

## Equity Toolkit –10.3.2 Improve Air Quality in Public Spaces – Implement or Maintain a Smoking and Tobacco Use Reduction Campaign

### Who Lives and Works in Our Community

Glastonbury is one of the state’s oldest municipalities, spanning 51+ square miles and serving as home to just under 35,000 residents. The following data is based on the 2020 Census:

- Glastonbury population = 34,482 residents
- Breakdown by Race/Ethnicity:

Race and Hispanic Origin	
White alone, percent	▲ 85.1%
Black or African American alone, percent (a)	▲ 2.2%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent (a)	▲ 0.1%
Asian alone, percent (a)	▲ 8.7%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent (a)	▲ 0.4%
Two or More Races, percent	▲ 2.2%
Hispanic or Latino, percent (b)	▲ 5.8%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent	▲ 80.9%

As indicated by the Census data above, the Glastonbury population is primarily comprised of residents who identify as “White alone” (85.1%), “White alone, not Hispanic or Latino” (80.9%), “Asian alone” (8.7%), and “Hispanic or Latino” (5.8%). Residents who identify as “Black or African American Alone” represent 2.2% of the population, and individuals who identify as “Two or more races” also represent 2.2% of the population. “Native Hawaiian and other pacific islander” represent roughly 0.4% of the population and 0.1% of individuals identify as “American Indian and Alaska Native alone”.

This data indicates that Glastonbury residents represent a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds, and it’s important that we reach every group in town to ensure all community members are aware of, and have the opportunity to engage in, Town and community programs and services.

The [2019 CERC profile](#), (most recent data available), indicates that the median age of Glastonbury residents is 46 year of age, and Glastonbury residents are comprised of the following age groups:

Age Distribution (2013-2017)		0-4		5-14		15-24		25-44		45-64		65+		Total	
Town	1,228	4%	5,146	15%	3,704	11%	6,954	20%	11,825	34%	5,831	17%	34,688	100%	

- As outlined above, roughly 26% of Glastonbury residents are between the ages of 5 and 24.
- Of the 34,482± residents, youth community members are comprised of the following populations:

Special Interest Groups	Population Count	% of Glastonbury Population
Students in Glastonbury Public School District*	5,811 (as of 2019-2020 school year)	~16.85%
8 <sup>th</sup> graders	466	
9 <sup>th</sup> graders	484	
10 <sup>th</sup> graders	490	
11 <sup>th</sup> graders	498	
12 <sup>th</sup> graders	496	
<b>Total 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> graders</b>	<b>2434</b>	<b>7.06%</b>

\*Data source: Glastonbury Public Schools Enrollment Report from 10.01.2019

According to the data above, roughly 17% of the town’s population are school-aged youth, and 7%+ of those youth are currently in grades 8 through 12. The 2019 CERC profile indicates that 87.9% of Glastonbury residents are enrolled in public school vs. private, therefore the public school system is an ideal and effective channel through which to reach Glastonbury youth and their families, including youth representing all backgrounds and demographics.

The 2020 Census also indicates that 95.3% of Glastonbury residents have a computer in their household, and 91.2% have an internet subscription. This is a helpful data point as it demonstrates that the internet and web-based/electronic resources can be a helpful platform for reaching community members. However, it also indicates that 5-8% of families would likely rely on alternative platforms to receive information.

Computer and Internet Use	
Households with a computer, percent, 2015-2019	95.3%
Households with a broadband Internet subscription, percent, 2015-2019	91.2%

### Background: Vaping/E-Cigarette Use and Public Health Concerns

Vaping and e-cigarette use, particularly among teens, has become a public health concern world-wide in recent years. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)\*:

- Most e-cigarettes contain nicotine. Nicotine is highly addictive and can harm adolescent brain development, which continues into the early to mid-20s<sup>1</sup> and E-cigarettes can contain other harmful substances besides nicotine.
- Using nicotine in adolescence can harm the parts of the brain that control attention, learning, mood, and impulse control.<sup>1</sup>
- Using nicotine in adolescence may also increase risk for future addiction to other drugs.<sup>1</sup>
- Each time a new memory is created or a new skill is learned, stronger connections – or synapses – are built between brain cells. Young people’s brains build synapses faster than adult brains. Nicotine changes the way these synapses are formed.\

\*Source: [Quick Facts on the Risks of E-cigarettes for Kids, Teens, and Young Adults | CDC](#)

1. US Department of Health and Human Services. [E-cigarette Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General \[PDF – 8.47MB\]](#). Atlanta, GA: US Department of Health and Human Services, CDC; 2016. Accessed July 27, 2018.

### Glastonbury Youth & Family Services

The Glastonbury Youth & Family Services (Y&FS) Department is a Town agency devoted to programs and services that respond to the needs of Glastonbury youth and their families. The division is comprised of three programs, Clinical Services, Creative Experiences, and Outreach Services. With the emergence and rapid increase of vaping/electronic cigarette use within the adolescent population, the Glastonbury Y&FS division wanted to take action to prioritize and help address this issue within the local youth community. In response, our Sustainability Team identified and engaged a number of stakeholders to develop goals and a strategic plan. Initially this issue was identified by the Glastonbury Youth Advisory Council (YAC) as a concern they wanted to address on a multi-tiered level. This group of students discussed this with the two co advisors of this group, GYFS/GHS outreach social worker and a school resource officer from the Glastonbury Police Department. These dedicated youth began examining the limited online information and research on the topic of vaping. As part of their research they learned about a physician at Yale University who was speaking on the dangers of vaping at a nearby high school. Two members of YAC attended this talk in the Spring of 2018 and connected with the speaker. Their goal was to bring this speaker to Glastonbury High School. In the Fall of 2019, the sustainability team contacted and met with Glastonbury High School and Middle School administrators, Director of Health and Physical Education, Director of School Counseling, Glastonbury High School Resource Officer and invited guest Dr. Dana Carvallo from Yale to begin planning for a school wide assembly. Additionally, planning included the YAC members as well. From this event, awareness and concerns were increased and this resulted in communication initiated by the PTSO to Glastonbury Public School Administrators. The PTSO decided to create an evening event to continue this conversation with the community at large. The Sustainability Team was contacted by Glastonbury High School Principal

and asked to be a part of the panel for this event. The GYFS/GHS outreach social worker and members YAC spoke at this meeting. Our community stakeholders have a shared mission to maintain the safety and wellbeing of our youth which has resulted in continued communication and collaboration to this day.

Community Stakeholders included:

- Glastonbury Parent Teacher Student Organization (PTSO)
- Glastonbury Public School Administrators
- Glastonbury Youth Advisory Council (YAC)
- A select group of 8<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grade students
- Town Departments: Glastonbury Youth and Family Services (Y&FS), Glastonbury Police Department, Glastonbury Social Services
- Yale School of Psychiatry
- Senator Richard Blumenthal
- Youth & Family Services Commission

**How did you connect with each other? What emerged from your dialogue? What Sustainable Action are you applying the equity toolkit to?**

The stakeholders mentioned above met numerous times and in various combinations beginning in the fall of 2019 to discuss the increased evidence of use of vaping devices/e-cigarettes in Glastonbury schools, parent/guardian fears and concerns as they discover these devices at home, and rapid development of addiction, lung damage, and other health concerns. This group identified shared goals and discussed meaningful programming to help address these concerns. This engagement process resulted in a commitment to educate Glastonbury youth, parents, and community members on the dangers of vaping/electronic cigarette use through a multi-tiered educational campaign.

The shared goals derived from these interactive discussions were:

- 1. Educate - Educate youth and families on vaping trends, equipment, and the dangers of vaping/electronic cigarette use**
- 2. Prevent – Prevent vaping use in youth through peer-modeling and reinforcing alternative behaviors/coping mechanisms**
- 3. Intervene - Develop an intervention system to address youth vaping behaviors, help deter users/early offenders from becoming abusers, and provide resources for youth who are considered heavy users.**

We are applying the Equity Tool Kit to action 10.3.2 - Implement or maintain a smoking and tobacco use reduction campaign - as vaping use is an emerging issue affecting local youth and creating a public health concern in community schools and other public spaces.

**What was the result of your collaboration?**

After meeting with community stakeholders and having continued meetings in the schools and with students and parents, a comprehensive education, prevention, and intervention program was created to reduce tobacco and vaping use in Glastonbury youth. Stakeholders specifically cited the following suggestions for inclusion as part of this campaign:

- “Let’s implement a vaping intervention program in the schools.”
- “Could we bring in an expert speaker to present to the students on this topic?”
- “Let’s do something where we utilize the YAC group for peer-to-peer education”

The program was implemented using a variety of forums including presentations, resources, and new staffing roles to support the effort. Those efforts can be summarized as follows:

## Presentations

Over the course of the campaign, a number of presentations were designed and provided to help educate youth, staff, and families on numerous vaping related topics. To truly make an impact, the stakeholders and Sustainability Team felt it was paramount to educate each of these groups, and to design the educational materials to encompass the various aspects of vaping. For example, rather than simply focus on the health-related dangers of vaping, the educational programs were designed to also include information that could be practically applied. For parents, this would mean understanding what vaping equipment looked like, how it was referred to, and what to do if they discovered their youth was using. Likewise, students and staff were taught what the equipment looked like, how to respond if offered to vape, or use another substance, resources for help, and other real-life support scenarios and tools. By incorporating these more practical educational components alongside the dangers and health risks of vaping, the stakeholders and Sustainability Team felt the programs would be more effective for youth, parents/guardians, and staff. Presentations were provided on the following dates and topics over recent years:

**January 25, 2019 – Yale/Hartford Hospital Presents to Glastonbury High School** - Glastonbury High School partnered with Yale Assistant Professor of Psychiatry Dr. Dana Cavallo, the Glastonbury Youth Advisory Council (YAC), the Director of Health and Physical Education, and Glastonbury Youth and Family Services to provide a school-wide presentation intended to educate students about the effects of vaping, as well as to provide support for cessation. In response to the stakeholder feedback gathered during the planning meetings, expert speakers and panelists from Yale and Hartford Hospital were brought into the Glastonbury High School to present as a kickoff to the vaping/tobacco use educational campaign and prevention initiative. On January 25, 2019, Dr. Dana Cavallo was introduced by students from the Youth Advisory Council and presented in-person to the Senior Class at Glastonbury High School (12<sup>th</sup> graders) during their 'Current Issues' class (first period of day) and the presentation was live streamed to all other students in their home room class on the same date/time. Additionally, the presentation was posted to the Glastonbury High School (GHS) website so that students' parents could watch it. As noted in the data section of this report, most Glastonbury households have a computer with internet access, therefore we felt this would be a useful platform for reference and ongoing education. At the onset of the school year, and throughout the year, Glastonbury families have the opportunity to self-identify that they do not have a computer or internet access in their homes, and they communicate that need to the schools. With this information, the Sustainability Team provided hot spots to these families to help provide them an opportunity to watch the vaping presentation as well.

Following the presentation, the organizing groups held a post-event meeting to get feedback from student and adult participants. The overall feedback was positive, and teachers and students alike voiced that they felt better informed on this topic and better able to identify vaping devices and dangers. However, there were, of course, some naysayers who made comments such as "We're vaping, everyone is vaping." "It's too trendy and more prevalent than people think. A presentation isn't going to make a difference." This feedback, while disconcerting, emphasized the importance of having a multi-tiered campaign that went beyond simple education and incorporated prevention and intervention tactics as discussed later in this report.

**April 8, 2019 - Focus Group with Senator Richard Blumenthal** - In April of 2019, Senator Richard Blumenthal facilitated a focus group with Glastonbury High School (GHS) students, staff, and faculty to gain feedback and knowledge on the growing concerns of vaping and electronic cigarette use: a mounting concern for community members across the state. Although the Director of Youth & Family Services and 4 other adults were invited to participate in the focus group, this session was designed to be a student-driven conversation where students/youth could express their thoughts on teen vaping directly to the Senator. 25 people attended this focus group event.

During the focus group, youth/students were given an opportunity to express their concerns and share their stories with Senator Blumenthal in regards to what they have seen occur within the Glastonbury community in terms as vaping/e-cigarette use. The Senator wanted to pick the brain of the students to see how they could inform him. It was an exchange of information to glean answers to questions such as: "How much do we know now on this issue?", "What do we need to find out?", and "What should be done on the state level and school level?" Senator Blumenthal also

provided education and expressed his concern around the increased use of vaping/electronic cigarette use, specifically within the youth population. He also highlighted his new legislation on the subject.

Prior to this event, The Preventing Opportunities for Teen E-Cigarette and Tobacco Addiction (PROTECT) Act was introduced by Richard Blumenthal and others. Shortly after this event, the PROTECT ACT was adopted, which provided funding to the CDC for research, creation of effective messaging to youth to reduce the purchasing of tobacco products, education of youth around the rapidly evolving tobacco and vaping landscape, and prevention. In addition, flavored vaping product most appealing to youth were prohibited for retail sale.

**PTSO Panel Discussion:** In 2019, the Glastonbury Parent Teacher Student Organization (PTSO) hosted a forum titled “Vaping 101”: Parents, We Have a Problem’, which featured a discussion on vaping with 3 Connecticut doctors, 2 high school students, a local police officer, the Glastonbury Schools superintendent, 3 school principals, a school social worker, and a state congresswoman. This event was open to all families both within Glastonbury and surrounding towns. Promotion of this program occurred in schools, the local newspaper, and online. This panel discussion was an effective way to reach parents and raise awareness of resources. This was evidenced by the specific feedback we received from participants. For example, immediately after the event was held, one parent approached the school outreach social worker to discuss concerns about her daughter’s vaping behavior. This Mom was specifically asking for education and support for herself and her daughter. The following week, the Glastonbury Outreach social worker contacted the Mom to accommodate her request by providing more educate, support and resources to her based on her unique situation. Additionally, the social worker met with her daughter that same week in school to further assess the situation over several weeks. Education and resources were given to this youth as well to encourage cessation of the vaping behaviors.

### **Outreach and Educational Campaigns**

**Peer-to-Peer Education with Youth Advisory Council (YAC)** - In March of 2020, the Youth Advisory Council (YAC) presented to Glastonbury middle school students about the dangers of vaping/electronic cigarettes as part of their Peer-to-Peer Education program. The YAC group is comprised of 8<sup>th</sup> grade and high school students and their mission is to raise awareness in the community and schools around substance misuse and abuse. They have also recently expanded their efforts to address other mental health issues as well. The Peer-to-Peer vaping/electronic cigarette education program was presented in 2 sessions of roughly 250-275 students per assembly at Smith Middle School. YAC students presented a program that they themselves developed on vaping and tobacco use. The presentation discussed what vaping is, the consequences of vaping, and personal, real-life anecdotes from the YAC members. Middle school students had the opportunity to learn directly from their peers at GHS and a Q&A session was offered at the end of their presentation.

**Current Drug Trends Presentation:** The Substance Abuse Prevention Coordinator (SAPC) hosted multiple presentations over recent years as part of this campaign, specifically on ‘Current Drug Trends’ and vaping. The following dates/presentations were provided over the past few years:

1. On 1/16/2020, Youth and Family Services staff attended an open house at the Glastonbury middle school where they provided vaping resources to families.
2. On 02/10/2020 & 3/22/2021, two presentations were conducted for a group of high school Peer Education students. A discussion took place around “What is vaping?”; “What are the dangers of vaping?”; “What do the current stats show?”; and “Where can students turn for smoking cessation”. After this presentation was completed, a high school student approached the Substance Abuse Prevention Coordinator (SAPC) with follow up questions. The student mentioned that the family recently discovered that her uncle’s (another Glastonbury resident) substance use has become serious and the family was unsure where they can turn for help. The SAPC provided additional education to the student around alcohol use, provided help line numbers for detox and residential programs, and also provided her with contact information so that the student’s family could reach out with direct questions and concerns. The family did reach out and scheduled an intervention and we were able to successfully connect the individual to treatment. After completion of

residential treatment, Y&FS staff worked with the individual and connected him to outpatient virtual resources so that he would continue to have support during the pandemic. Resources were also provided to family members for support. This was a highly successful outcome and a great example of the effectiveness of these educational presentations and opportunities to create networks of resources for families in need.

3. On 3/5/2020, a presentation on Current drug trends was given to parents/guardians of 6<sup>th</sup> thru 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. The presentation discussed vaping, current trends, what to be on the lookout for, and local help resources. They also showed samples of the vapes currently being used by adolescents.
4. On March 10, 2020, the SAPC completed a presentation for Glastonbury School staff on Current Drug Trends, which included providing education on vaping and what signs they should look for. It also touched on current vaping trends, "How to have a conversation with students around vaping", and where to refer students for smoking cessation.
5. A presentation on substance use, including vaping, was held for the Glastonbury Boy Scouts (starting from elementary school up to high school) and their families. The presentation discussed substance use and vaping, followed by a discussion about what electronic cigarettes look like, "how to respond if offered any substance (including a vape)", and the side effects of smoking. Presenters also distributed resources and educational information to parents/guardians. These sessions were held on 11/17/2020 and 11/18/2020.
6. On November 9, 2020, the SAPC published an article titled "Vaping: What you need to know!" which included information for parents/guardians on what a vape looks like. The article also explained that both e-cigarettes and regular cigarettes contain nicotine. The SAPC also included her contact information in the article so that readers could follow up with questions or concerns.

### **Prevention Programs**

Research has shown that prevention and early intervention programs can help reduce the impact of substance use within our communities. It is important for us to continue to intervene early and educate our youth and their families on substance use trends so that they have the right tools and resources, and feel well equipped to make the best decisions possible (peer modeling, coping mechanisms). Through our presentations, educational forums, advertisements, and interactions with the community, we hope to be able to continue to reach as many families as possible. We also understand that not every family feels comfortable attending forums or large presentations, which is why we have been, and will continue to offer alternative options such as one-on-one sessions. For adolescents who experiment and end up using a substance, we hope that through the programs and resources we have developed, we will be able to work together as a community and intervene early enough before the use progresses into addiction. Regardless of what part of the town our residents might be located in, we want to continue building these relationships, engaging them for their input and making changes where necessary to help ensure that all of our residents feel comfortable reaching out to us for help.

### **Diversion Program**

This program was developed to prevent first-time youth offenders from entering the Juvenile Justice system. The Glastonbury Police Department refers youth offenders involved in the illegal use/misuse of substances to Glastonbury Youth and Family Services for education, intervention, and recommendations. Education around vaping/electronic cigarette use is provided to the students. These youth are seen by both Y&FS clinical staff and our SAPC as appropriate.

During the first session of the SAPC drug and alcohol education, the participants are given the opportunity to discuss what brought them to the Diversion Program and what they might be interested in learning. We then do an overview of the different stages of substance use: experimental, social/regular use, problem/risky use, and dependent/addiction. A discussion takes place around the different categories of substances, (alcohol, opioids, marijuana, vaping etc.), and potential outcomes/consequences if these substances are used - e.g. medical emergencies, encounters with law enforcement, etc.

The Diversion Program is available in an individualized and group setting. If meeting with an individual, we provide additional education around the specific substance that brought them into the program. We also have the participants

view different educational videos or talks done by celebrities or other role models/people they may look up to. We also provide reference/take-home educational materials in case the participant is interested in reading more on any topic after these sessions. At the end of the session, we have an open dialogue with the participants to ask them what they have learned, what might have been helpful, and what we can improve on. This ongoing feedback helps inspire future modifications so that we can be as effective and helpful as possible. Participant input highlighted the preference of the group model over the individual one. We adapted our model to allow participants to jump into the educational portion at any point. In addition, we allowed for participants to choose to present formal discussion of what they learned to staff in order to earn community service credit.

In addition, all youth who are placed in the Diversion program are assigned a number of community service hours by the Glastonbury Police Department. The Glastonbury Y&FS staff helps connect these youth to community service opportunities as well as to ongoing clinical services if appropriate. We have also collaborated with members of The Youth and Family Commission to help develop meaningful community service and service learning opportunities to maximize the benefits to the youth participants and help ensure they get the most out of the program.

### **Intervention - Glastonbury Youth & Family Services Vaping Intervention Program**

To address parent/guardian concerns with vaping by youth, Social Workers within the Glastonbury Youth and Family Services (Y&FS) division created a 4-pronged Vaping Intervention Program for school-based offenders on the high school and middle school level. The program was launched in 2019 through a partnership between Glastonbury Y&FS, the Glastonbury Police Department, and Glastonbury Public Schools. The Intervention program consists of education, assessment, and referral components to address the varying reasons a student may engage in vaping behaviors. If a student is caught vaping or using electronic cigarettes or other tobacco/substances in school, the student is referred to Y&FS staff. At the high school level, any student offenders who are caught vaping or with a vaping device are automatically enrolled in the Y&FS 4-pronged Vaping Intervention Program.

The 4-pronged program consists of:

1. psycho-educational support
2. exploration of use of vaping as a coping mechanism
3. alternative healthy coping mechanisms to replace the behavior, and
4. an assessment of where the student may be in the use/misuse process - e.g. experimentation, use/misuse and dangerous addiction.

Intervention program sessions are facilitated by Glastonbury Y&FS staff and include reasons and triggers for vaping, healthy and unhealthy coping skills/stress reducers, good decision making, and harm reduction. If any student is assessed to be of greater concern in the assessment/use spectrum, Y&FS make referrals to their own clinic, into the Y&FS drug/alcohol session run by Y&FS staff, or to other local community resources as deemed necessary.

This 4-pronged intervention program was launched in 2019. In the first full school year of the program's implementation, 15 students were referred to the program. This program was welcomed by school administrators, counselors, teachers, and parents as it provided an easily accessible and immediate starting point to provide student education while examining behaviors leading to these infractions. We have also established many success stories for the effectiveness of the program, and the value it's providing Glastonbury youth and families. For example, a school administrator referred a female student to the intervention program after discovering a vaping device in her backpack. The student explained that she began vaping as a way to manage her stress. These stressors were mostly due to social anxiety and difficulty making friends. The Y&FS intervention team engaged with the student to discuss a variety of alternative ways to help manage anxiety and provided healthy stress management tools for her to consider instead of vaping or other substance use. This student learned that music, time spent with her pets, and journaling were healthy alternatives she was willing to try. Ultimately this student began to use these alternative coping options and engaged in ongoing counseling with a community provider. This interaction is a prime example of how effective the intervention program has been, and its success in helping to cessation before the substance use led to addiction.

During the pandemic, the intervention program continued on a virtual basis, however referrals were greatly reduced. Since students were all in an at-home learning environment, teachers and faculty did not have the opportunity to witness such behaviors and make referrals. Now that the student body has returned to in-school learning, we expect the referrals to return to pre-pandemic activity levels.

## **5. How will you Refine, Revisit and Improve**

The Sustainability Team was successful in implementing this comprehensive program to discuss the emerging concerns about vaping use, largely as a result of the many players and invested stakeholders who provided input and support to the effort. Community concern was significant and motivated these groups to come together for discussion and implementation of the action steps developed. This allowed for easy access into schools and other community spaces to reach a wide variety of adults, staff, and students throughout the community.

Our efforts to provide a comprehensive 3 tier prevention, education, and intervention program to reduce the use and misuse of vaping and e-cigarettes among youth was targeted at reaching all interested members of our community. All our events were free of charge and intentionally held at various locations and various times of the day with the hopes of making it more convenient for all community members to attend, whether they were working families, income limited, enrolled in the public schools, or not. We also provided a specific 'current drug trend' training to the staff and faculty in an alternative school setting for students with disabilities and other mental or physical challenges.

We strategically provided these resources and programming through both in-person and virtual settings to accommodate community members with and without access to computers and internet, though we relied on web-based communication platforms for distributing information as supported by the Census data. That said, we also attempted to make some of our educational resources available through hard copy format, such as articles in the local newspaper and distributed paper materials as mentioned previously to ensure the community members without these amenities had equal access to our resources and programs. Additionally, as we engaged with each individual and family, we were mindful to adjust our communication and presentation styles to best suit their preferences and expressed needs to help make the outcome as effective as possible.

In terms of event venues, we chose to host most of our events in the school facilities for many reasons. By presenting in the school facilities, we were able to reach the entire student body of the target audience of 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> graders, inclusive of all age groups, backgrounds, demographics, and abilities. By hosting events on the school premises, we also eliminated potential barriers of transportation or access, as all students have access to the school bus transportation system and parents/guardians would not need to arrange/plan for transportation. Going forward, we will continue to seek feedback from program participants about the times, dates, and forums through which we provide these programs to ensure they are conducive to community needs, and adapt as applicable.

The Substance Abuse Prevention Coordinator continues to play a very active role in these campaign efforts. While the Town has had the SAPC position in place for some time, it has been challenging to find someone who is a good fit for the role and we have had several individuals come and go over the past several years. Fortunately, our current SAPC, Mirela Mujcinovic, was hired September 2019 and has been a fantastic fit for the role. Since joining the team, Mirela has played an integral role in the success of the Town's vaping and electronic cigarette prevention and education, and as an interventionist, she has been a key player in the Diversion and 4-pronged vaping intervention program. Additionally, Mirela continues to be extremely active in terms of public outreach with community members. Through the dedicated efforts of Mirela and other members of the Sustainability Team, Glastonbury Y&FS staff have seen an increased level of interest from community members in the intervention/educational programming – specifically, an increase in calls and inquiries asking for referrals or assistance.

To help demonstrate the effectiveness of the overall prevention campaign and how these efforts are reaching the target populations, we wanted to provide 2 examples of success stories:

A mother contacted an outreach social worker at Youth and Family Services and expressed concerned about her son's vaping and substance use. This family had met the outreach social worker while their son was in middle



school and the engagement process between the student and the Glastonbury Social Workers continued through high school. Over the past several years, the strength and duration of this relation made the student and the family feel comfortable reaching out for support. Following graduation, parent concerns for their son's well-being and possible involvement with substance misuse increased. Mom contacted outreach social worker to express her concerns and several meetings were held notified. Outreach social and mom met with the substance abuse prevention coordinator (SAPC) and then scheduled an intervention with the son and his family. Through this intervention, we successfully connected the student with a local clinician for support with mental health and substance use. Following the intervention, the outreach social worker scheduled a one-on-one meeting with the SAPC and the student to discuss next steps. As a result of these interventions and support efforts, the student decided that he needed a higher level of care and went to a treatment facility out of state. The family followed up with Y&FS staff regularly and continues to inform us that he is doing well. They are currently working on a plan to help transition him back to Glastonbury and to ensure that he has all of the support services that may be needed to continue his progress.

The Glastonbury Social Services Department reached out to the SAPC for support after they received a call from a resident in need. The caller was from an elderly resident whose son had moved back to Glastonbury after losing his job during the pandemic. His son was also facing challenges of substance abuse. The SAPC reached out to the family and scheduled a meeting with the individual seeking support and his family. The client was not prepared to go into treatment and did not think that his substance use was causing any harm to anyone including himself. As part of the Intervention Program, the SAPC follows a "harm reduction model" in which continued support and follow up is provided until a client is ready to enter treatment. Given that model, the SAPC continued to check in with the family and the client to offer ongoing support over the past two years. He was not willing to meet in person but was open to receiving educational materials at his home. To accommodate his needs and preferred support and communication methods, the SAPC mailed him resources from the Connecticut Clearinghouse and other resources, and suggested the individual reach out to the sources provided. She continued to check in with the family and connected them with Families Anonymous and other local resources for support. After 8 months of ongoing outreach, the client finally decided to go into substance use treatment. He is currently in treatment and the family reports he is doing well. The SAPC is now working with the family to form a plan for aftercare and ensure that the client feels well supported and has access to resources to help further support his recovery upon his return.

The examples above not only demonstrate the effectiveness of the intervention campaign, but also the successes that can be derived by ongoing engagement and adapting the tools and model to the unique needs and preferences of each community member. This can range from communication style, to how resources are delivered, and highlights the success of the intervention program since its inception in 2019.

### **Going forward**

To further expand our reach, Y&FS staff began meeting with the local prevention council, Glastonbury Community Action Partnership (GCAP) to discuss opportunities for collaboration, and we plan to explore partnership opportunities for future initiatives. GCAP is currently working on recruiting new members to their organization, such as individuals representing faith organizations and mental health facilities, and those added perspectives will be extremely valuable as we move forward with these efforts.

One of the goals of the past 2 years was to provide educational services to the elderly and to the low income community. Unfortunately, this goal was postponed due to the pandemic, as many of the pandemic-related restrictions precluded our ability to effectively reach these populations. For the coming years, we will seek greater collaboration with the Glastonbury Housing Authority, Senior Services and interfaith groups in the community to further extend our efforts to the senior population as well as minorities and community members with income limitations.

For the coming year(s), we also hope to include youth who are either currently vaping or in recovery in our prevention efforts. Research shows that peer-to-peer education is effective with youth especially. Increased attendance and active participation are seen in assemblies where this model is used. In addition, youth input would be valuable in helping us learn directly from our target audience, and glean greater insight as to what additional changes we may need to make in our community prevention programs. We will continue to work with the Glastonbury schools to identify potential opportunities to engage these youth in conversation and future programming.

This comprehensive and evolving campaign has been very well received by community members and the Sustainability Team is proud of the impact they are having on youth and families to help reduce vaping and e-cigarette use. Our collaborative efforts are proving to help with substance cessation and contribute directly to an improved quality of life and path to success for youth members of the Glastonbury community. We are proud of these efforts to date and look forward to continuing to modify and improve upon them to best serve the needs of the community.