



# The Valley Prevention News

Volume 2, Issue 1

*Working for a Healthier  
Community*

## Senator Patrick Leahy Becomes Lead Advocate on Substance Abuse Issues

### Vermont Coalitions Receive Kudos for Advocacy Efforts

Vermont substance abuse coalitions received accolades and a round of applause at the annual meeting of CADCA, the national organization of community substance abuse prevention coalitions which took place in February in a very snowy Baltimore, MD.

Sue Thau, Public Policy Consultant at CADCA (which stands for Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America) called for all Vermont representatives to rise and take a bow for their advocacy efforts. She informed the crowd that due to those efforts, Senator Patrick Leahy had called CADCA and offered to step in as the lead advocate on substance abuse issues in the U. S. Senate now that former Senator Joseph Biden, who had fulfilled that role previously, has left the Senate to become Vice President.

Having a Senator in our corner who is as admired and experienced as Senator Leahy contributes greatly to our ability to be heard on important substance abuse issues. We're all very grateful to the Senator for his willingness to help us bring these issues to the forefront of our national debate and to advocate for sufficient funding to address them.



*DVCP members and staff attending the meeting with Senator Leahy included Andy Hauty, Cindy Hayford and Bob Edwards.*

### Neither Snow nor Rain nor Gloom of Night...

Meetings with Senators Leahy and Sanders were scheduled for Wednesday, February 10th but over 30 inches of snow in Baltimore/Washington caused a change in plans. Senator Sanders couldn't get out of Vermont and all of Washington, DC was shut down.

Senator Leahy and his staff graciously agreed to reschedule the meeting to Thursday and since DVCP staff had their Thursday flight home cancelled, we were able to attend. The meeting included a visit to the Capitol Building with the Senator. The Vermont visitors thanked Senator Leahy for his work on the Drug Free Communities legislation, provided information to the Senator on the impact of other substance abuse legislation and policies, discussed what the coalitions do and described some of the successes federal dollars have made possible.

***DON'T FORGET!!!***

***PREVENTION DAY***

***APRIL 14, 2010***

***VERMONT STATEHOUSE***

***MONPELIER, VT***

***Call: 464-1698 to find out how to join us.***

## ***WSSU 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results Are In Data Show Increase in Female Risk Taking***

The *Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)* is done statewide every two years. It surveys students in 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade and asks a wide variety of questions related to behaviors which put young people at risk. In 2009, one hundred and sixty-six (166) students or 68% of WSSU students in the grades surveyed, participated.

The results related to alcohol use/abuse among our youth produced mostly good news. All the categories reporting the use of alcohol—ranging from whether students have ever had a drink to engaging in binge drinking—were down from the same measures in 2007. The overall percent of students who reported consuming at least one drink of alcohol during the 30 days prior to the survey dropped 10%. Those reporting binge drinking dropped by 7% overall but showed a more substantial drop among males (16%). Unfortunately, the female rate of reporting binge drinking *rose* by 2%.

Overall, those reporting driving under the influence of alcohol is down to 5%, a 10% drop from 2007. Once again, the drop in the rate among males was substantial (17%), while females reported a 3% drop. Those reporting that they rode with someone who had consumed alcohol also showed an overall drop of 9%.

Two issues that become evident when this data is analyzed are first, students still report that the most common way they get their alcohol is from someone giving it to them. In 2007 that category accounted for 49% of the responses, in 2009 it was up to 60%. The other issue that stands out is the gender shift. From reports of violent behavior to substance abuse to general risk taking, female involvement is on the rise. DVCP will be focusing on these issues over the next year. For more information on survey results or a copy of the survey, call 464-1698.

## ***Suicide is the Second Leading Cause of Death Among Vermont Youth Between Ages of 11-23***

The Deerfield Valley Community Partnership has joined with the Windham Southwest Supervisory Union (WSSU) to initiate a suicide prevention project aimed at our local youth. The project is part of a larger statewide initiative entitled, *UMatter*, which is aimed at de-stigmatizing mental health and encouraging help-seeking behavior among those who need support.

As the second leading cause of death among Vermont youth between the ages of 11 and 23, suicide has been identified as a major statewide prevention initiative. In the Deerfield Valley, based on the findings from the WSSU 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 23% of students in grades 8-12 reported feeling so sad or hopeless almost every day for at least two weeks that they stopped doing some usual activities. Thirty-five percent (35%) of 12<sup>th</sup> graders felt this way.

Over the coming months, DVCP will be providing trainings for gatekeepers, people who are either first responders or who are sought out by youth who are in trouble and/or by parents and others seeking assistance in dealing with youth who are having a difficult time. The first training will occur on Thursday, May 6<sup>th</sup> at the Grand Summit hotel at Mount Snow. In addition to attending the trainings, each gatekeeper group will develop protocols specific to their role in the event of a suicide attempt or completed suicide. Through this process DVCP aims to construct a communitywide safety net through which the schools and the community work together seamlessly each time a suicide threat is identified. If you are interested in being involved, please call Anne O'Sullivan at 464-9909.

### **Parent Tip**

*Words are powerful. Use yours to help prevent underage drinking.*

*Your kids respect your opinions, even if they don't show it. In fact, studies show that parents have the most influence on whether or not their children will drink.*

*Want more information? Visit:*

[www.parentupvt.org](http://www.parentupvt.org)



**DO YOU HAVE OPINIONS  
YOU WOULD LIKE TO  
SHARE WITH YOUR  
LEGISLATORS ?**

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## Deerfield Valley Community Partnership RECOGNITION DINNER



Award recipients are pictured from left to right: Rebecca Sweeney (Above & Beyond Award), Cindy Hayford-DVCP Coordinator, Scott Hayford (Shining Star Youth Award), and Tanya Bernard (Volunteer of the Year Award)



On March 11, 2010, DVCP members gathered at the Old Red Mill for a Recognition & Awards Dinner. Over thirty members attended. Thank you to all of the staff at the Old Red Mill for a wonderful evening.

### Deerfield Valley Community Partnership

#### Steering Committee

- Karen Molina
- Bob Edwards
- Arlene Palmiter
- Judith Fellows
- Lynn Redd
- Ronda Lackey

#### DVCP Coordinator

- Cindy Hayford
- SPF-SIG Grant  
Project Director**

Andy Hauty

#### Grant Evaluator

Anne O'Sullivan

#### Grants Fiscal Agent

Windham Southwest  
Supervisory Union

#### Student Assistance Counselors

Dawn Borys-TVHS  
Kristen Trudeau-TVMS

#### Leadership Coordinators

Suzanne Mears-TVMS  
Dennis Heberlein -TVHS

#### Prevention Curriculum

Jennifer Nilsen



#### Coalition Meeting Dates

2009-2010  
TVHS

April 26

May 17

June 21

Dinner is served at 5:30  
Meeting at 6:00

**COME JOIN US**

**EVERYONE'S WELCOME!!!  
(Please RSVP)**

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We're on the Web!

[www.dvcp.org](http://www.dvcp.org)



## *From the Coordinator's Desk...*

### *Dear Neighbors,*

*DVCP has taken on a new prevention project (see P.2). This time it's aimed at reducing the risk of suicide among our local youth. A "substantial amount" of suicide victims test positive for alcohol and other drugs. According to the CDC (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention), the use of drugs and alcohol contribute substantially to suicides overall, regardless of cause of death. So, it makes sense for the DVCP to be involved in this important prevention project.*

*On another note, hearing the news about Jessica Bolognani on January 2nd was just heartbreaking. Jess was one of those young people who come along every once in a while and make a real impact on everyone. All of us at DVCP were privileged to know and work with her in our Leadership Program and as a founding member of our FRESH Advisory Council.*

*In writing recommendations for Jess as she applied for college and scholarships, I commented on her wonderful enthusiasm, her willingness to get involved in school and community volunteering and what a great example she was to other youth in our community. When I picture Jess in my mind, I still see that big smile that lit up her face. My heartfelt condolences go out to all of Jessica's friends, family and those whose lives she touched.*

*Through the work I do at DVCP, I cannot help but think about what we can do to prevent a tragedy like this from ever happening again. Let's start the conversation. Let's join together as parents and community members to find every possible way to keep our kids safe.*

*Cindy*

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