

THE REGISTER CITIZEN

Coalition established to fight substance abuse in the Northwest Corner

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TORRINGTON >> Two private foundations, the Foundation for Community Health and the Northwest Corner Fund of the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, have stepped up to fund a collaboration between two nonprofit agencies, McCall and the Housatonic Youth Service Bureau, in an innovative measure to combat substance abuse.

Together, the project is called The Northwest Corner Prevention Coalition: A Collaborative Approach to Address Youth Substance Abuse in the Northwest Corner. “The issue is multifaceted and complex; therefore, the solution needs to be comprehensive and use the latest research in order to be effective,” said Nicholas Pohl, Executive Director of the HYSB, in a written statement.

The group also has partnered with the existing Northwest Corner Prevention Network (NCPN) which is eager to engage in this partnership, organizers said.

NCPN is chaired by Lesly Ferris; Director of Kent Park and Recreation and includes representation from law enforcement, school administrators, students, health care providers, elected government officials and parents among many others. The project will be utilizing an approach that engages the entire community.

“This problem affects all of us – therefore, we need to engage stakeholders from every sector in the community in our efforts,” said Ferris.

A portion of the grant funding will be used to provide the coalition with a full-time Prevention Facilitator. McCall has hired Shalyn Sheldon as the dedicated staff person for this work and has extensive knowledge in strengthening coalitions and the Strategic Prevention Framework, the researched approach that will be used extensively through this project.

The Strategic Prevention Framework is a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration model that prevents substance use and misuse in a community.

There are five steps to the model including; assessment, capacity building, planning, implementation and evaluation.

“We are extremely grateful to the two foundations for their generosity and commitment to the people of the northwest corner; we are very hopeful that these steps will have a positive impact on the lives of families throughout this region.” said Ms. Coutant Skinner.

The group is looking for additional volunteers; contact Shalyn Sheldon at (860)496-2139 or shalyn.sheldon@mccallcenterct.org to learn more.