



CESA 5

Juveniles are 25% of the population, but 100% of our future.

# Columbia County Connects Newsletter

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Members of Columbus Community Action Team view life in downtown Columbus after midnight

## Just Before Midnight - Columbus Night Out

Just before midnight on Friday, October 22, eight Columbus citizens, two law enforcement officers, and a reporter from the Daily Citizen gathered in the basement of the Columbus Police Department. This may seem like a strange time for a Community Action Team to meet, but the group wanted to have an opportunity to walk through their town during the late night/early morning hours to see just what happens at that time of night. The Columbus Community Action Team, in conjunction with the Columbus Police Department, planned the group meeting.

To begin the evening's event, Chief Meister shared his concerns about the impact that late night behaviors are having on Columbus. On a regular basis, Columbus police encounter people behaving negatively after an evening of drinking. This negative behavior affects the entire community and the consequences carry over into the daytime. In an article in the Daily Citizen (October 29, 2010), Chief Meister said that citations for underage drinking, possession or consumption of alcohol, operating while intoxicated, and disorderly conduct are on the increase in the city. This is due in part to stepped up enforcement by the Police. Chief Meister feels that it's a small group of

people who continue to cause most of the disturbance.

Near 1:30 AM (Saturday morning), the group of citizens started out on their walk. Before they left for the walk, Chief Meister warned them that some of the behaviors they might see can be disturbing and could include fights, public consumption of intoxicants, vandalism, public urination, or vomiting. They were split into two groups. One group went with Officer Mike Rufer and the other went with Chief Meister.

The group had an opportunity to see many things during their walk. A member of the group, downtown business owner, Wendy Symiab, told the Daily Citizen that when she saw how inebriated some of the people in the downtown were, she was scared. Another participant in the walk, Rev. Floyd Laabs, told the Daily Citizen that raising awareness is really the first step and that this isn't an "us against them issue." It's really about working together to have the best community that can be.

The group plans to have a follow-up walk in the spring and will also discuss this walk at future Community Action Team meetings.



## AmeriCorps Volunteer

Columbia County Connects has been lucky to have the privilege of working with a Marshfield Clinic AmeriCorps volunteer for the past two years. Last year Curt Hossman volunteered with us. Curt came to us from Lodi, where he had been the school counselor for many years. He worked tirelessly with Officer Pat Drury in Lodi to develop a Prescription Drug Round Up program that still continues twice a year. He helped develop and implement a town supper held for the Lodi community and was, and continues to be, an active member of the Lodi Community Action Team. Curt assisted our coalition in creating a list of local alcohol policies. Curt also continued to work in the Lodi School District with youth and teachers throughout the year. He assisted with JUDO and some TIPs classes. We value the time that Curt spent with us. He will be missed!!

This year we have Jenny Steingraeber volunteering with us. She comes to CCC with a unique perspective on how our

coalition works because she started with us as a youth member of the Teens In Action youth group in Pardeeville as an 8<sup>th</sup> grader! She graduated in May with a Bachelors Degree in Art Therapy. While earning her degree from the University of Wisconsin-Superior, Jenny served as the lead guide of the student outdoor adventure program. This job involved leading kayaking trips, arranging and leading backpacking trips, and being a climbing wall attendant. This experience has served our coalition well. Jenny is now working with our youth retreats as well as serving as the adult advisor for the Step Up Speak Out county youth group. Jenny's many other tasks include managing community service for Teen Court respondents, adult volunteer for Teen Court, as well as support person for the Circles of Support program.

We are lucky to have Jenny with us this year!!

Columbia County Connects has had the privilege to work with a Marshfield Clinic AmeriCorps volunteer for the past two years: thanks to Curt and welcome to Jenny!

## Lodi Prescription Drug Disposal

Lodi area community members will have another opportunity to safely dispose of unused and expired medications. They can bring them to the Lodi Police Station, located at 142 S. Main, on Saturday, January 15 from 10:00am to 12:00pm. The first two drug disposals were a huge success and over 750 containers of medications were collected. The Lodi Police Department assumes control of the drugs which will be safely disposed of at no charge. Community members are asked to please leave the medication in its original container. Names must be crossed out while still keeping the name of the medication legible.

There are numerous reasons why it is important to safely dispose of unused drugs:

- Medications flushed down the toilet may contaminate our lakes, streams and groundwater causing harm to humans, wildlife and vegetation.
- Medications thrown in trash can cause

poisoning by accidental ingestion by young children, pets and even wildlife.

-The Partnership at Drugfree.org surveyed teenagers found that nationwide 1 in 5 teens has tried Vicodin, and 1 in 10 have tried OxyContin; both powerful narcotic pain relievers. One in ten teens has abused cough medicine. One of the most common means for young people to obtain drugs is by getting them from grandparent's medicine cabinets.

-Misuse and abuse of prescription drugs is growing throughout the U.S. and is negatively impacting millions of youth, adults and families.

What can you bring?

All prescription and over-the-counter medication will be accepted including pills, spray, liquids, capsules, inhalers, ointments, patches, and creams.

This program is being sponsored by LCAT (Lodi Community Action Team), and the Lodi Police Department.

Let's all work together to create a healthy safer community.

## Alcohol Compliance Checks

In 2010, 176 alcohol compliance checks were done in Columbia County. Alcohol Compliance checks involve the use of underage buyers going into alcohol licensed establishments with the support of law enforcement and attempting to purchase alcohol. A total of 133 compliance checks passed, which means that IDs were correctly read and an alcohol sale was not made. This is a passing rate of 76%. We congratulate those establishments who are doing what they are supposed to be doing to

train employees to properly read IDs. However, there is still work to be done. As compliance checks continue, we encourage community members to do any or all of the following: 1) support law enforcement who conduct compliance checks in their area, 2) vocalize concerns to business owners who allow underage alcohol sales in their establishments, 3) contact your local town board to assist in developing a point system for alcohol licenses in their area.

## Youth Groups Fall Retreat

On November 19th, 82 middle school students from Rio, Pardeeville, Wisconsin Dells, and Portage attended a Youth Retreat at KEVA Sports Center in Middleton. On November 30th, 73 high school students attended. The day began with AmeriCorps volunteer Jenny Steingraeber talking to the students about challenge by choice. This involves being aware of your personal comfort zone and challenging yourself to step out of that zone when safe

challenges are presented. The students had a day filled with team building games, relay and tag races, soccer, and Eskimo baseball. Along with asking the students to try new things and step out of their comfort zone, the purpose of each of the retreats was also to encourage physical fitness.

Over 150 students attend retreats held at Keva Sports Center in Middleton on November 19 and 30



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## Columbia County Connects

The Columbia County Connects Coalition is made up of members that represent school districts and communities throughout the county. This coalition was established through the Columbia County Juvenile Justice Committee.

Funding is provided by Columbia County Health and Human Services, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI), a Federal Drug-Free Communities Support grant, and the STOP grant.

The two main programs are Youth Connects (teen leadership) and Community Connects (community education). The 40 Developmental Assets play a major role in our programming. The following are the top 4 assets we are currently addressing:

- **Caring School Climate** - School provides a caring, encouraging environment.
- **Safety**-Young person feels safe at home, at school, and in the neighborhood.

- **Restraint**-Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.
- **Youth as Resources**-Young people are given useful roles in the community.

### Community Advocacy

The Community Advocacy Department works with the Community Liaisons to provide community education on prevention, hold responsible beverage server classes for community groups, alcohol compliance checks, coordinate Community Action Teams, work with Project Northland teachers on 6th grade Poster Fairs coordinate Project Northland 7th grade Amazing Alternative activities and media advocacy campaigns.

### Youth Connects

The Youth Connects Coordinator works with the Youth Liaisons in the individual schools in creating service programs and leadership opportunities with students. An adult from each school district supports the local youth efforts.

**Please feel free to post this newsletter or share it with a friend!**