



Life In The Right Direction
DERRY, NH

Community Alliance for Teen Safety

1996 to 2010





Community Alliance for Teen Safety (CATS)

Our mission is to promote safe habits for all youth by increasing awareness of high-risk behaviors, encouraging healthy choices, and fostering community alliances in Chester, Derry, Hampstead, Londonderry, Salem and Windham.

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Communities Served

- Chester
- Derry
- Hampstead
- Londonderry
- Salem
- Windham



Over 250 organizations and individuals reflect CATS membership representing the 12 sectors of the community as defined by SAMHSA: business, civic/volunteer, healthcare, law enforcement, local/state government, media, other, parents, religious/fraternal, schools, youth, youth-serving organizations



Community Alliance for Teen Safety was founded in 1996 after the greater Derry area experienced 11 fatal crashes involving teen drivers during an 18-month period in 1995 and 1996. Also at this time Dr. Joseph Sabato, of Parkland Medical Center, began to look at the crash epidemic as a result of his experience treating some of the crash victims in the emergency room and counseling their families. Dr. Sabato contacted the Derry Police Department, EMS and the Medical Examiner's Office to hold the first meeting at Parkland Medical Center. According to data compiled from Derry Police Department, Department of Safety Fatal Accident Reporting System and Statewide Crash Data teen drivers were involved in more than 40% of all crashes during this time.

Follow-up taskforce meetings held at Pinkerton Academy attracted attendance from area towns and included representatives from the schools, state highway safety and regional NHTSA, police departments, families of the victims, state legislators, residents of Derry and surrounding communities as well as other professionals interested in determining the cause of these tragedies. Lack of seat belt use was identified as a common factor in the deaths of the teens. Several passengers of the same vehicles who had been wearing seatbelts walked away from the collisions. In addition, risky behavior and the need for increased parent involvement in their children's driver education were identified. CATS focused on public outreach and education about safe



Governor Shaheen signs the seat belt bill in 1997, photo by CATS staff

driving as well as spearheaded legislation to support a graduated licensing bill for teens, to increase the mandatory seat belt age from 12 to 18, to review driver education programs, and to enact mandatory license suspension for moving violations of individuals under 20.

All four pieces of legislation passed and were signed into law in 1997. The seat belt bill was signed by then Governor Shaheen at a special ceremony held at Pinkerton Academy in Derry, NH. The Community Alliance for Teen Safety (CATS) was formed as a result of this grassroots effort. After its first year of operating with volunteers and donations, CATS received a 4-year seed grant from the NH High-



CATS Mock Crash 2008, photo by CATS staff

way Safety agency to support continued safe communities efforts. In recognition of its safe communities efforts, CATS was awarded the International Safe Communities Special Achievement Award in 2000.

Attention to safe driving efforts remains a priority for CATS. For example, in 2008 CATS youth members reviewed data from the regional 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey and discovered that 12% of participating youth reported operating a motor vehicle within the past 30 days after consuming alcohol. Social norming awareness was developed to highlight that 88% did not drink and drive. In an effort to communicate a preventative message regarding the dangers of drinking and driving at prom time, youth members working in collaboration with CATS staff and community partners organized a mock crash which was held at Pinkerton Academy and filmed by Derry Cable TV. CATS youth worked with Liberty Mutual Insurance, the NH Attorney General's Office, Derry Police, Fire and EMS, Peabody Funeral Home, Pinkerton Academy, Derry CTV, and a local film producer. 700 high school juniors attended the event on the day before the prom.



The message created by the mock crash extended beyond this single event. The NH Attorney General's Office suggested filming an aftermath to the mock event to illustrate the life-changing consequences of drinking and driving at prom time which would result in the death of 1 teen, serious long-term injuries for 2 others and arraignment and sentencing of the driver. This effort was made possible with the cooperation of the Rockingham County Superior Court, Superior Court Judge Tina Nadeau, the New Hampshire Public Defender's office and prosecutors from the NH Attorney General's Office. NH Bureau of Liquor Enforcement, NH Highway Traffic Safety Institute, and the Injury Prevention Center at Dartmouth College have since joined the effort to insure the continued development of effective messages for creating public service announcements and short videos from this footage for distribution to driver education classes throughout the state as well as for pre-feature viewing at multiplex movie theaters.

S strategies

Community Alliance for Teen Safety uses data collected at the community, regional and national levels to assess trends, needs and priorities regarding teen safety and healthy decision-making. A few examples include:

- Locally, CATS work with the Derry Cooperative School District, UNH Survey Center and CATS evaluator to deliver and analyze the annual Making Good Choices Survey to middle-school students. When the study began in 2001, substance use rates among Derry middle school students were several percentage points higher than the national average. By 2006, vigorous prevention efforts had brought use rates down to the national average or even slightly lower. 2007 and 2008 saw an up-tick in undesirable behaviors, but in 2009, the numbers were again more encouraging.
- The NH Youth Risk Behavior Survey is conducted every other year and now includes questions regarding prescription drug use. According to New Futures for New Hampshire, “the results released in December showing a continuing trend of decreases in the proportion of high school students who report they ever had a drink of alcohol. The 1993 (earliest available) rate of 80% “lifetime drinking” has declined steadily to a rate in 2009 of 68%.”

Community Alliance for Teen Safety continues to be a force in the community that addresses high-risk behaviors. In addition to driving safety, CATS focuses on teen substance abuse prevention, bullying prevention, internet safety and media literacy, prescription drug disposal and misuse awareness, as well as issues around wellness. CATS sponsors a Safe Homes Network for parents and produces a monthly studio roundtable discussion aired on Derry Cable Television.

In addition to community partnerships and leveraged resources CATS has maintained its fiscal sustainability over the years through diverse funding including federal, state and municipal contracts and grants, foundation grants, fundraising activities, and donations.

- Since 2004 a community attitude survey has been conducted periodically by CATS to measure the attitudes and perceptions of adult and teen community members. Recent data from 2008 reported 92% of respondents agreed that substance abuse is a problem for teens and 95% believe teens need more options for making healthy choices. 84.92% of respondents agreed that parents need more information about teen risk behavior, and 92.86% of respondents believe parents need support.
- A recent report from the NH Department of Health and Human Services Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant identified the CATS containment region as being at high risk for youth having retail access to alcohol, social access to alcohol, and for social norms regarding perceived risk.

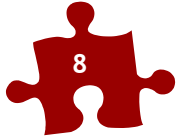


*Buyer Beware Sticker Shock,
photo by Julie Huss, Derry News*



Areas of Focus

	Primary Partners	Deliverables
<p>Alcohol, Tobacco & Other Drugs To reduce substance use among teens by addressing retail & social access, and perception of risk.</p>	NH Bureau of Liquor Enforcement, Derry PD & FD, Derry Cooperative School District, Pinkerton Academy, NH BDAS, New Futures	Buyers Beware, TEAM Training, Red Ribbon Week, Social Marketing, Awareness Events, CTV Roundtables
<p>Media Literacy To improve critical thinking skills and healthy decision making by strengthening communication competencies.</p>	Media Power Youth, Derry Cooperative School District, Derry CTV	PSA Production, Resource Guide, Social Marketing, CTV Roundtables
<p>Driving Safety To educate and promote seatbelt use, reduce & eliminate distracted driving (texting), and DWI.</p>	NH Highway Safety Agency, NH Attorney General's Office, Derry PD & FD, NH Traffic Safety Institute	Mock Crash, Resource Guide, PSA Production, Awareness Events
<p>Bullying/Internet Safety To respond to the increasing frequency of harassment, intimidation, bullying and cyberbullying at school and at home.</p>	Derry Cooperative School District, Pinkerton Academy, Derry PD	Olweus or Other Prevention, Resource Guide, PSA Production, CTV Roundtable
<p>Prescription Drug Misuse To educate and provide solutions for safe prescription drug disposal and to reduce prescription drug abuse.</p>	NH Department of Environmental Services, ASAP Rx Task Force, Derry PD & EMS, Derry Department of Public Health	Resource Guide, Take Back (planned), PSA Production, CTV Roundtable, Awareness Events



The greater Derry community has grown in its responsiveness to concerns and issues as they emerge. Ongoing collection and analysis of data, effective collaboration and sharing of resources helps community members identify issues and emerging trends. This enables increased participation in being informed and determining solutions.

Community Alliance for Teen Safety has effectively served as a central hub - connecting the various “spokes” of the community wheel in times of crisis. Outreach to the community and in-reach to CATS has been simultaneous and dynamic, establishing a prototype for looking at solving community issues going forward. In some cultures crisis is interpreted as opportunity. The CATS community has embraced this paradigm. Times of crisis bring a spectrum of emotions and change, as well as the opportunity to strengthen a community as it coalesces around the issue and with each other. Whether it is the combined support of law enforcement and the business community to support youth prevention activities such as Buyers Beware Sticker Shock or working with other coalitions to plan a regional bullying awareness training, CATS has facilitated the growth of new and expanded linkages among the various sectors of the community for a sustainable approach to solving problems and identifying measurable change at the community level. ♦



COMMUNITY ALLIANCE FOR TEEN SAFETY

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