

CMCHC

Bulletin Board

central massachusetts center for

healthycommunities

A program of LUK, Inc
 Funded by the MA Dept. of Public Health

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Letter from the Director

Spring/Summer 2005

Dear Community Partners,

One of my great joys as a New Englander is the coming of springtime; the days lengthen, the temperatures rise, and the buds and flowers begin to pop out all over. How similar the cycles of nature are to the work we do to build healthier communities. Many of the same tried and true principles apply: the importance of good preparation, timing and providing the right environment. Plants will only thrive when given fertile soil, enough light or shade and the right amount of water and fertilizer. In communities we hope to create sustainable environments where the seeds of social justice, equality and civic participation support all our diverse residents and protect the most vulnerable among us. Often we struggle with trying to move faster or push our communities ahead before they are ready to take on full and active engagement. The initial work of preparing a com-

munity for change involves bringing together diverse sectors, engaging people in the process of listening and communicating their concerns and hopes and identifying together the key actions necessary to make real change. This can be time consuming and challenging. If we rush through this critical part we end up with community initiatives that lack widespread community investment and sustainability. During the delicate development of new seedlings much is required. Managing pests (rabbits, insects, overzealous weeders) and assuring conditions support growth help to assure a strong plant that will, in time, begin to offer gifts of it's own. In the beginning of healthy communities work, care is also necessary. Attending to coalition members' strengths and appreciating all efforts is critical to keeping people involved and evolving. Statements like "this community will never change" and "someone d-

ready tried that and it didn't work" can threaten our nascent initiatives. We must build a fence of realistic hope and determination around our coordinated efforts to build healthy communities for all. Similar to seedlings, if we can nurture our initiatives through initial development soon we will find a healthier community growing to serve and support each of us. Happy Spring! May we all be successful in planning and building healthier communities in Central MA.

-Dodi Swope

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What is New with STEP

by Courtney Bisceglia

As Coordinator of the STEP Program, I have been able to visit different schools and do OUI (Operating Under the Influence) workshops for the students. With prom season here now is a good time to reach the students. I start off with an icebreaker that gets the students talking about underage drinking, alcohol ads, and how they feel drinking gets people into trouble. Then we talk about statistics on drinking and driving; for example 315 people die each week due to an alcohol related traffic crash. We also talk about why drunk driving is a violent crime, and in fact, drunk driving is the nations most frequently committed violent crime. Then we discuss what alcohol does to the body and how it affects driving. At this time I bring out the drunk-goggles for the students to try. It gives them an idea of how much alcohol tampers with their ability to see properly, and why they shouldn't get behind the wheel if they have consumed alcohol.



Next we talk about the dangers of alcohol and what kind of damage alcohol can do to their body. Lastly we talk about seat belts. I explain that seat belts save lives, and show them the proper way to wear their seat belts. I don't lecture, instead I engage the students in conversation and participation and I am truly interested in their responses. At the conclusion of each workshop I have them do an evaluation of the program. My favorite comment from all the workshops I have done is: "Thank you for coming and talking to us. You made me think twice about drinking and driving." If I am able to reach one student I believe it is worth it. For more information on workshops for your school, contact me at:

cbisceglia@cmchc.org, or (508) 438-0515

New Initiatives Germinating by José Rivera

Depending on what day (or even at what time) you're reading this, the outside world may look and feel like Winter, Spring or Summer. So I'll just say: Happy Season! Regardless of what the weatherperson says, there are several wonderful endeavors burgeoning that are worth celebrating:

- In North County, LUK's Kenton Jacobs is hard at work with Fitchburg and Gardner community action teams, FCAT and GCAT, respectively. These teams are bringing together school personnel, police officers, parents, leaders in the faith community, and youth who are passionate about and fully committed to the reduction of underage drinking. They are following Communities Mobilizing for Change on Alcohol (CMCA), a science-based model that reduces underage drinking by reducing the youth's access to alcohol.
- Clinton community members have been meeting to develop underage substance abuse prevention interventions for their area. At our last meeting, the notion emerged to bring together the youth doing community service as part of their probation and those doing it as part of their Honor Society membership. Fiona Bycroft-Ryder, Probation Officer, and Gail Schwartz, Clinton High School Social Worker are putting together a program where everyone will benefit from multiple mentoring opportunities. The culmination of this endeavor will be a forum where attention will be drawn to the youths' strengths, what they've learned, and their contributions to their community.
- Worcester is reaping the benefits of collaboration as well. A number of the many youth service providers are implementing All Stars, a science-based substance and violence prevention curriculum for youth. In true community spirit, they have been coming together to share challenges, successes, and opportunities. This collaboration has evolved into the concept of an All Stars city-wide intervention that will offer Worcester youth consistent reinforcement of messages that have been proven to be effective in delaying, and oftentimes preventing the onset of noxious choices.

Long story short: A lot of exciting initiatives are germinating with the help of community members.

The FCAT's activities were recently highlighted on May, 8th in the Worcester Telegram & Gazette article by Christina Sanchez entitled "Underaged go carding outside store."

Common Pathways
by Clara Savage



Hola amigos! I am Clara Parra Savage, the new Common Pathways Coordinator. The role that was brilliantly played by our Director, Dodi Swope. As you know, Common Pathways is a healthy community initiative in Greater Worcester that began with the merger of the CHNA 8, the Community Wellness Coalition and a community benchmarking effort called Pathways to Progress. Common Pathways is a process of engaging a broad and inclusive representation of Worcester's organizations and residents to envision and then act on bringing about an improved quality of life

Center's Website Blossoms
by Cassandra Andersen

My name is Cassandra Andersen and I joined the CMCHC family in March as the new Youth and Media Specialist. I have lived and worked in Worcester my whole life and find the challenge of extending my contacts and work into the greater Worcester area exciting. I will continue to maintain and hope to expand the positive youth development practices Laura achieved in our community. I also enjoy my new position because I can combine my experience with youth and my technical abilities. I graduated from WPI in 2002 and was employed by the EcoTarium before joining CMCHC.

I am happy to announce the completion of an updated CMCHC website. If you have visited our website before, you will notice that the color scheme has

changed to match our logo. It contains lots of new resources for the community. You can now download our brochures, newsletters, and some of our publications. There are multiple pages with links to other informative websites concerning substance abuse, youth development, healthy communities, and resources available in Spanish. It also has new pages with information about the STEP program and Common Pathways. And it includes expanded staff profiles and more complete directions to our office. Please visit our

the summer and fall. We will be synthesizing this information to support a community wide priority setting in the winter of 2005-2006. Worcester is fortunate to have a group of generous and committed leaders and residents from different walks of life who come together to make Common Pathways a reality.

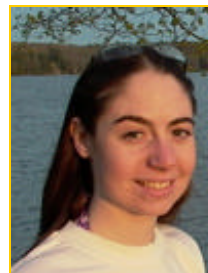
You are invited to join us by contacting me at **(508) 438-0515**, or send an e-mail to **csavage@cmchc.org**

[The New "Spring Line" of the CMCHC Resource Center](#)

Videos Purchased: "The New Nutrition Pyramid", "Eating for Optimal Health", "Eating Disorders: The Inner Voice", "Picture Perfect: Chasing the Impossible Goal", "Super Size Me" and the entire 14 video set of "Degraasi High." Also "Killing Us Softly 3", "Reviving Ophelia", and "Spin the Bottle".

Books Purchased: "How to Hold a Youth Summit Planning Guide", "Empowerment Evaluation Principles in Practice" and "Smashed: Story of a Drunken Girlhood".

refurbished website at **www.cmchc.org**. If there is anything you think is missing from our website you can email me at **candersen@cmchc.org** and I will try to add all relevant resources to our page so that it continues to be a site for the whole community.





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Address Update:

In order to serve you better we would like to keep our list serve/database up to date.

Please e-mail:

dswope@cmchc.org or

fax 508-438-0516 with your current contact info. **Thank You!**

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Upcoming Trainings:

5th Annual New England School of Prevention Studies July 25-28th at Rodger Williams College in Bristol, R.I. Visit <http://www.neias.org/PSS/SATPvCATcover05x.html> or call: 207-621-2549 for more information

The MA Forum for Healthy Communities III Begins in September 2005. Offers an ongoing training series for community based teams to develop and support healthier communities initiatives. Contact Peter Lee or Susan Downey at: 617-451-0049 or visit www.tmfnet.org and look for the MA Partnership for more information.

New Adventures for Laura Martinez!

Many of our community partners have enjoyed hearing about Laura's adventures through Southeast Asia and wonder what she's up to now. Laura has landed in San Francisco and has taken a great position with Hispanics in Philanthropy (HIP) (www.hiponline.org). HIP's mission is "to strengthen Latino communities by increasing resources for the Latino and Latin American civil sector and by increasing Latino participation and leadership throughout the field of philanthropy." We wish Laura all the very best in her new adventure!