



Youth Networking Newsletter

Youth Leadership Training: Public Speaking and Prevention

On May 8th, teens from the region participated in a Public Speaking training by members of Toastmasters. Many of these students go into the 8th grade to discuss healthy transitions to high school. Below is an excerpt from one of those meetings.

Hey guys! Good morning. Wow, it's pretty nice to be back in EMS for a change, I used to be a student here just 2 years ago. My name is Carl Akerman, and I am currently a sophomore at GHS. You know, I remember when I was in your seat listening to this, well I'll admit, I was hardly listening. My mind was on other things, my tennis match after school, the fact that I was so close to reaching another level on my Xbox game, and of course girls. So guys and girls, for just a couple of minutes please stop thinking about the girls and guys around you, and listen to what I have to say, because as I found out in my freshman year, I should have definitely listened to what the students had to say to me 2 years ago. So, you guys are off to GHS, how does it feel? Excit-

ing. In just a couple of months you will be going to what can be considered a small city. GHS boasts almost 3,000 students, of all different races, backgrounds, cultures and personalities. It is an enormous school, with LOTS more freedom. However, this freedom, comes with great responsibility. Now you have heard this before, but please take it to heart. When you come into GHS, you enter the real world. Your actions in GHS will impact how you live your life, how you think about life, and how you act on life. This is not mean to scare you, but you will be rapidly exposed to everything from alcohol to drugs to crime to sex. Make smart choices. Mommy and Daddy are not always going to be there to hold your hand. This is not to say that GHS is an unsafe and scary place, but it is as close to the real deal as it gets. So go around explore, but understand that stupid choices will impact you far more severely than they have in the past. Another piece of advice I would like to give, is about grades and your social life.

Like I said, your actions start to matter in GHS. From the first day you step into that school, you are building to your desired future. It is a time, when grades and how hard you try will start to count. In about 1, 460 days, you will be leaving GHS. That is 1,460. You can hardly buy a decent car with that number. Understand that you must start prioritizing your school work more and more. There will be more times where you tell your friends that you have to study for an important test or presentation. Learn to balance social life and your academic life. There is truly nothing harder. I still struggle with it today. But it is so important that you start thinking and using your brain. So if you take anything away from this assembly, besides a shortened day, remember that one, you must be responsible and two, try your absolute best in what you do in school. So, have fun in GHS, its an awesome place, but keep in the back of your mind my two pieces of advice.

*Carl Akerman
Sophomore Greenwich High*

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Special points of interest:

- ◆ The **CoolSpot.gov** The young teen's place for info on alcohol and resisting peer pressure.
- ◆ Remember, you're the party not the alcohol: **Party Sober!**
- ◆ **Life at its best** doesn't shame, blame or lecture. It supports youth who choose not to drink and assures them that they are making the right choice. Visit www.addnothing.org to learn more.

Faces Working in the Region



Darien Grim Reaper Day: "Ghosts" with messages haunt DHS (as printed in the Darien Times, Thurs., May 27th)

When students walked out of the high school's main entrance Mon. afternoon, 52 of their peers stood in a line, wearing white T-shirts and holding red roses.

Each student in the line represented a "ghost", someone who had died due to an alcohol-related accident. The ghosts were silent and had times written on their shirts, indicating when they died.

The demonstration was part of Grim Reaper Day (GRD), organized by the Darien chapter of SADD, Students Against Destructive Decisions, to raise awareness of drunk driving among Darien teens.

During the school day, at appointed times, leaders of the SADD club took the participants from their classes to represent the "disappearance" of teens who had died in drunk driving accidents.

SADD is a nationwide organization that

SADD's mission:
To provide students with the best prevention tools possible to deal with the issues of underage drinking, other drug use, impaired driving and other destructive decisions.

For more information about SADD, please visit their website at www.sadd.org

seeks to help students make positive decisions. SADD raises awareness of and discourages such activities as teen drinking, drunk driving, texting while driving, drug use, unprotected sex and other destructive decisions.

Janice Marzano, program director of the Depot teen center, revitalized SADD in Darien when she moved its base from the high school to the Depot. Senior Kenny Weiss was elected to be the club's president this year.

For the past two years, SADD has placed wrecked cars in the school courtyard before prom to remind teens not to drink and drive. It also held an event with the purpose of revealing to teens the more unsavory ingredients in cigarettes.

Jr Adrianna Baker pitched the GRD idea after hearing of similar events hosted two years ago at Brien McMahon High.

Jr Kristi Carey took charge of organizing the day early in Dec.

SADD officers were pleased with GRD, which Marzano called "excellent".

Kenny said it served as a "smack in the face" to Darien students, a wake-up call reminding them of the dangers of drunk driving. Kenny praised Kristi and all SADD members for their hard work organizing the event. "Overall, it went great" Kristi said.

The solemn line of ghosts was difficult to ignore. Students peered out windows to see what was happening. Cars slowed in the DHS roadway to get a better look. Darien Police officer T. Court Isaac, present at the event, described it as "fantastic"

"All we hope is to create an impact," Isaac said, "and maybe save a life."

"GRD was successful," Adrianna said, "because it involved students talking to students about the important decisions that affect their lives. "This", she said, "is what SADD is about. We definitely want this to continue, maybe every two to three years.

Greenwich

While the world around us continually inundates us with negative influences such as crime, eating disorders, drugs, and other such activities, we must strive to keep a positive influence alive. Working to achieve this goal, The Outreach Club of Greenwich High School spreads awareness about the harms of drinking and drugs, and focuses on keeping teens safe. As part of our strategy we host a Youth Leadership Lunch in which we bring a guest speaker who talks about his/her experience with any of these issues. This year we were fortunate to have a young woman who spoke about the tragedy of losing her parents and her grandmother due to a drunk driving accident. As a club, we hope that impacting stories will inspire teens to take measures to prevent from being caught in a similar situation.

Additionally, the club travels to all three middle schools in Greenwich to share advice on how to positively transition into the high school. Awaiting them is a caring staff, excellent resources, and great opportunities for learning. However, they are also heading towards a

world of exposure. A time in which students will have to make choices that can have substantial consequences. As a club attempting to keep teens in control of their lives, we encourage the entering freshman to get involved in a positive way. To join clubs, tryout for sports, participate in the band, and other activities to help them feel part of the school. If a student feels part of the Greenwich High School "community" then they will be more likely to reach out for help if needed. They will be more likely to feel included, and thus less likely to put themselves in situations that could jeopardize their futures.

With education comes awareness. For this reason Outreach takes part in alcohol awareness week every year. We bring in doctors to teach adolescences about the effects that alcohol and drugs has on their bodies. We bring members of the GEMS staff to share what happens when a child gets placed in an ambulance and what occurs when they get to the hospital. We set up a mock car crash to vividly illus-



trate the impacts of a crash. Once awareness is reached, teens will have the means to keep themselves safe.

*~Eugenia Neri, Junior
Greenwich High School*

Other Successful Youth Events & Projects in Greenwich Include :

- Wiffle Ball Tournament with the Police greenwichwiffle.com to sign up.
- Greenwich Teen Connections Directory at www.unitedway-greenwich.com
- Red Cross Youth Council and the Safe Rides Program. Contact Jessica Chapman at ChapmanJess@usa.redcross.org

For more information, please contact Jenny Byxbee, Greenwich Youth Services Coordinator. Email: jbyxbee@unitedway-greenwich.com

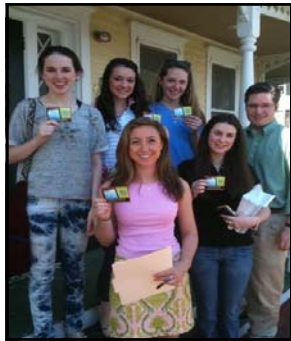
New Canaan

Students from [St. Luke's School](#) hit the streets of New Canaan April 7 as part of their school wide Service Day to promote April as Alcohol Awareness Month.

The students walked door to door across the downtown area asking many local business owners, liquor stores and restaurants to

handout fliers about the dangers of underage drinking.

Students also placed stickers on shopping bags,



The younger you are when you start drinking, the greater your chance of becoming addicted to alcohol at some point in your life. More than 4 in 10 people who begin drinking before age 15 eventually become alcoholics. Source: NIAAA: Underage Drinking: A Major Public

boxes and takeout containers at many stores reminding parents and youth that underage drinking parties are both illegal and dangerous. The stickers also promote a statewide effort to educate parents about the role they play in keeping kids sub-



stance free; go to www.SettheRulesCT.org for more information.

St. Luke's advisor for this activity Julia Gabrielle said, "All of the stores were very supportive. This was something that everyone could get behind to keep kids safe."

They partnered with the Lower Fairfield County Regional Action Council, [New Canaan Youth Services](#) and [New Canaan CARES](#) in this effort.

In 2005, 85.6% of youths ages 12-17 reported that they strongly or somewhat disapprove of peers having one or two drinks of an alcoholic beverage nearly every day. 2005 SAMHSA National Survey on Drug Use and Health

Stamford

Growing up I was always known as the follower and no one ever seemed to see the leadership within in me. No one believed that I was capable of being my own person; no one believed that I had the potential to make a difference yet alone speak for myself. As a child my sister was my idol, she was my greatest inspiration. I remember following her every step as she bravely walked through the stages of her life. She was a courageous motivated leader with the desire to help the helpless and give hope to the hopeless. She was the perfect example of what everyone failed to seek in me. The road she walked was the very road that I desperately followed. We came to an intersection when she began skipping school, it was if she crossed the road and I was left alone. Left alone forced to make a decision, a decision that would affect me for the rest of my life. I didn't hesitate to make my first step because I knew with out a doubt that I didn't want

to be another statistic.

I walked out of class one morning, Ms. Diaz my previous guidance councilor handed me a paper and recommended that I attended a Leadership training meeting in Darien. At the meeting I didn't expect to get as much out of it as I did. We started off with an ice breaker that instantly took away all of my nerves. The next activity was getting to know someone else by writing facts about them and presenting it. We all thought it was a simple task but what it really did was test our speaking abilities. Constructive criticism was given to each presenter and we got another chance to test our selves after we learned about substance abuse. Personal stories were shared regarding alcohol and drugs then we partnered up and wrote our own article as if we were presenting to students in junior high school. It was amazing to see how different our performance was after we got the speech lesson. At the



end of the day, I was eager for more. I wanted to learn more, learn how to speak and help others by doing so. When I heard about Power Camp, I was relieved because I knew that this was the beginning the road that I was searching for. Starting a SADD chapter in my school is one of the many things that I look forward to during my junior year. I want to be an example for the students in my school who are faced with great temptation, I want to be inspiring as well as the leader that is built in me.

*~Shantel Hyman
Sophomore, AITE*

MADD Power Camp 2010

Lights, Camera, Take Action...

July 13-16, 2010 at Southern Connecticut State University MADD Connecticut will be holding it's annual Youth Leadership Power Camp. Power Camp is a 4 day 3 night summer camp for teens and their advisors focused on underage drinking prevention. Power Camp gives you the opportunity to meet peers from around the state that are ready for a change and who want to create an environment that is focused on the prevention of under-

age drinking. While at camp, you will gain the knowledge and skills necessary to initiate change in your home community by developing a project plan for the following school year.

We hope you can all join us and take part in this great experience. Please contact Lauren Iannucci, Youth Coordinator at MADD and Camp Director at 203-234-6521 or by email at lauren.iannucci@madd.org any questions. I look forward to seeing you all at Power Camp 2010!

Regional Youth Network
Greenwich, Darien, Stamford, New Canaan

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Regional Action Council**

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**Collaborating to Support
Healthy Communities**

For submissions or questions,
please contact Amy Badini at
abadini@optonline.net



Lower Fairfield County Regional Action Council (LFCRAC) is a collaborative of dedicated representatives from a variety of sectors in lower Fairfield County. Our mission is to reduce substance misuse from youth through seniors and including persons living with mental illness in Greenwich, Stamford, Darien and New Canaan.

This publication is designed to connect youth in our region who are interested in preventing substance misuse in their communities.

New Canaan

Greenwich

Darien

Youth Training

New Canaan Police Department

Alcohol Compliance Checks
New Canaan Police Officers working with underage volunteers conducted alcohol compliance checks on Fri., May 28 to identify stores that would make unlawful sales of alcohol to minors.

Of the 7 stores tested, none of them sold alcohol to the volunteer minor. There was 100% compliance from all 7 establishments. These results will be reported to the Dept. of Consumer Protection, Liquor Control Division

Compliance checks are undercover, local enforcement operations designed to identify businesses that sell alcoholic beverages to minors. Following strict protocol, the goal is not to trick or entice establishments into selling to minors, but rather to bring businesses into compliance with state law.

Police Officers and trained youth volunteers work together on each compliance check. In a typical check, a volunteer youth enters a store and tries to buy beer. If asked for proof of age, the youth volunteer will provide his or her true age and valid CT driver's license or will tell the store employee they do not have their identification with them. If a sale is made, the business fails the test.

Youth involved in the undercover operations are typically between 16 and 19 years of age.

In the spring of 2006, I was a junior in high school enrolled in GHS's Student Leadership class. Jenny Byxbee (Greenwich Youth Services Coordinator) stood in our classroom approaching us differently than any adult had before. What did we think about the entertainment in town? How did we feel about the stereotype of teenagers? From there, two friends and I approached Jenny about finding a solution and the next thing I know, I'm back working with Jenny every summer with a whirl wind of programs that we had piloted that very spring of 2006 as the Jr. United Way (JUW). We were created in conjunction with the Greenwich United Way to help connect local youth to local services and bridge the gaps between the high schools in town. The JUW also found success creating partnerships between students with the police and other youth agencies in town. In our 6th year running, we have students from GHS, Brunswick, GA and Sacred Heart that meet monthly to create community service projects and alternative social events for the teenagers in town. We created and edit yearly the "Greenwich Teen Connections" directory, which students can use as resource for everyday help as to where the 24-hour gas stations are located in town to emergencies and what your options are to obtain safety.

~Erin Montague, GHS Class of 2007

The Depot teen center of Darien is proud to announce it's National Chapter of SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) took home 3rd place; winning a \$2,000 prize, out of 80 submissions in the DMV contest "From the Driver's Seat to the Director's Chair", which challenged students to create a public service video announcement on the dangers of distracted driving among teens and had financial support from the Travelers Insurance Company. The DHS students and their parents, along with the other top 10 teams were invited to attend a special awards ceremony and treated to a special tour at the Traveler's Claim University, a conference and training center in Windsor, CT. The following Monday, the students were on a 5 am train on their way to the CBS Morning Show where they were interviewed on National TV by David Price.

Depot SADD currently has 29 active members. Originally, the mission of the SADD chapter was to help young people say "No" to drinking and driving. Today, the mission has expanded. Students have told us that positive peer pressure, role modeling and environmental strategies can prevent other destructive decisions and set a healthier, safer course for their lives. suicide.

Toastmasters Public Speaking

Public speaking, while being one of the most difficult things to do, is also an important skill for succeeding in all aspects of your life. The presentation from the Toastmasters was a great experience that not only taught me the little tips for public speaking, but it provided a great setting in which to practice them. One of the most important things that I learned about public speaking was that there is no difference between talking with a friend one on one and giving a presentation in front of a group. When giving a presentation, by focusing on a familiar or friendly face instead of focusing on the group as a whole, you are less likely to feel overwhelmed or nervous. Despite this fact, many people still have trouble speaking because of their lack of experience. Each person has his/her own way to remain calm while public speaking, and the only way to find that is through practice. The Toastmasters, being the experts of public speaking, provide activities to practice speaking in a comfortable environment that also allow you to figure out your own personal tricks to public speaking.

~Gibby McHugh