

# Newtown Community Info Brief on Underage Drinking

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## SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE NEWTOWN PFS GRANT

NYFS was awarded \$320,000 with the Partnership for Success Grant from the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services over a 4 year period. The grant was intended to reduce the percentage of youth who report that they drank alcohol one or more days during the past 30 days and reduce the percentage of youth who report that they drank five or more drinks on the same occasion on at least one day in the past 30 days (binge drinking). Various data driven initiatives were implemented within the Newtown community to address these issues.

## ALL ABOUT NEWTOWN

- Newtown's population of 26,957 is spread over 58 square miles.\*
- 911 students in grades 7-12 with 48% female and 52% male.
- Newtown High School and Newtown Middle School are the town's two public higher ed schools.

\*Census, 2010. \*\*GPIY Survey 2012

## ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM

NYFS's goals are to address risk factors such as: *reducing peer norms that encourage and/or accept drinking* and to *increase perception of harm*. Specific PFS strategies and initiatives were developed to address these risk factors. These strategies center on: social marketing, positive substance free youth activities and peer mentoring.



The Newtown Prevention Council is a group of community key stake holders working together to engage every relevant segment of the Town of Newtown in the development of multiple town-wide long-term strategies that focus on prevention of underage drinking.

*"Building a coalition of community members working toward a safe and substance free town."*

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Over **400** students participated in FUSION throughout PFS programming. Through FUSION, students completed thousands of community service hours.
- Students attended over **20** Fun Friday events after-school at NHS.
- Over **80,000** placemats have been used at a local diner with messaging related to SetTheRulesCT.org and social norms for Newtown.
- NPC organized, promoted and sponsored TIPS trainings for off-premise and on-premise liquor licensee's in 2010 and 2013.
- A local journalist had the PFS coordinator as a guest on the local community access channel to talk about the prevention efforts and the new Set the Rules CT campaign

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Student Survey		√		√	
Parent Survey		√		√	
Youth Focus Groups	√	√	√	√	
Parent Focus Group	√	√	√		
Faith Based Focus Group	√	√	√		
FUSION Survey	√	√	√	√	√
Alc. Free Events	√	√	√	√	√

Alcohol Use	Source	Baseline (2009)	Year 4 (2013)
Past 30-day use, high school students	YRBS - NPC -	44% 40%	39% 26%
Past month binge alcohol use, high school students	YRBS - NPC -	24% 27%	22% 16%

## OVERALL:

The data suggests that the NPC has been able to substantially shift the trend in terms of underage drinking rates among youth in the community. Fewer students reported drinking from 2009 to 2013 and almost three-fourths of all Newtown high school students reported not drinking

at all in the past 30-days. The data also supports that there has been a delay in the age of onset for Newtown youth; in 2013, reported lifetime use (defined as having 'more than a few sips' of alcohol) decreased for all students in 7th to 12th grade when compared to rates in 2009. Some of the data also indicates that continued attention is necessary. Drinking rates among high school upperclassmen are significantly higher: 37% report 30-day use, 67% report lifetime use, and 45% report excessive (or binge) use. In addition, 16% of these students report riding in a car with someone who has been drinking in the past year. Fortunately, NPC will continue to work on these issues and the overall goals and objectives outlined above through a federal Drug Free Communities grant that provides the coalition with substance abuse prevention funding. The peer mentoring group has been so successful that NYFS is in discussion with the Intermediate and Middle School in implementing a similar program!