

Madison Alcohol & Drug Education Coalition

10 School Street, Madison, CT • (203) 245-5694 • madeinmadison@madisonct.org

For Immediate Release

Media Contact: Laurie Ruderfer, (203) 245-5694

MADISON YOUTH SURVEY REPORTS ON RISK AND PREVENTION OF ALCOHOL, DRUG USE

MADISON, Connecticut – March 26, 2010 - The Madison Alcohol and Drug Education Coalition (M.A.D.E) will hold a public meeting on March 31 to release survey highlights gathered from over 1,700 youths between the ages of 12 and 18. The survey, conducted in October 2009, was designed to identify key factors that either contribute to the risk of teen substance abuse or help to prevent alcohol and drug use by young people. Funded by a Drug Free Communities grant, the survey also reported on the challenges and strengths of Madison teens. M.A.D.E will host a community briefing about the youth survey findings on March 31, 2010 at 7:00 P.M. at the Arts Barn, 8 Campus Drive, Madison. This meeting is free and open to the public.

Madison's Drug Free Communities grant mandates that four (4) core measurements: 1) the age children first use alcohol, marijuana and/or tobacco; 2) how many teens used those substances in the past 30 days; 3) how do youth perceive the harm of their using these substances; and, 4) how do teens think their parents would react to their usage, be tracked over the life of the grant. The Survey provides a baseline measurement to which future data will be compared. The Survey reports the following:

Drug	Age of first use (years)	Past 30-day use	Youth's perception of risk	Youth's perception of parental disapproval
Alcohol	13.1	24.2%	67.7%	87.6%
Marijuana	14.2	14.7%	82%	92.8%
Tobacco	13.7	7.5%	94%	95.5%

The data collected from Madison youth regarding alcohol and marijuana use mirrors the trends that are seen nationally.

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“The survey helps us to identify what is influencing our teens, both positively and negatively, so that we can focus our efforts and target our prevention services,” explained Lori Lodge, vice chair of M.A.D.E. “This is a call to action for our entire community including law enforcement, faith-based, business and civic organizations in town, schools and families to work together to decrease substance use and the problem behaviors associated with it.”

“Assets” as Building Blocks to Healthy Youth Development

The Survey evaluated eight (8) broad “asset” categories and measured 40 individual assets. These assets are considered to be the basic building blocks of human development. Youth who report higher level of assets are less likely to engage in risk taking behavior and more likely to thrive. The Survey found that on average Madison youth report having 21.3 developmental assets. Nationally this number is 18.6. The data also indicates that the number of assets Madison teenagers experience decreases the older they get. This is true across all segments measured both locally and nationally.

Grade	7	8	9	10	11	12	7-12
Average # of Assets	23.7	23.3	21.7	21.3	20.3	18.2	21.3

It is well-documented that a collaborative approach to prevention works. However, no one sector of the community can single-handedly address teen drug and alcohol use. Based on the survey data, M.A.D.E. has identified several areas of concern that warrant continued prevention efforts by the Madison community, at home and in school. Notably:

- 29% of youth surveyed perceive that adults in the community value youth;
- 36% of youth reported that young people are given useful roles in the community;
- 35% of youth reported that their parents and other adults model positive, responsible behavior;
- 32% reported that their parents are actively involved in helping them succeed in school; and
- 33% reported that his or her parents communicate positively and that the young person is willing to seek parent(s) advice and counsel.

At the same time Madison youth also reported:

- their family life provides them with high levels of love and support (77%);
- they feel safe at home, in school and in their neighborhood (69%)

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- they spend three (3) or more hours per week in sports, clubs or organizations at school and/or in community organizations (82%);
- they are motivated to do well in school (79%); and
- they are optimistic about their personal future (78%).

Youth were asked 160 questions related to developmental assets, risk-taking behaviors and thriving indicators. Youth responses and assets were then broken down into eight categories: support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time, commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies and positive identity.

The Survey findings for these segments were as follows:

Support – Measures to what degree students report receiving love, acceptance and affirmation from their families, peers and community.

- 77% report their family life provides regular love, acceptance and affirmation
- 33% report they willingly seek parental advice and engage in positive communication
- 53% have positive supportive relationships with non-parental adults
- 44% report having caring neighbors
- 38% perceive a caring school climate

Empowerment – Measures how youth perceive they are valued by their community.

- 29% of kids feel that adults in our community value them
- 36% of young people feel they are given useful roles in the community
- 53% of youth volunteer at least one hour each week in the community
- 69% report feeling safe at home, school and in their neighborhood

Boundaries and Expectations – Measures whether teens experience clear and enforced rules that send a consistent message about appropriate and acceptable behavior.

- 50% of children report their families have clear rules and consequences and that their whereabouts are monitored
- 57% report their school sets and enforces clear rules
- 47% state that their neighbors monitor their behavior
- 35% recount that adults around them model positive, responsible behavior
- 68% have friends that act responsibly
- 54% feel encouraged by teachers and parents to do well

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Constructive Use of Time – Measures what structured opportunities there are for kids and who provides them.

- 24% of Madison youth report spending more than three hours a week studying or practicing music, theater or other arts
- 82% of kids report spending more than three hours each week in organized sports or community or school clubs and organizations
- 49% spend one or more hour a week in activities in a religious institution
- 76% report being out with friends two or fewer nights a week “with nothing special to do”

Commitment to Learning – Measures factors affecting the development of children’s critical thinking skills and intellectual curiosity.

- 79% report they are motivated to do well in school
- 62% are actively engaged in learning
- 62% have more than one hour of homework each school day
- 66% care about their school
- 27% read more than three hours each week for pleasure

Positive Values – Measures where their moral compass is, what guides their priorities and choices.

- 54% highly value helping others
- 50% wish to promote equality and reduce hunger and poverty
- 66% act on their convictions and stand up for their beliefs
- 65% tell the truth even when it isn’t easy
- 62% accept and take personal responsibility
- 44% state it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs

Social competencies – Measures what personal skills youth have to help them develop independence and competence.

- 32% report they plan ahead and make choices
- 52% describe themselves as empathetic, sensitive and friendly
- 39% know of and are comfortable with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds
- 47% resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations
- 52% seek to resolve conflict nonviolently

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Positive Identity – Measures how kids view themselves now and in the future.

- 55% feel they “control” what happens to them
- 57% report having high self-esteem
- 70% comment that their life “has purpose”
- 78% are optimistic about their personal future

To learn more about the Madison youth survey, the community is invited to join M.A.D.E on March 31, 2010 at 7:00 P.M. at the Arts Barn, 8 Campus Drive, Madison, where highlights of the student survey will be presented to the Madison community. The meeting is free and open to the public.

The M.A.D.E. survey was designed by the Search Institute to provide in-depth analysis of risk-taking behaviors of Madison youth. Every two years, M.A.D.E. will conduct this survey to collect drug use data from seventh through twelfth graders in Madison. This survey is recognized nationally as the most current and reliable source of validated information on local youth substance abuse.

M.A.D.E. is in the second year of a five-year Drug Free Communities grant. The Drug Free Communities grant program is sponsored by the Office of National Drug Control Policy in partnership with the U.S. Department of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

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About the Madison Alcohol and Drug Education Coalition (M.A.D.E. in Madison)

M.A.D.E. is a community coalition of parents, community and faith-based organizations, elected officials, business and social service professionals, and staff from the Town of Madison and Madison Board of Education. M.A.D.E.’s mission is to create a safe and drug free community that values its youth and is committed to encouraging those relationship, experiences, values, attitudes, and attributes that every young person needs for success. For more information or to get involved, call (203) 245-5694.