

MAYOR JOSEPH A. CURTATONE,  
SOMERVILLE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT &  
SOMERVILLE OFFICE OF PREVENTION  
PRESENT

# GOT PREVENTION

December 2016

## Volunteers Needed

In April 2017 the Student Health Survey will be administered to all the Middle School students in Somerville from grades 6-8. We need at least 20 volunteers to administer the survey. Volunteering will be a great opportunity to meet new people and see the great schools of Somerville.

Everyone is welcome to volunteer. The more the merrier. It will take about 2 hours out of the morning to administer since we are doing all the grammar schools.

If you would like to assist the City of Somerville in administration of the Student Health Survey in April 2017 please contact

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*Happy  
Holidays*

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SOMERVILLE



## HARMS OF MARIJUANA

Data from the most recent Surgeon General Report on Alcohol, Drugs, and Health on Marijuana Use.

**Long-term health consequences of marijuana use:** mental health problems, chronic cough, frequent respiratory infections, increased risk for cancer, and suppression of the immune system.

**Other serious health-related issues stemming from marijuana use:** breathing problems; increased risk of cancer of the head, neck, lungs, and respiratory tract; possible loss of IQ points when repeated use begins in adolescence; babies born with problems with attention, memory, and problem solving (when used by the mother during pregnancy).

**Increased risk for traffic accidents:** Marijuana use "is linked to a roughly two-fold increase in accident risk."

**Increased risk of schizophrenia:** "[T]he use of marijuana, particularly marijuana with a high THC content, might contribute to schizophrenia in those who have specific genetic vulnerabilities.

**Increased risk of addiction from high-potency marijuana available in legalized states:** "[C]oncern is growing that increasing use of marijuana extracts with extremely high amounts of THC could lead to higher rates of addiction among marijuana users."

**Permanent Loss of IQ:** "One study followed people from age 13 to 38 and found that those who began marijuana use in their teens and developed a persistent cannabis use disorder had up to an eight point drop in IQ, even if they stopped using in adulthood."

If you would like more information around the entire surgeon report on Alcohol, Drugs, and Health please go to:

<https://addiction.surgeongeneral.gov/surgeon-generals-report.pdf>



## WHY SHOULD WE CARE ABOUT PREVENTION?

### Information from the most current Surgeon General Report on Alcohol, Drugs, and Health

Beginning in the twentieth century, the major illnesses leading to death shifted from infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis and infections in newborns, to noncommunicable diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes, and cancer. This shift was a result of effective public health interventions, such as improved sanitation and immunizations that reduced the rate of infectious diseases, as well as increased rates of unhealthy behaviors and lifestyles, including smoking, poor nutrition, physical inactivity, and substance misuse. In fact, behavioral health problems such as substance use, violence, risky driving, mental health problems, and risky sexual activity are now the leading causes of death for those aged 15 to 24.

To effectively prevent substance misuse, it is important to understand the nature of the problem, including age of onset. Although people generally start using and misusing substances during adolescence, misuse can begin at any age and can continue to be a problem across the lifespan.

It is important to note that the vast majority of people in the United States who misuse substances do not have substance use disorders. Nonetheless, substance misuse can put individual users and others around them at risk of harm, whether or not they have a disorder. Also, early initiation, substance misuse, and substance use disorders are associated with a variety of negative consequences, including deteriorating relationships, poor school performance, loss of employment, diminished mental health, and increases in sickness and death (e.g., motor vehicle crashes, poisoning, violence, or accidents).<sup>15-17</sup> It is therefore critical to prevent the full spectrum of substance misuse problems in addition to treating those with substance use disorders.

Preventing or reducing early substance use initiation, substance misuse, and the harms related to misuse requires the implementation of effective programs and policies that address substance misuse across the lifespan. The prevention science reviewed in this chapter demonstrates that effective prevention programs and policies exist, and if implemented well, they can markedly reduce substance misuse and related threats to the health of the population. However, evidence-based programs and policies are underutilized. For example, studies have found that many schools and communities are using prevention programs and strategies that have little or no evidence of effectiveness. In fact, underuse of effective prevention programs and policies was the impetus for the creation of Communities That Care (CTC), a prevention service delivery system that promotes healthy youth development, improves youth outcomes, and reduces substance use and other problem behavior.

At the policy level, research shows that higher alcohol prices reduce alcohol misuse and related harms (e.g., alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes), and taxes are one component of price. As of January 1, 2015, 42 states had a beer excise tax of less than \$0.50 per gallon, while only four states had an excise tax more than \$1.00 per gallon.

**For more information please go to:**

**<https://addiction.surgeongeneral.gov/chapter-3-prevention.pdf>**



## SOMERVILLE POSITIVE FORCES UPDATE

In October, SPFJr. and SPF100 Alumni Youth Leaders worked with Lovelee Heller-Bottari and Jamie Erdheim to work on hiring new leaders for their programs. In addition SPF100 continued their collaboration with the *MA Gambling Prevention Commission* and worked to support community education for marijuana prevention.

Anmol, Nephtalie, Lily, and Jasmine worked with SCAP staff to review 35 SPF100 and 19 SPFJr. program applications. Next, they planned and set-up interviews all while developing professional development and interviewing skills. The opportunity to sit on the other side of the table during the interview and gain a unique insight will serve them well in the future. Ultimately, they conducted 1 group interview with 28 SPFJr candidates and 16 individual interviews with SPF100 candidates. They really did an amazing job sharing program information and identify new leaders. In the end, they hired 24 new SPF youth and we could not be more proud of their efforts.

### ***Congratulations to our 2016-2017 SPFJr. Team:***

Aeryn Player, Ben Buchheit, Deha Ahmed, Ezra Brody, Isabella Milanowski, Jaderson Flores, Jasmine Fridman, Lilian Switkes, Tatiana Pineda, Lucca Alcarazvalens, and Theresa Romano

Also this month, SPFJr. held their program orientation with 10 new and 1 alumni SPFJr. youth leaders. SPF leaders learned about prevention projects and program expectations. They met with library staff, Ron Castile, to hear about library resources and received a tour of the Teen Room space. Finally, they engaged in interactives to form caring relationship between their peers and adults, and worked on team building skills.

SPF100 alumni leaders met with three *MA Gambling Prevention Commission* staff to finalize their substance abuse and gambling prevention campaign, *Odd Odds*. This tabling campaign engaged about 100 SHS students during lunches using two interactive games to teach students about the odds of winning in gambling games. They also use their photo voice exhibit to educate peers around ATOD/compulsive gambling risk and protective factors and distributed 20 financial planning resources for graduating students. Students really enjoyed the campaign, one students exclaimed, “nobody teaches us this stuff, this is great!”

**For help with compulsive gambling call: 1-800-426-1234 or visit:**

**<http://www.masscompulsivegambling.org/>**

Finally, SPF Alumni leaders assisted with *SCAP Marijuana Prevention Team* efforts by providing input on the development of new marijuana harms poster and helping to distribute them at over 40 community locations!

**Check out the poster and our other marijuana prevention posts on our SCAP Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/SomervilleCares/>**

**For more information** about Somerville Positive Forces and/or Somerville Cares About Prevention or to volunteer, please contact: Lovelee Heller-Bottari, SCAP Program Director, at 617-625-6600 x4322 or [lheller@somervillema.gov](mailto:lheller@somervillema.gov)



## Tips for a child's after school activities

Here are 10 tips for making your child's after-school activities a fun and rewarding part of childhood—and for teaching your child the skill of time management.

- 1. Choose the right activities.** There is no need for everyone to run ragged getting to volleyball practice if your child no longer enjoys it. “We talk about mindful choices,” Dalgliesh says. “You want your child to get value out of any activity, whether it’s a great social outlet or a chance to run off a lot of energy.”
- 2. Consider timing.** If you’re lucky enough to have choices in times, choose wisely. “Think about how well your child does with transitions,” Dalgliesh says. “For some kids, coming home triggers wind-down time, [so] parents may want to go to the library after school to do homework instead of stopping by the house.”
- 3. Honor the family meeting.** There is a central principle when it comes to family time management: Everyone must get together once a week, with calendars in hand, to plan out the next week. Figure out how each kid will get to and from each activity, and make plans for meals and snacks. When doing the planning, try to carve out at least one night when the family can have dinner together. Make your weekly meeting fun by following it with a family movie or game night. Or, suggests Grey, dole out allowance and lunch money at the end of the meeting. “We made our meeting like a board meeting,” she says. “It became something special that the kids enjoyed and looked forward to.”
- 4. Maintain a family calendar.** Each family member needs his or her own week-at-a-glance calendar, and you also need a family calendar. Yes, that’s a lot of calendars, but it will help ensure all activities are well-planned.
- 5. Get the activity bags ready.** Get your kids in the habit of packing their activity bags on Sunday night. Designate a place for them to hang or store their bags. For activities requiring a lot of gear, use a checklist to make sure nothing gets left behind.
- 6. Embrace meal planning.** It’s important to plan simple, consistent meals, especially if you’re a busy family with a lot of activities. For example, kids love theme dinners such as “Taco Tuesday,” and can help with preparation and assembly. Also plan snacks, making sure to have high-protein nibbles available for kids before they embark on a strenuous activity.
- 7. Make it portable.** Keep healthy drinks and snacks in a car cooler. After all, “we’re a portable society,” Dalgliesh says. In addition to food, keep an “activities bin” for kids to rummage through while hanging out at big brother’s karate practice— but only then. “Those activities are special, and they only get pulled out when kids are waiting,” Dalgliesh explains.
- 8. Make car time special.** If you spend a lot of time driving to and from activities, make that time count. Try an audiobook, choosing a story everyone in the family can enjoy. Dalgliesh plays a conversation game with her children. She has a set of cards with prompts such as, “What is the worst meal you ever had in a restaurant?” or “What is your favorite vacation memory?” She passes the deck to her kids has them pick one. “It’s about finding those moments to connect,” she says.
- 9. Have a picnic.** If you have to race from your daughter’s after-school soccer practice to your son’s evening hockey game, pack a cooler and enjoy a picnic supper in the bleachers, at a park, or anywhere else you can find.
- 10. Divide the meal.** If an activity runs right through your child’s usual dinnertime, consider giving him a large, protein-rich snack before the activity and then a light supper afterward. A starving child equals a cranky one.

**More more tips please go to:**

**<http://www.schoolfamily.com/school-family-articles/article/10859-15-tips-for-managing-the-after-school-activities-juggle>**



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## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

### Writer

Do you have a literary knack? Help SCAP write articles, interest pieces, or editorials for the SCAP newsletter or local newspapers. Time commitment varies depending on length of writing sample.

### Youth In Action Project Participant

Adult volunteers are partnered with youth and law enforcement in efforts to promote zero tolerance enforcement, legislative advocacy and eliminate the current retail and social availability of alcohol for minors via the various YIA programs. Current volunteer opportunities are available with the Compliance Checks, Shoulder Tap Surveys and the Sticker Shock Campaign.



Please go the **Somerville Cares About Prevention** website if you would like to find out about other volunteer opportunities.

[www.somervillema.gov/SCAP](http://www.somervillema.gov/SCAP)

### SCAP Community Activist

Friendly, outgoing volunteers are needed to reach out to residents, storekeepers, non-profit groups, community groups, etc. to promote the SCAP mission and to encourage involvement. Duties may include distributing informational or upcoming event fliers, and making phone calls to various businesses and residents. Variable hours are available.