

The Solution



**Charlotte Mecklenburg
Drug Free Coalition**
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Jenny Wade

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Center for Prevention Services

Executive Director:

Jane Goble-Clark

CMDFC Coordinator:

Andie Anselmi

Message from the Chair

Vol. 5 No. 3
January, February, March 2012

The only thing that seems to be constant in life is change. I began as the new chair of the Coalition on October 1, 2011 and there has been a whirlwind of change in these short few months. Just a few weeks after I came on board, we welcomed Kim Matone into the position of community organizer for the Coalition. In late November, the Coalition accepted the resignation of Shelley Friedman, our Prevent Underage Drinking (PUD) community organizer. We truly appreciate the work that Shelley did as a staff member and hope that she will continue on as a volunteer with the Coalition. We thank Jane Goble-Clark of the Center for Prevention Services (CPS) for referring us to two excellent candidates. As a result, we have hired Rosanna Saladin-Subero and she will begin as the new PUD Community Organizer in January.



The first task ahead of me was (and still is) learning how the Coalition works and how we, as members of the Coalition, can make it work better. Our primary funding for the past five years has been a grant from the Drug Free Communities (DFC) grant and in the next few months, we must re-apply for this grant. Although the Request for Proposals has not yet been published, this is a task which Andie Anselmi, Coalition Coordinator, has been working on already. With the assistance of volunteers from the Coalition, I feel certain that we will submit a quality grant that will result in new funding that will allow us to continue our mission of reducing the harmful impact of substance abuse on our children and our community.

A few years ago, the Coalition was recognized as a 501(c) 3 organization. This long sought-after accomplishment brings more positive changes as we move forward through 2012. The Coalition has operated thus far with CPS as its fiscal sponsor. With this new designation, people can now make contributions directly to the Coalition and we will need to decide how to move forward with managing our own funds. In addition, the Executive Committee will be considering office space outside of the Center for Prevention Services.

The year 2012 holds many positive opportunities for the Coalition. In the midst of all of these changes in staffing, request for funding and becoming our own organization, it is important that we don't lose focus on the Coalition's mission. We have made progress in raising awareness in our community about the harmful effects of alcohol and other drug abuse on our youth, yet we still have challenges. Too many adults in Charlotte-Mecklenburg still think there is nothing wrong with adolescents drinking alcohol. Alcopops continue to be sold in local retail outlets and endanger unsuspecting youth who are often unaware of the high alcohol content. We must continue all of the activities we have been doing to generate and disseminate accurate information to our youth and the larger community.

Our first Coalition meeting of 2012 was very well attended and I saw a passion for this work in the hearts of those present. We talked about the need to do some things differently and people readily stepped up to fill the gap. I am very proud of the members of this Coalition and of the work you continue to do to make a positive change in this community. I am humbled to be your Chair during this exciting time and I look forward to what we can accomplish together in 2012 and beyond.

Join the Solution...

Youth Voices: SPIDA Members Nataria Lockhart & Autumn Chadwick



Nataria Lockhart (left) completing letter to ABC Commission Board on the benefits of classifying alcopops as a distilled spirit. PHOTO: Rachelle Vo

Nataria Lockhart, SPIDA member for 2 years:

“Being a SPIDA (Students Preventing and Informing on Drugs and Alcohol) member has helped me so much. I started out as being a shy and timid person, but during my time with SPIDA I have developed into a strong youth leader in my community. SPIDA is a fun organization for youth to

participate in. We help organize teen summits where we meet up with other schools and organizations to learn how to better advocate against the use of drugs and alcohol. We also perform refusal skits; write letters to decision makers on how to make the community more safe from drugs and alcohol and lead drug awareness campaigns.

I believe the work that I do with the other SPIDA members in the community is important. It’s important for other youth to know that most youth in Mecklenburg county don’t use drugs and choose to do more positive things. I enjoy influencing youth in our community to make good decisions and I encourage other youth to join this youth group!”

Autumn Chadwick, SPIDA for 1 year:

“I really like educating the community and letting people know about how drugs can harm a young person. One my favorite projects I’ve participated in was helping out with the Alcohol Purchase Follow Ups led by Dr. Friday.

For this project, we had someone who looked under the age of 21, but actually was over the age of 21 enter stores in an attempt to purchase alcohol. They surveyed whether or not these stores checked for ID. After the results were tallied SPIDA and other volunteers from the coalition went to the stores that checked ID stores and awarded them with a certificate of appreciation. Stores that did not check for ID were given information on alcopops and merchant ID

training. Merchant ID trainings were led by the Alcohol Beverage Control and Alcohol Law Enforcement. As a SPIDA youth, I was glad to see that most stores said they would send their workers to these trainings.”



Autumn Chadwick presents a Certificate of Appreciation to a local gas station during the Alcohol Purchase Study. PHOTO: Rachelle Vo

The first county-wide SPIDA meeting will be held Wednesday, February 15, 2012 from 6:00pm-7:15pm at 100 Billingsley Rd. If you are interested in joining this meeting or would like to learn more about SPIDA, please contact a SPIDA Adult Advisor at spidacharlotte@gmail.com or visit us on Facebook under the name SPIDA Charlotte.

Phone-A-Thon Raises Money for PUD Initiative

Written by Percy Rivers

On December 15, 2011, the Development Committee of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Drug Free Coalition held a Phon-A-Thon to help raise money for the North Carolina Preventing Underage Drinking (PUD) initiative. The PUD initiative is partially funded by the PUD grant. This grant helps us to implement programs that assist in providing a safe and healthy environment for local youth.

The average age a child takes his or her first drink of alcohol is 12 years old. Underage drinking is a nationwide epidemic that hits close to home for everyone. With the NC PUD grant we can help educate our community and take initiative in helping to ensure that something is getting done to prevent underage drinking.

The Phon-A-Thon was held at the Center for Prevention Services. Our goal was to contact all Coalition members to seek donations in order to help raise \$2,700.00 for the PUD initiative. The Phon-A-Thon began at 6:00pm and went until around 8:00pm. All who participated worked diligently to contact Coalition members and seek donations.

While we did raise some money, we are still far from our goal. If you or anyone you know would like to contribute to the PUD initiative, please contact Percy Rivers at 704-222-8126 or send contributions to CMDFC, Suite 101, 1117 E. Morehead St. Charlotte, NC 28204.

The Development Committee would like to thank the following people for their participation in the event: Andie Anselmi, Tony Beatty, Jenny Wade, Shelley Friedman, Zorana Roldan Romo, and Rachelle Vo.

Contribute Today!

New Community Organizer Joins the Coalition

Written by Kim Matone

My name is Kim Matone and I am happy to join the Charlotte Mecklenburg Drug Free Coalition as Community Organizer with the Drug Free Communities grant. My background is in Child and Family Development and I worked as Senior Prevention Specialist for Center for Prevention Services (formerly Substance Abuse Prevention Services) for eleven years. I have been a Certified Substance Abuse Prevention Consultant since 2009. As Community Organizer, my goals are to strengthen the Coalition and reduce youth substance abuse. The substances that I will focus on are alcohol, marijuana and black tar heroin.

Since coming on board in November I have worked on a variety of projects including “Many Cultures, One Community.” This event was held at Northwest School of the Arts on December 3rd and was sponsored by Crossroads Charlotte. This was a community-wide event that highlighted relevant topics among immigrants, refugees, asylees and internationals (IRAI). I had the opportunity to display and share information about the Coalition and to network with many other service agencies.



Participants at “Many Cultures, One Community.”
Photo courtesy of Crossroads Charlotte



I spoke with Rama Road Elementary Parent Teacher Association on December 17th. I gave them a brief overview of substance abuse among youth and handed out literature. I will be presenting “Protecting Our Children in 2012, A Drug and Bullying Prevention Presentation” to a group of parents on January 24th. Also, I have spoken with Rama’s fourth and fifth graders and will be talking to the teachers at their next staff meeting. I am so excited that Rama Elementary School’s parents, staff, and students have embraced the Charlotte Drug Free Coalition! In December, I spoke with high school students at Cross Roads Charter School about black tar heroin. They a lot feedback and input on this relatively new substance to hit Charlotte.

As well as educating the community about alcohol, marijuana, and black tar heroin, I have had the opportunity to coordinate volunteers to attend the Taylor Swift concert and assess alcohol availability. This concert took place in November and was predominantly attended by youth and their mothers. Alcohol and alcohol advertisement was prevalent throughout the Time Warner Cable Arena but even more so on the lower levels where the more expensive seats were.

I am enjoying being a part of the Coalition and hope to continue to help bring the community together to reduce youth substance Abuse. I look forward to coordinating other events such as The St. Patrick’s Day Parade, Charlotte Goes Green and Speed Street. I am still looking for volunteers! If you know anyone who would like to help, please email me at Matone@preventioservices.org.



Country music star, Taylor Swift
Photo courtesy of
www.famous-wallpapers.com

What’s your story?

Do you have any upcoming events or story ideas? Send your event information, pitch ideas, or share some pictures for the next edition of The Solution. Contact Kerry Burch at kerry.burch@carolinashealthcare.org

What It Has Meant To Be Community Organizer

Written by Shelley Friedman



Shelley Friedman (left) discusses "Talk It Up, Lock It Up" with SPIDA member Nataria Lockhart at the Girl Voice Network Meeting.

PHOTO: Rachelle Vo

It has been more than three years since I began my work as a Community Organizer with the Charlotte Mecklenburg Drug Free Coalition (CMDFC). Before that time, I volunteered on the Parent Centered Prevention Committee (PCPC) for three years. I saw an article written in the Charlotte Observer by Mary Howerton. She wrote about the Coalition's work and a new parent committee that was forming and parents were needed to participate. That article called to me and I became interested in using the resources I gathered from the prevention professionals on the committee and also joined the Parent Teacher Association's (PTA) Parent Education Committee at my child's high school. It wasn't quite that easy because the principal was not too eager. He did not want there to be a perception that there was drug and alcohol use by students at the school. I knew first hand that there was drug and alcohol use and was determined to address it. But, for the first year, I spoke to the PTA members and the principal several times and assured them that we would keep the meetings and the message about communication issues between adolescents and parents. I finally gained their trust and, though we had meetings that were very successful, the principal never attended any of them. The assistant principal and a substance abuse prevention counselor showed up and were impressed with the meetings and the PCPC team, so the Parent Education committee gained credibility and for the next year we covered topics like how drugs and alcohol affect the brain of youth under 25 and the risk to youth of becoming dependent or addicted to those substances.

My son graduated and so did I. I left the Parent Centered committee but mentioned if there was a position open in the future, I would be interested. The rest is history. Based on the success with PCPC and the PTA work, I was asked to be one of the Community Organizers for the Coalition.

What stands out most to me are the connections I made with the various people through the different agencies who work hard to make positive changes in our community. I connected to their passion, belief and their faith that they could make a difference. I came to the CMDFC wanting to support positive changes around underage drinking and substance use because my life had been affected by family member's addiction. I knew I was not alone but yet most people do not talk about it. I wanted to collaborate to help parents understand that underage drinking is not a rite of passage and can have a lifetime of devastating effects.

One of my proudest moments was when I decided to reach out to my own faith community, Temple Beth El. I joined the CMDFC Faith Committee because I wanted to share that adults have to be the ones to reduce teens' access to alcohol because. We know that education alone does not help an impulsive teenage mind. I met with Rabbi Judy Schindler and she supported the endeavor and connected me to the Social Justice committee at the temple. I committed to writing monthly articles for the Temple bulletins to inform the congregation about the Prevent Underage Drinking initiative. I ended each article with contact information for parents who may have concerns or questions about their child. The Coalition hosted a Town Hall meeting for the religious school educators to help share prevention messages. I feel proud that my faith community is opening their eyes to the fact that underage substance use crosses all religious, ethnic and economic boundaries and needs to be addressed so we can begin change the social norms.

The most fun I had was with the Parent Centered Prevention Committee. This committee knows how plan Town Hall meetings and laugh while doing it. It has truly been a joy to me. I also feel honored to have worked with the SPIDA advisors. SPIDA is growing and developing its youth advocacy program. Each year they become more sophisticated leaders.

I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to make a contribution to the work of the Coalition. It is time for me to move on and it has been an honor for me to serve as a Community Organizer with the CMDFC. Thank you all for your hard work, dedication and contributions to keeping our community drug free. It takes all of you to make changes in our community.

Sincerely,
Shelley Friedman