

Are the Children Well?



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE COALITION

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Tri-Towns take action!

Moratoriums/ban enacted across tri-town communities

Once again, tri-town citizens have spoken— putting the brakes on recreational marijuana establishments/ cultivators setting up shop in the tri-town community. The state has delayed the implementation of the law legalizing the recreational marijuana industry until July 2018, and the tri-town has extended that deadline— joining 80 other Massachusetts municipalities that have made the same decision. At May town meetings, Boxford and Topsfield voted in support of a temporary marijuana moratorium effective through November 2018.

While not affecting personal use or home grows, the moratorium will allow the towns more time to consider the implications of marijuana establishments on public health and safety, understand the regulations created by the Cannabis Control Commission (CCC) - which plan to be issued by March 15, 2018 - and grant town boards more time to amend zoning bylaws, and/or create permanent ordinances to regulate where marijuana establishments can open. Without the moratoria in place—once the CCC begins accepting specific retail applications as of April 1, 2018—towns would lose some local control over the regulation of time, manner and place of marijuana establishments. Topsfield Planning

Board chair Martha Morrison adds, “The moratorium is designed to give Topsfield time to consider the potential impacts of recreational marijuana in the Town and the effect of State regulations on local zoning. If we know what the Town can do in time for next year’s Annual Town Meeting, we will propose zoning bylaw amendments that are as stringent as possible for approval by our citizens.”

“As a former School Committee member and member of The Coalition, I understand the detrimental impact of marijuana on the brain development of our youth. I’m pleased that Middleton voters supported the ban.”

- Teresa Buono

While Middleton voted to establish a temporary moratorium as well, the town took it one step further and approved a ban prohibiting all marijuana cultivators, marijuana testing facilities, marijuana product manufacturers, marijuana retailers or any other type of licensed marijuana-related businesses to operate in Middleton, joining 37 Massachusetts municipalities that approved or are about to vote on an outright ban. Middleton resident Derek Fullerton initiated the ban via a Citizen’s Petition. Fullerton reflects, “The town spoke in

2016 when they voted No for Question 4. I am glad the Middleton voters supported the ban because it honored the town’s vote last November and shows that we are a community focused on prevention and health and not on big business efforts like the Tobacco Industry!” Teresa Buono, a long-time Middleton resident echoes similar sentiments, “As a former school committee member and member of the Coalition, I understand the detrimental impact of marijuana on the brain development of our youth. I’m pleased that Middleton voters supported the ban.”

The mission of Tri-Town Council (TTC) is to strengthen the social and emotional well being of tri-town youth and reduce and prevent at-risk behavior. Collaborating with parents, schools, youth, law enforcement, community organizations and area resources, TTC identifies needs and provides proactive solutions that support and empower youth to make healthy and safe decisions. TTC offers a variety of youth workshops, adult education programs, and afterschool enrichment - all grounded in the Developmental Assets framework.

The Coalition, a program of Tri-Town Council, is a community partnership focused on achieving a measurable reduction in youth drug and alcohol use by establishing and maintaining an environment in which youth of all ages are encouraged and choose to be substance-free.



Class of 2023 Bond Over 6th Grade Fun Night

By Katelin Kim

Masco Sophomore Katelin Kim is a student in the Media Communications class where she writes articles for the Tri-Town Transcript ranging from sports, opinion, and student spotlights, to school issues, school events, and activity in school clubs. Aside from writing articles, Katelin enjoys helping out the community through volunteering at the Lahey Hospital, as well as at events like the 6th Grade Fun Night.



Over 275 incoming 7th graders from all three Tri-Town communities came together for TTC's Welcome to Masco Night. Masco Asst. Principal Gavin Monagle started things off. AWESOME Masco MS and High youth volunteered to run small groups, games, and answer questions.

Tri-Town Council hosted the annual 6th Grade Fun Night where the class of 2023 were introduced to their future classmates through bonding activities. On the night of May 13, almost 300 students filled up the field house at Masco where they were welcomed by the smiling faces of members of Tri-Town Council, high school and middle school volunteers, and staff members. A total of 35 high school and middle school volunteers were in charge of leading small group activities and stations for the sixth graders. The night started off with an introductory speech by Meredith Shaw, Coalition & Youth Program Coordinator of Tri-Town Council, and the sixth graders were soon divided off into groups. One high school volunteer paired with one or two middle schoolers led each group into a location in the school where they led small group activities. "The small groups were good because it was nice to learn the names of other students and get to know them in a

more enclosed, calm, and collected environment," said sixth grader Hannah McMillian. "It was easier to approach them in these small group activities."

Afterwards, the students all gathered back into the field house and were transitioned into the "free time" period which consisted of different station activities, ranging from physical games like volleyball and basketball, to creative stations where kids attempted to build the tallest tower they could out of toothpicks and marshmallows. The stations expanded across the Masco campus, including the field house, gym, hallways, and more. "Some kids thrive in an environment where it's loud or they enjoy physical games like basketball or floor hockey, whereas others would prefer arts and crafts, or a raucous game of Apples to Apples or a quiet competitive game of chess," said Shaw. "In our planning, we try to anticipate and balance the varied needs, interests, and personality styles of the participants." The objective of this night was for the sixth graders to have fun with their friends and future classmates from other towns. Tri-Town Council's mission is to support the social and emotional well being of the youth. "I imagine 6th graders experience a range of emotions when they think about the transition - anticipation, excitement, and uncertainty to name a few," said Shaw. "I imagine when they think of moving on to 7th grade, some students feel completely ready and others feel unsure or anxious and many are a combination of emotions. Hosting the Fun Night gives 6th grade youth the opportunity to meet new people, ask questions, tap into the knowledge of older students and hopefully feel more confident about joining the Masco student body."

The 6th Grade Fun Night definitely seemed to diminish the nerves the students had of entering Masco next year. "I did not have too many worries prior to

this event, but this night made me realize that many other students were in the same boat as me," said sixth grader Sofia Defilippis. "I believe Masco will be very fun and exciting."

"Hosting the Fun Night gives 6th grade youth the opportunity to meet new people, ask questions, tap into the knowledge of older students and hopefully feel more confident about joining the Masco student body."

-Meredith Shaw TTC Youth Coordinator



Future 7th graders test their skills in opening the combination locks they will be given next year—one of a variety of stations 6th grade youth could visit during TTC's 6th Grade Fun Night at Masco.



Celebrating Summer and keeping your teen safe!

Summer is upon us and there is much to celebrate! Days at the beach, beautiful sunsets, warm summer evenings, spending time with friends and family. If you're a teen—especially one who has just graduated from high school — summer is full of opportunities to celebrate in a variety of ways. **How do adults keep the teens they care about safe during this celebratory season? Read on for some tips and resources!**

TALK to your teen! It is well documented that **parents are the number one reason why teens choose not to drink, REALLY!** Let your teen know that you disapprove of underage alcohol use. Your voice matters! Looking for a little guidance? Check out SAMSHA's resource for talking to your teen [HERE](#).

If your teen is attending a party, know where they are and if there will be adult supervision. **Make the call to the host parents in advance.** [Click here](#) for tips

on initiating these critical conversations with other parents.

Check in. Tell your teens in advance you will be checking up — and do it! Make sure they are where they say they are.

Set a curfew. If your teens are attending a party, agree in advance what time they will be home. Be awake and interact with them when they arrive home.

Help your teens avoid uncomfortable or dangerous situations by working out a way to connect that allows them to 'save face' - a [text message or code word](#) that indicates they need you to get them home. Let them know you **WILL PICK THEM UP, no questions asked (for now)**. Safety first, always.

HOPE and CONCERN:

*According to 2015 data released by **NHTSA**, the number of fatal crashes involving teens driving under the influence dropped 47% since 2006. However, **1 in 6** teen drivers killed in car crashes were under the influence of alcohol.*

Click on links below for more resources:

Talk. They hear you.

Ask.Listen.Learn

5 steps to steer clear of underage drinking

MADD's Power of the Parent Campaign



Summertime Asset Building Ideas for Families

Ahhhhh, summertime! A break from the typical routine, slower pace, and those long, lazy summer days can provide opportunities for family fun and **Asset building!** **Read on for some ASSET BUILDING ideas:**

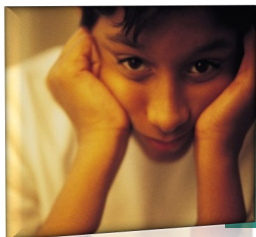
Hot summer days are perfect opportunities to quench kids' desire to feel valuable.

- ◆ Help them build their **Empowerment** and **Positive Identity Assets** by setting up a lemonade stand. Use proceeds to make a monetary donation or grocery shop for donations for a local food pantry. They will feel good about helping others AND learn what it means to be of service to the community.
- ◆ While summer is a fantastic opportunity for kids to explore interests via camps, classes, sports etc., are their summer activities balanced with quality time at home with 'nothing special to do'? If the answer is yes, their **Constructive Use of Time Assets** are growing! With your unstructured time with your kids, do something fun together—tell jokes, read to each other, play a board game, do a craft together, go for a bike ride or plan a family dinner.
- ◆ Want to your child to develop a sense of responsibility and build his or her **Positive Values Assets**? Help your child plant some flower/herb pots or a vegetable patch that your child is responsible for watering, weeding, and harvesting.
- ◆ Planning and decision making are important life skills and part of the **Social Competencies Asset** category. Support your children in growing these skills by asking them to organize a family picnic, and let them do most of

the planning. Have them think about, "Where will we go?", "What will we bring to eat?", "What supplies besides food might we need?"

- ◆ Bring a smile to someone's face, contribute to a caring neighborhood, and strengthen **Support Assets!** Have your kids use chalk to create messages on the sidewalk for neighbors. If you don't have sidewalks, your kids might leave notes on a neighbor's door, sharing what they appreciate about them.
- ◆ Keep reading skills sharp over the summer while keeping the **Commitment to Learning Assets** strong! Participate in a summer reading program at the library or have your kids start a book club with their friends.





Freeing Boys for Strong Friendships and Academic Performance: Breaking the Boy Code

by Stephanie Meegan (www.StephanieMeegan.com)

Twenty years ago, William Pollack wrote *Real Boys: Rescuing Our Boys from the Myths of Boyhood*. In the book, he explained our culture's pervasive **Boy Code** that expects boys to be stoic and independent, macho and athletic, powerful and dominant.

Over the past two decades, girls are increasingly encouraged to aspire to a wide -range of personal traits, interests, roles and careers. But boys are still constrained by stereotypical norms.

When boys are restricted by narrow definitions of masculinity and not mentored to develop social-emotional skills, both their relationships and their motivation to learn can suffer.

Fortunately there are ways to diminish the negative impact of the **Boy Code**.

Model Metacognition

Help boys (and girls) externalize their thoughts, feelings and processes. Through genuine curiosity, reflective listening, and gentle acceptance, you can encourage boys to expand their vocabulary so they can respond to questions like: "What thoughts went through your mind just before you ...? How did you come up with that solution ...? What were you feeling when ...? What steps did you use to ...?"

The ability to go inside yourself and use words for expressing emotions, thoughts, ideas and processes are essential building blocks for both social skill and cognitive development. Relationships, critical thinking and problem solving are less baffling to young people who have learned to identify and communicate what is going on within themselves (introspection) and understand the inner workings of others (empathy).

Temper Competition with Team Work

Friendly competition is fun and motivating for boys. However, it is important to make it clear that you value collaboration,

fairness and loyalty more than winning at all costs. When your son out-performs others, acknowledge his hard work and achievement but also ask him how others contributed to his success. Most importantly, explain how quiet confidence solidify friendships far more than arrogant bragging and putdowns. Good sportsmanship is an attitude of gratitude and humility, and is important beyond the playing field.

Tune-In and Check-Out

It's easy to miss clues of distress in young people, so tune-in to their body language, facial expressions, and changes in attitude and behavior. Before checking out what's bothering him, try to allow solo time to process. Physical activity and using fidgets (self-regulation tools to help with focus, attention, calming) can help boys work through experiences and feelings using both sides of their brains.

Make "Action Talk" a Habit

Barry MacDonald (www.mentoringboys.com) points out that boys are more likely to talk about stuff when they are engaged in benign activities with you. For example, try initiating conversation when in the car, playing board games, shooting hoops, or preparing dinner.

It's also may be easier for boys to engage in open discussions while sitting, standing or walking beside you. Sometimes the direct eye contact of face-to-face encounters can be intimidating and trigger withdrawal.

The Impact of the Boy Code on Male Friendships

In an interview for *The New Yorker* magazine, Niobi Way, NYU professor of applied psychology, describes how boys openly express their love for their friends and emphasize that sharing confidences was the most important aspect of their closest male friendships. Through extensive research Way discovered that "(d)uring late

"We should be alarmed because research about the relationships between boys consistently reveals that friendships are key to all aspects of well-being. Close friendships provide a sense of self-worth, validation, and connectedness to the larger worlds and significantly enhance psychological, physical, and academic health."

-Niobi Way

Deep Secrets: Boys' Friendship and the Crisis of Connection

adolescence, however, boys begin to lose their closest male friendships, become more distrustful of their male peers, and in some cases, become less willing to be emotionally expressive. They start sounding, in other words, like gender stereotypes."



Closing Thought

As parents, teachers, coaches and mentors, we need to make it clear to the boys in our lives that true masculinity is expressed in diverse ways. We can model through our words and actions that it is healthy and wholesome for boys to support and be honest with one another at every stage of life.

T.S. Eliot explained why having even one trusted friend can make all the difference.

*"If a man has one person, just one in his life,
To whom he is willing to confess everything—
And that includes, mind you, not only things
criminal,
Not only turpitude, meanness and cowardice,
But also situation which are simply ridiculous,
When he has played the fool (as who has
not?)
Then he loves that person, and his love will
save him."*

-T.S. Eliot