

## COMMUNITIES IN ACTION

### Safe Schools/Healthy Students Project – Virginia

Safe Schools/Healthy Students Albemarle/Charlottesville Project (SS/HS) is a coalition of the Albemarle County and Charlottesville City Public Schools systems that supports safer, healthier students and learning communities. Dedication to students, families, and community forms the core of SS/HS. After two years of successful National Prevention Week events, SS/HS wanted to continue to grow its involvement in the observance for 2014.

SS/HS used the daily themes of National Prevention Week 2014 to guide the topics of their events, and extended an open invitation to parents and community members for all events held throughout the week. They selected five topics for a mix of talks and trainings – alcohol abuse prevention, prevention of prescription drug use, tobacco use prevention, healthy body image, and mental health.

The National Prevention Week 2014 activities sponsored by SS/HS attracted nearly 100 attendees throughout the week and whetted the community's appetite for future prevention activities. As a result of the organization's successful events, community members have requested that SS/HS organize additional prevention events throughout the year! Bo Sykes of the local CBS television station interviewed June Jenkins, executive director of SS/HS, about their National Prevention Week events—see <http://www.newsplex.com/community/communitycounts/headlines/VNB-Community-Counts-June-Jenkins-259539901.html>.



*June Jenkins, executive director of SS/HS, sat down with CBS19's Bo Sykes to talk about local events for National Prevention Week 2014.*

### PRIDE – Bermuda

PRIDE is a non-profit organization, based in Bermuda, which helps kids build life skills that can empower them to stand strong in the face of the pressure to use drugs. A coalition of organizations in Bermuda, led by PRIDE, hosted community awareness events in observance of National Prevention Week 2014. On May 19, PRIDE held a promotion campaign in the City of Hamilton where they encouraged the community to get involved in supporting National Prevention Week. One activity during the week was an “I AM PREVENTION” photo booth where people wrote on the bottom of their photo what they do to educate, empower, and equip the young people in their lives and community.

On May 23, PRIDE held a mini fair at their local mall. The fair highlighted substance abuse prevention partners of Bermuda and the services they provide. The fair also featured a flash mob and was covered by a local television station. PRIDE also created a theme song for the week entitled “Stay Wise.” Substance abuse prevention partners in Bermuda talk about their prevention efforts in this video:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rychfe06M2A&feature=youtu.be.](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rychfe06M2A&feature=youtu.be)



*Community members sing along to “Stay Wise” during the fair.*

**Working Together Coalition – Minnesota**

The [Working Together Coalition](#) is made up of community members invested in making northern Minnesota communities a safe and healthy place for youth, free from alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. To rally community members through National Prevention Week 2014, the Coalition identified speakers to offer trainings that helped participants make strides in prevention efforts in their communities. The Coalition hosted a professional development conference called “Be The Change: The Solution is in the Community,” which provided health care professionals an opportunity to learn more about issues related to substance abuse prevention and mental health, and to build skills for addressing those issues.

The conference was a success, not only because it provided a unique opportunity for health professionals in the region, but also because it created new partnerships and collaborations to get the message of prevention out into the community. The Coalition raised awareness about behavioral health issues and brought together more than 150 individuals from different groups that are working toward the same goal—to create a safe and healthy community. The photo below shows attendees participating in the “Be the Change: The Solution is in the Community” conference.



**Be The Change**  
The solution is in the community.

**2014 CONFERENCE**

June 4th & 5th - Northern Lights Casino - Walker, MN

This conference is for people who care for or work with youth and families in the community. It offers professionals and families opportunities to:

- improve policy and enhance practices for youth and families who have or are at risk for substance use and mental health disorders
- acquire skills and strategies that will improve outcomes for children and families
- gain knowledge of best practices and latest research in substance use and mental health
- enrich understanding of different perspectives and common goals in support of all children

**JUNE 4th**

**WORKSHOPS**

- Suicide Prevention
- High Cost of Synthetic Drugs
- Everyone's an Asset Builder
- Local Drug Trends
- Marijuana: Where We're Headed
- And more!

**JUNE 5th**

Jodi Pfarr's Bridges Out of Poverty workshop provides both the social service provider and the community member key lessons in dealing with individuals from poverty.



Topics include increasing awareness of the differences in economic cultures and how those differences affect opportunities for success. This workshop is designed for audiences of employers, community organizations, law enforcement, counselors, health care and social service providers.

Continental breakfast and lunch are provided both days of the conference.

Conference Fee: \$40 for one day, \$75 for both days  
Registration & Schedule: visit [WorkingTogetherCoalition.com](#)

Working Together Coalition is hosting the event with the following sponsorships:



### **Utah County Health Department – Utah**

The mission of the [Utah County Health Department](#) is to promote health and prevent avoidable disease and injury by monitoring the health of the local Provo community and ensuring conditions in which people can be healthy. For National Prevention Week 2014, the department held a Suicide Prevention Town Hall meeting with the theme, “Ask a Question, Save a Life.” The local event was held at the Utah County Health and Justice building in Provo. Multiple mental health agencies from around the county were available for anyone who needed information, help, or a referral. The keynote speaker was Dr. Greg Hudnall, Executive Director of the HOPE Task Force.

Attendees learned how to be gatekeepers, watch for signs of potential suicide, and how to recognize a person in crisis. The "Question, Persuade, Refer" program was taught to the attendees. Participants learned how to ask questions, ways to persuade someone to seek help, and resources that are available. They let attendees know that they are not expected to offer counseling but instead to refer them to someone who can help. This insightful event, along with several others and general promotion, got the word out about suicide prevention in Utah County!

**Community Connections – West Virginia**

[Community Connections](#) (CCI) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization serving Mercer County, West Virginia, and its surrounding areas. Through extensive partnerships, CCI's initiatives extend to the regional, state, and national levels. The organization works with multiple partners and has programs that reach not only Mercer County, but also other areas of the region to create a “prevention without borders” strategy that allows multiple organizations to work together to achieve positive outcomes.



*Community members running in the “Run For Your Life” 5k Kids’ Walk/Fun Run*

Community Connections observed its third National Prevention Week on Thursday, May 22, 2014, with its “Run For Your Life” 5k Kids’ Walk/Fun Run. Proceeds from the race benefited the Bluefield Pride Travel Basketball Team. The goal was to raise awareness of the week and also provide a healthy, community-based activity for the public. Sixty-three runners participated in the event. T-shirts were provided to participants, and the winners received sports bottles.

As in years past, Community Connections focused the entire week on getting information out to the public. In addition to the Run For Your Life 5k, Community Connections held a Tobacco Symposium on May 19 that received positive publicity and engaged the community.



### **Center for Prevention and Counseling – New Jersey**

The [Center for Prevention and Counseling's](#) vision is to develop the capacities of adults and children to sustain healthy lifestyles by providing services designed to foster addiction-free lives, emotional wellness, financial stability, and safe communities. For National Prevention Week 2014, the Center hosted a program called "Hidden in Plain Sight" for parents and concerned community members in Newton, New Jersey. This event displayed how easily alcohol and other drugs can be hidden in a teenager's bedroom, with 50 potential spots highlighted in the program. It also addressed signs and symptoms of alcohol and other drug use, as well as reported on drug trends in the local community. This was the Center's debut of the "Hidden in Plain Sight" event, which it continued to offer for several months after National Prevention Week. In addition to the event, the Center created newsletters that focused on each of the daily themes for National Prevention Week. They also created bags with prevention materials and disseminated them to everyone who came to the Center during National Prevention Week.

### Courage to Speak Foundation -- Connecticut

The [Courage to Speak Foundation](#) was founded in 1996, shortly after Ginger and Larry Katz lost their son, Ian, to a drug overdose. Since then, The Courage to Speak Foundation has been dedicated to fulfilling a promise Ginger made to Ian: she promised to do everything in her power to prevent this tragedy from happening to another family. Ginger advocates that the courage to speak—about fears, drug dependence, or any troubling issue—presents an ideal opportunity for healing. Ginger’s message is shared in this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KNKTBlyU6f0>.



During National Prevention Week 2014, Ginger presented her book, *Sunny’s Story*, at three schools in Connecticut. The book is a drug prevention story narrated through the eyes, ears, and mind of Sunny, the family beagle. It is about the ups and downs of life with his young master, beginning with their meeting at an animal shelter and ending with a futile effort to ward off disaster. *Sunny’s Story* helped students at each of the local schools talk openly about the dangers of drugs. As one student said, “I learned that you should always make right decisions, and that you should always have trusting friends.”



*A student reflects on what he learned after the Courage to Speak presentation at Brookside Elementary.*

**Aavidum – Pennsylvania**

[Aavidum](#), which started in 2004 after a local community lost a student to suicide, seeks to create a positive mental health environment in schools and communities by forming Aavidum chapters and encouraging youth to support each other’s mental and physical well-being. At the core of Aavidum is an educational philosophy that empowers students to take responsibility for making a positive difference (see Aavidum’s video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TyVe9uv7kyM>).

Aavidum wanted to create something new for its first observance of National Prevention Week. The students put their heads together and created “The Talk,” a peer-to-peer, student-to-student conversation about the top five things students need to know to “have each other’s backs” and support one another’s mental health. “The Talk” relied on students talking to small groups of their friends and peers about mental health. For this initiative, Aavidum created wristbands and “talk cards” so that information about suicide prevention, including the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, was easily visible and accessible.



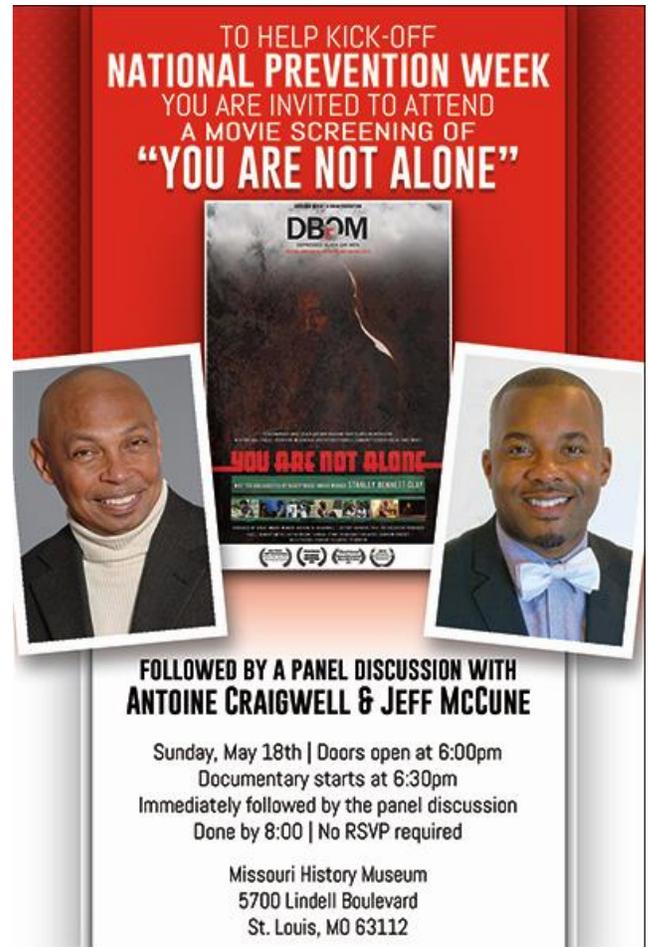
Aavidum used the momentum of National Prevention Week to launch phase one of "The Talk" as a comprehensive, multi-county awareness campaign that included 10 local high schools. By encouraging students to conceptualize and carry out a National Prevention Week event, Aavidum successfully launched a peer-driven awareness campaign that reached students in 10 Pennsylvania high schools that continues to grow in scope, breadth, and attention.



**Washington University School of Medicine – Missouri**

[Washington University School of Medicine](#) in St. Louis is committed to advancing human health throughout the world. They are leaders in patient care, research, and education, but also are committed to their local community. The School of Medicine participated in National Prevention Week 2014 by hosting the following events in St. Louis, Missouri:

- Sunday, May 18 – The School held a screening of the documentary, *You Are Not Alone*, and a panel discussion. *You Are Not Alone* focuses on depression among black gay men, and the panel discussed the link between depression and HIV risk taking.
- Tuesday, May 20 –The school held a discussion about marijuana use.
- Thursday, May 22 –New Media Peers and members of the youth advocacy committee planned an event around the prevention of suicide.
- Friday, May 23 –New Media Peers conducted a yoga session with a local youth group.



These events show how Washington University School of Medicine effectively took the National Prevention Week theme and adapted it for their local audience.

## The Center for Health Education & Wellness University of Tennessee – Tennessee

[The Center for Health Education & Wellness at the University of Tennessee](#) is dedicated to a community model that is embodied in the “Vols Help Vols” commitment—that students and staff are all Volunteers (the name of the school’s athletic teams), and that they look out for each other. The mission of the Center for Health Education & Wellness is to engage in prevention and intervention efforts to increase awareness, affect student decision making, and positively influence the University community.

Spring break is one of the most exciting times for students, but it can also present opportunities for harmful behaviors. Before Spring Break 2014, the Center wanted to educate students about preventing unhealthy behaviors in a new and engaging way.

Through the “Our Lives. Our Health. Our Future.” Safe Spring Break event, the Center was able to:

- Provide approximately 750 students with educational information aimed at changing and/or reinforcing existing knowledge and behavior regarding safe and healthy lifestyles. Topics that were covered included underage and binge drinking, tobacco use, prescription drug abuse, marijuana use, suicide, and mental health;
- Provide approximately 750 students with information about behavioral health resources that are available on campus and in the greater community; and
- Enlist approximately 500 students to follow the Center for Health Education & Wellness via Twitter, Facebook, and/or Instagram, allowing the Center to continue to engage with students regarding important health and wellness topics via social media, such as [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

The University of Tennessee adapted the timing of its National Prevention Week activities to fit the needs of campus life and scheduling. Because of the University’s Safe Spring Break event, important prevention messages and information reached hundreds of college students during a critical time when risk behaviors are more prevalent.



### **The Front Porch Coalition – South Dakota**

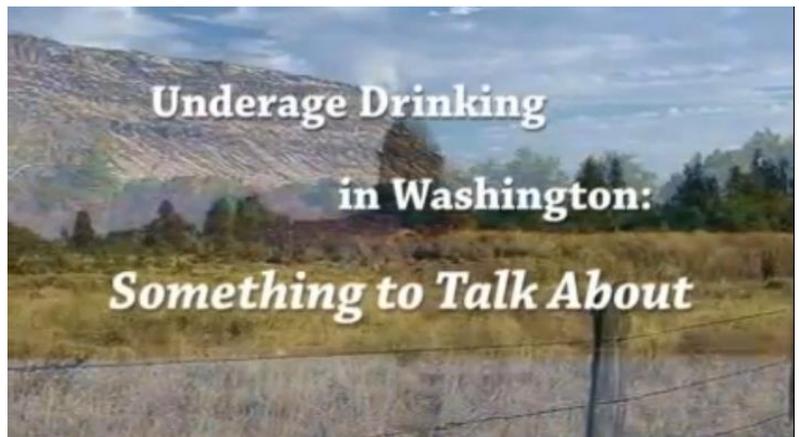
The [Front Porch Coalition](#), along with 11 non-profit mental health services providers, hosted an outdoor awareness event in Rapid City, South Dakota, about suicide and mental health. The Coalition’s work has been central to bringing the prevalence of suicide to the attention of the public, community leaders, and lawmakers. They also work to provide education about suicide prevention to every level of the community.



The third annual event in honor of National Prevention Week featured food, entertainment, and speakers, including community leaders and individuals living with mental illnesses. The primary purpose of the event was to raise awareness about prevention and reduce stigma of mental illness and suicide, while making people aware of the resources available in the community. Over 250 attendees took home the message of the day, “Help is out there.”

### **Community Safety Network of Toppenish – Washington**

The Community Safety Network (CSN) of Toppenish, Washington, is a community coalition dedicated to prevention and safety in the local area. For their third annual event in observance of National Prevention Week, CSN hosted a health fair in Toppenish that featured health and safety information about prescription drug abuse and marijuana use, as well as general health and safety information. The Network held a Community Walk/Run event with a bike rodeo and Zumba to promote awareness of these issues. The event also featured music by school choirs and bands. They wanted to provide an event where the whole family could participate, be active, and get information about health and safety issues. The fair was a success and doubled attendance from the previous year!



The state of Washington produced this video on underage drinking to make parents aware of the consequences of underage drinking and provide tips on how they can talk with their teens about alcohol—<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MwrkJso07Z0>.

### **Washington County: One Community – Maine**

[Washington County: One Community](#) (WC:OC) is a coalition in Maine that works collaboratively to ensure its residents receive the public health support they need to achieve healthy, substance-free, productive, and financially viable lives.

WC:OC sought to provide an alternative, family-friendly event that highlighted the benefits of living a substance-free life and promoted healthy habits. To accomplish this, they planned and hosted the first Annual 5K A La Mud Obstacle Challenge, which included a lot of mud, a lot of fun, and prevention education! WC:OC invited community members to register for this “race” as an individual or a team. They provided participants with backpacks filled with prevention materials after the race.

Later in the week, WC:OC also hosted two speakers from other local behavioral health organizations who spoke at Rotary Clubs about substance abuse and overdose prevention, as well as what the legalization of recreational marijuana use would mean for the community.

WC:OC used National Prevention Week to create a community-centered prevention activity that brought together families, coworkers, friends, businesses, and community members. WC:OC surpassed their original attendance goal by 250 percent! More than 350 attendees participated in the obstacle challenge in a fun, safe, and educational environment.



### **El Paso Advocates for Prevention Coalition – Texas**

The [El Paso Advocates for Prevention Coalition](#) (APC) focuses on mobilizing the community and raising awareness through prevention strategies that address drug and alcohol use/misuse and underage drinking. For National Prevention Week 2014, APC held a town hall meeting to prevent underage drinking among youth, with the theme, “Putting Unity in the Community.” The town hall featured guest speakers, activities for youth and families, and resources to raise awareness of the dangers of drinking and driving, especially during the upcoming graduation season. The purpose was to encourage safety during upcoming graduation and prom celebrations and to educate families on the dangers of underage drinking and driving.

Activities included a National Prevention Week "I Choose" Project poster workshop for children; informational booths from key partners in the community, including Mothers Against Drunk Driving, the Texas A&M University Colonials Program, Western Technical College, and El Paso Community College, and participation from high schools in the surrounding area. The Rio Vista Community Center donated their space to host the event. The event was full of family fun and learning for the whole community.

### **SOLACE– Ohio**

The mission of [SOLACE](#) is to promote public awareness about drug addiction and recovery through evidence-based prevention services for children and adolescents. In April of 2008, Jo Anna Krohn lost her son, Wesley, to an accidental gun shot while he was under the influence of alcohol and opiates. Jo Anna formed the group in 2010 and has since united families and individuals throughout her community.

For National Prevention Week 2014, SOLACE conducted a speaking presentation on the dangers of underage drinking and substance abuse. SOLACE delivered the presentation to three local high schools as well as a technical career center. Through these events, hundreds of local youth received important information that encouraged healthy decision-making.

### Waukesha County Drug Free Communities – Wisconsin

[Waukesha County Drug Free Communities](#) establishes and strengthens collaboration among organizations and governments to support community efforts to prevent and reduce substance use among youth. The coalition works to address the community factors that increase the risk of substance abuse and promote factors that reduce the risk of substance abuse.



For National Prevention Week 2014, Waukesha County Drug Free Communities hosted events covering all daily themes of National Prevention Week:

- A “hidden in plain sight” event in coordination with a local furniture store, which included models of teenagers’ rooms as a tool to educate parents about signs of substance use.
- A student PSA contest in which the winning PSA was shown at local movie theatres and on hospital video screens (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7M4y8BGKk5c>, see image above).
- An educational forum with local law enforcement on new drug trends in the region.
- An open house at the Addiction Resource Center.
- A “Life of an Athlete” conference with high school sports teams, focusing on effects of drug and alcohol on the body, athletic performance, and codes of conduct.
- “Project Sticker Shock” focusing on legal implications of underage drinking and involving 50-75 retailers. Volunteers placed “Parents who Host, Lose the Most” stickers on drinks and prom items.



Throughout the week, employers, local government, and schools participated in the National Prevention Week “I Choose” Project by creating posters with their inspirational “I Choose” messages. These activities received significant media coverage, which amplified the positive effects of their events. Above, Detective Chris Cole from the Waukesha County Metro Drug Unit provides information about drug trends in the community at an educational forum: <http://fox6now.com/2014/05/20/whats-next-monitoring-drug-trends-in-southeast-wisconsin/>.

### **Nome Community Coalition – Alaska**

A coalition of community organizations led by the Nome Juvenile Justice Program works together in Nome, Alaska, to raise awareness, form new partnerships, and bring the community together around behavioral health issues. Participants in National Prevention Week since 2013, the coalition hosted a series of events covering all of the observance's themes in 2014:

- Norton Sound Behavioral Health held informational activities geared toward the promotion of mental health.
- Norton Sound Injury Prevention hosted a bike rodeo to promote safety while riding bikes.
- Kawerak Native Organization hosted the “Walk for Life” in remembrance of those who have lost loved ones by suicide. In addition, they focused on suicide prevention through their peer helper program in local villages.
- The Nome Community Center focused on tobacco education through cessation and prevention programming.
- Nome Youth Facility worked with residents on drug and alcohol prevention, domestic violence prevention, and bullying through various psychoeducational groups. They also recorded radio spots for the local radio station.
- The community hosted a meal with 14 Alaska-Native elders and 14 youth, in which the elders shared how alcohol abuse has severely affected their lives and loved ones.

These events brought information about a range of behavioral health topics to the Nome community, while also highlighting important services available to residents.

### Cherokee Nation – Oklahoma

[Cherokee Nation Behavioral Health Services Prevention Programs](#) offers a variety of programs dedicated to keeping their community safe and healthy. Programming includes mental health services, substance abuse treatment, community-based programs promoting mental health, and programs designed to help prevent substance abuse and other risky behaviors.

For National Prevention Week 2014, Cherokee Nation partnered with

various agencies in the area to host a community block party called “Rock the Block.” The event featured music, free food, games, a bouncy house for kids, informational booths, a chalk art contest, face painting, and door prizes. Local law enforcement groups also came to the event and used goggles to simulate the influence of alcohol and teach the community about the harms of drinking and driving. The community gathering also featured motivational speakers who shared their personal stories about the importance of prevention. “Rock the Block” brought the community together and put information about behavioral health into the hands of families who attended the event. Check out this video about the Rock the Block event:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NAxtuaDtKNQ> Caption: Cherokee Nation hosts Rock the Block event

