

# THE ALLSTON-BRIGHTON SUBSTANCE ABUSE TASK FORCE

# ANNUAL REPORT 2014



## MISSION

The Allston-Brighton Substance Abuse Task Force (ABSATF) is a coalition of community agencies and residents that mobilizes youth, families, community members and leaders to prevent and reduce substance abuse and use among youth and adults in our community.

## TOGETHER WE SUCCEED

For more than a decade the

Allston-Brighton Substance Abuse Task Force has been a leader in this community of about 75,000 people. Our work is cut out for us as we seek to reach those as young as elementary school students and as mature as the grandparents who help to raise them. We have a range of cultures and languages in our community, and the Task Force is working to expand its reach to ensure that everyone benefits and is included in our efforts. The past year was a busy one, and the next 12 months promise to be just as exciting as we continue our work on underage drinking prevention while facing the challenges of medical marijuana dispensaries and an epidemic of opiate and prescription drug abuse. We will face these challenges together as we have always done as a coalition of community partners. Together we can bring about the change we want to see in our community.

## KEEPING BUSY AND ABOVE THE INFLUENCE

The ABSATF Youth Coalition (YC) is made up of students that either live in or attend high school in Allston-Brighton. These teenagers work together to make our community healthier for youth by serving as role models and educating other young people about substance use and abuse prevention. In 2013 the YC logged close to 500 hours and accomplished many of its goals, including:

- Engaging in the national Above the Influence campaign which aims to prevent substance abuse by having youth focus on the positive aspects of their lives that allow them to say no to negative influences. The YC depicted their healthy influences on a quilt which hung in public places. Another public artwork project is planned for spring 2014.
- Building on its legacy that helped to ban alcohol advertising on the MBTA by working toward a ban on alcohol ads on all City of Boston property.
- Participating in multiple trainings by Health Resources in Action to build their advocacy, facilitation and public speaking skills in order to effectively communicate their messages to local youth and city officials.
- Implementing a “sticker shock” campaign during college move-in by placing 1000 stickers on cases of beer at two liquor stores in Allston-Brighton. The stickers reminded consumers that the legal drinking age is 21 and thanked them for not supplying to minors.
- Conducting a “shoulder tap.” Students, with adult supervision close by, asked passers-by for alcohol outside of liquor stores. If they were refused, students gave commendation cards, but if someone agreed to it, the students supplied a “thumbs down” card which listed the penalties for supplying alcohol to minors.

## FUNDED BY

Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Drug Free Communities Grant

Massachusetts Department of Public Health Bureau of Substance Abuse Services Underage Drinking Prevention Grant

Boston Public Health Commission No Drugs Coalition

Boston College Community Grant for the Walk for Recovery

The New Balance Foundation

Local businesses and private donors



## A NEW OPTION FOR THE COMMUNITY

ABSATF continued its “What’s in Your Medicine Cabinet?” campaign that began in 2011 to raise awareness of prescription drug abuse. After several successful Safe Medication Collection events, including one in spring 2013, a permanent, self-serve MedReturn Kiosk was installed in the lobby of the Boston Police Department in Brighton. Residents may safely and easily dispose of medication at their convenience. In the fall, three billboards in Allston-Brighton advertised the permanent kiosks.

**WHAT'S IN YOUR MEDICINE CABINET?**

**Turn in your unused or expired medication for safe disposal**

Boston Police Dept. D-14 • 301 Washington St., Brighton

Free, 24/7, Anonymous **1-855-494-4057**

DEPOSIT YOUR UNWANTED PRESCRIPTION DRUGS HERE. From prescription painkillers, allergy drugs, antibiotics and all of your other medical supplies. Return.

## CELEBRATING RECOVERY

The 10th Annual Walk for Recovery was held on Saturday, September 21, 2013, at Artesani Herter Park in Brighton. ABSATF recognized Tim Burke, CEO of the Addiction Treatment Center of New England, for his dedication to ABSATF and service to the recovery community. More than 100 participants



walked together on a three-mile loop around the Charles River to celebrate the power of recovery from addiction.

## TEACHING AND GUIDING

On eight Friday nights over the past year Elizabeth Parsons of ABSATF joined Brendan Kennedy, a graduate student from the Boston College Office of the Dean for Student Development, and Frank Hughes of the Boston Police Department D-14 to educate BC students about being good neighbors. Over the last year more than 100 students attended these “Friday Night Heights” sessions after they committed an alcohol, noise or community disturbance violation. Parsons built awareness of the social host liability law and helped the students understand the consequences of hosting parties (with alcohol) that include minors. Since Friday Night Heights started in 2009, no participant has been found in violation a second time.

In September 2013, the ABSATF marijuana working group organized a forum for parents and those who work with youth to raise awareness of the dangers of marijuana use. Kevin Hill, MD, MPH, assistant professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and psychiatrist-in-charge in the Division of Drug and Alcohol Abuse at McLean Hospital, discussed the effects of youth marijuana use in the forum.

## TASK FORCE PARTNERS

ABSATF Youth Coalition  
Addiction Treatment Center of New England  
Allston Brighton APAC  
Boston City Councilor Mark Ciommo  
Boston College  
Boston Police Department, District 14, Area D  
Boston Private Industry Council (PIC)  
Boston Public Health Commission  
Boston Public Schools  
Boston University  
Brighton Board of Trade  
Brighton District Court  
Brighton Main Streets  
Brighton Marine Health Center  
Charlesview Apartments  
City Connects  
City of Boston Mayor’s Office  
Commonwealth Tenants Association  
Crittenton Women’s Union  
CVS Pharmacy  
Education Development Center, Inc.  
Gavin Foundation  
Granada House  
Greater Boston Center for Healthy Communities  
Health Resources in Action  
Hope House  
Jackson Mann Community Center  
Joseph M. Smith Community Health Center  
Mass. Dept. of Public Health Bureau of Substance Abuse Services  
Mass. Organization for Addiction Recovery (MOAR)  
Mass. Senator William Brownsberger  
Mass. State Representative Kevin Honan  
Marty’s Big Buys  
Newton Emblem Club  
Oak Square YMCA  
Parents and Residents of Allston-Brighton  
Peoples Federal Savings Bank  
SAFE-MA  
Signal Graphics  
St. Elizabeth’s Medical Center  
St. Joseph Preparatory High School  
The Women’s Table  
William J. Ostiguy High School



## WORKING TOGETHER

Since spring 2013, more than 50 students in grades 5-12 have joined the Road to the Right Track program, which is led by Frank Hughes of the Boston Police Department D-14 in partnership with ABSATF and supported by a New Balance Foundation grant. Research has shown that providing youth with healthy activities reduces risk factors and increases protective factors regarding substance use and abuse. While running is the core of the program, students and their parents also learn about making healthy lifestyle choices. ABSATF has shared its resources and introduced concepts of the national Above the Influence campaign with both youth and parents in the program.

ABSATF also has partnered with the Massachusetts Organization for Addiction Recovery (MOAR), the Boston Public Health Commission and St. Elizabeth's Medical Center to bring a free, peer-led curriculum known as AREAS (Addiction Recovery Education Access Services) to those in recovery. Every week, those in recovery gather to talk about topics such as employment, housing and relapse prevention in a caring, supportive environment.

## REACHING EVERYONE

In spring 2013, ABSATF staff met with a consultant to discuss ways to assess cultural competency within the Task Force, implement cultural competency trainings and activities, and develop a strategy for incorporating it into the ABSATF's strategic plan. Task Force members discussed the concept of cultural competency at a meeting, and ABSATF staff distributed a cultural competency assessment tool to all ABSATF members in November 2013. Survey results determined that ABSATF has reached out to the many cultures that make up our vibrant community, but that we need to continue and expand those efforts. An outreach committee was formed, and the group strategized ways to expand membership to increase its diversity on all levels.

## GET INVOLVED

ABSATF members help our community become a positive, drug-free place where young people can thrive. Through collaboration and innovation, you can help Allston-Brighton become a model for other communities around the city, state and country. We welcome volunteers who would like to help out occasionally at our events or those who would like to join one of the following committees:

- Communications
- Development and Sustainability
- Marijuana Prevention and Education
- Outreach and Membership
- Prescription Drug Prevention
- Under Age Drinking Prevention
- Walk for Recovery Planning
- Youth Coalition

Our meetings are open to the public. For more information, please see the events calendar at [www.abdrugfree.org](http://www.abdrugfree.org).

## MORE INFORMATION

Please visit [www.abdrugfree.org](http://www.abdrugfree.org) to sign up for our newsletter or read more about ABSATF. Follow us on Twitter @abdrugfree. Follow our Youth Coalition on Twitter and Instagram @abyouth.

## CONTACT US

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