

Read on for some highlights between February 1, 2013 and July 31, 2013!



Coalition members celebrate at the May 10th ribbon cutting. Left to right: Mark McLaughlin, Merrimack School District, Officer Tom Prentice, Merrimack Police Department, Mack the Moose, Merrimack Safeguard, Betsy Houde, The Youth Council and Donna Arias, NH Interscholastic Athletic Association holding baby Abby.

Prescription Drop Box – Convenience without Questions

Narrative taken from Merrimack Journal, May 17, 2013, Loretta Jackson, writer

Representatives of the Merrimack Police Department unveiled its Pharmaceutical Drop Box in the lobby of the police station May 10. The drop box resembles a postal mailbox, about 4 feet tall. It will be accessible at all times.

Police Chief Mark Doyle welcomed a dozen residents, including fellow officers, some town officials and representatives of various community groups to the debut of the new drop box.

Officer Tom Prentice, a 12-year veteran of the Merrimack Police Department, is the school resource officer at Merrimack Middle School. He gave details about the new, white, metal drop box.

He said the pharmaceutical drop-off box will be a “24-hour convenience” to residents wishing to dispose of prescription drugs and other substances.

Legal drugs and illegal drugs are welcomed. However, needles, syringes and lancets are not permitted.

Other acceptable items include over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, pet medications, creams, ointments and liquid medicines in original containers. Sealed plastic bags are recommended for surrender of loose pills and street drugs.

“Now, people can drop off drugs, 24/7,” Prentice said. “Walk in and drop them in the box. It is totally anonymous, no questions asked.”

Meds Collected During April Take Back Equivalent to Patriots Linebacker

Thanks to an ongoing partnership between Merrimack Police and the NH Drug Enforcement Administration, our April Drug Take Back netted 242 pounds, which is the same size as a 2013 Patriots linebacker!

Our largest amount collected to date, this brings our grand total to 1,045 pounds of unneeded drugs collected during Take Back events since 2010.

With the addition of the new Prescription Drop Box, Police anticipate continuing to host Take Back events in an effort to get the word out about the safety risks of storing unneeded medications at home.

O.P.’s Role Deemed Effective After June Evaluation

For the last several months, we’ve been trying to answer the question, “How do you measure effectiveness of a strategy that is designed to prevent something else?”



With the help of evaluator Sarah Short from NH’s Community Health Institute, we conducted a 2-week time study and a key leader focus group in June in search of answers.

In addition to providing education to students – in classrooms, small groups and individually – around preventing bullying, alcohol and other drug use, internet safety and so forth, Officer Tom Prentice, Middle School Resource Officer, also conducted an average of 4.5 conferences per day. These conferences included meeting with 49 students and 16 parents to provide support, mediation and to link them with community resources.

According to focus group participants, comprised of faculty and staff at the school, “The SRO is highly visible in the school community and has a calming and deterrent effect on the school environment.”



July 4th Float Introduces Prescription Drop Box

Thanks to a creative team led by Merrimack Parent Laura Ploss, this year's parade theme featured a cardboard version of Merrimack's new Prescription Drop Box. Mack the Moose, accompanied by a flatbed loaded with local youth, showcased the 24/7 way people can dispose of unneeded medications and also passed out refrigerator magnets informing people about 2-1-1 access. This service, accessible by dialing 211 or through www.211nh.org connects residents with community resources for a wide variety of human service needs.



Local Limo Companies Keep Prom Safe

Merrimack Safeguard is pleased to congratulate the local limo companies that helped to keep our young people safe during prom. According to one of our parent members, she received a two-page contract indicating the limo company would contact the police if there was any drinking or drug use. In addition, no water bottles or soda were allowed to be brought into the limo and the itinerary was mapped out in advance, with parental knowledge, so the limo couldn't be used to go to a party that wasn't authorized. Students also had to sign a consent form agreeing to the rules.

What a great way to foster communication between family members and to make sure your children get home safely!

As your young people are starting to get excited about prom this school year, please do your research to ensure they are in good hands when hiring a limousine.

Areas where we need specific expertise...

The coalition identified our greatest need as Program Sustainability, now that we ending year 4 of a five year grant. In addition, several areas were cited as benefitting from additional training or technical assistance:

Assistance is needed in these areas: How can you help?

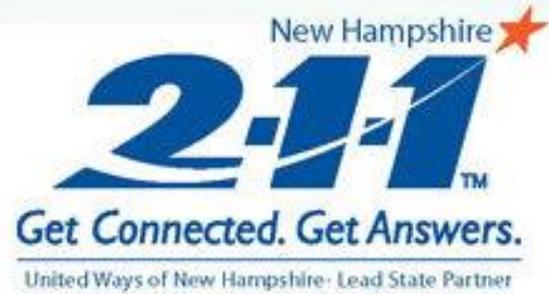
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coalition and partnership development • Community needs and resource assessment • Leadership development • Cultural competency | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal and outcome development and assessment • Developing substance abuse prevention initiatives • Advocacy and policy development |
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Thank you for all that you do to help Merrimack youth and families make positive choices!

For more information, please contact

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Survey Results Indicate Retailors Care

However, Parent Communication Slipping

A total of 570 Middle School students completed our annual National Outcome Measures Survey to identify areas where we are improving and those we need to work on in the coming year. The good news is that scores increased from the last two years for the question, "How difficult do you think it is for underage drinkers in our community to obtain alcohol from restaurants, liquor stores and grocery stores?" Scores for each of those distinct categories increased an average of 1.1%, with grocery stores the greatest increase of 1.83%. At the same time, for local bars, the perception of difficulty obtaining alcohol dropped from 91.5% last year to 90.9% this year and convenience stores dropped from 92.3% to 91.8%.

These same youth responded that only 40.2% of their parents have talked with them about alcohol use within the past 12 months, which reflects a drop of 20.08% from 2010, when 50.3% of youth answered the same question. It's never too early to start having age appropriate conversations with your child. Also, be sure to get to know your children's friends and their parents! Contact us for details or check out www.BeyondInfluence.org.



Thank you St. James UMC

You're a great community partner!

For several years, St. James United Methodist Church has been hosting our monthly meetings in their spacious gathering room. Please consider joining us – **typically on the first Thursday of every month** – from 6:00pm to 7:30pm. All are welcome. (Daniel Webster Highway, Exit 12, across from the Homestead.)