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Special points of interest:

- *Healthy Bedford Wins Implementation Funds*
- *Online Mental Health Screenings*
- *JGMS After School Program - Winter 2013*
- *Youth and Family Services Committee 2013-2014*
- *Fuel Assistance Available*
- *Veterans Service District*
- *Walk Like A Penguin*
- *Youth and Family Donors*
- *MDMA Drug Guidelines for Parents*



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Healthy Bedford Wins Implementation Funds

In November the Healthy Bedford Task Force learned that their planning efforts of the last 18 months had been successful. The Northwest Suburban Health Alliance or CHNA 15 announced that Healthy Bedford was awarded \$25,000 in funds for the Implementation portion of their planning efforts. Funded through the Northwest Suburban Health Alliance/CHNA 15 DON, or "Determination of Need," funds from Lahey Clinic, Winchester Hospital, and Mount Auburn Hospital, Healthy Bedford proposed to utilize the results from the "Towards a Healthier Bedford" Planning process to address transportation related

concerns in the community as the #1 problem identified in surveys, focus groups, and conversation through the planning period.

To address those transportation related concerns Healthy Bedford proposed two projects. One was implementation of a Pedestrian Master Plan for the community to address walkability issues, specifically lack of sidewalks in certain areas and lack of connectivity via trails or paths from outlying parts of town. The other project is to research and seek funding for a circulator bus or some sort of fixed route local transit to enhance access around Bedford and decrease congestion and

the private automobile. Healthy Bedford is moving ahead researching both of these topics and will be looking for citizen input and participation as they go forward. For more information or to be involved contact Healthy Bedford Coordinator Carla Olson Mondays and Thursdays at 781-275-7727 or email her at:

Healthybedford
@bedfordma.gov



Online Mental Health Screening Program Helps to Identify Depression and Mood Disorders

The holiday season is supposed to be one of the most joyous times of the year. But a calendar filled with social engagements, shopping for presents and endless errands can leave even the most holiday spirited individual emotionally drained.

If you are overwhelmed by the holidays and have not been feeling like yourself lately, take a free, anonymous mental health or alcohol screening online at www.bedfordma.gov/youth or www.mentalhealthscreening.org/screening/BYFS

You'll receive immediate, customized feedback as well as the opportunity to schedule an appointment for further evaluation if necessary.

Here are eight helpful hints to help you manage the holiday

season from the National Mental Health Association:

1. Set realistic goals. Plan ahead, shop and make travel plans early and pace yourself. This will help decrease last minute anxiety.
2. Don't do everything on your own. Get everyone in the family to help with holiday tasks.
3. Scale down your expectations.
4. Manage your time and make sure you leave extra time for last minute changes or crises.
5. Try to relax. Deep breathing exercises, relaxation tapes, and gentle yoga are some techniques that may help you.
6. Exercise. If you already have a regular exercise routine,

maintain it through the holidays.

7. Monitor your feelings and share them with a good friend. Even a quick phone call or email exchange can help you feel better.

8. Don't drink too much. While alcohol is abundant at holiday parties, too much can actually make you feel more depressed.

In a recent independent study commissioned by the nonprofit Screening for Mental Health, 55 percent of study participants who completed an online depression and mood disorder screening sought treatment within three months of taking the screening.

Cont'd on page 3

JGMS After School Program Winter 2013

GIRL TALK!

FITNESS ROOM AFTER SCHOOL!

INTRODUCTION TO CPR!

SHOOTING AND EDITING FOR TV!

YOGA FOR THE MIDDLE SCHOOL BODY & MIND

Bedford Youth and Family Services in collaboration with John Glenn Middle School is gearing up for another successful Winter After School program with a focus on the most popular activities including Girl Talk with Bedford High School student leaders and advisors Maureen McDermott and Wendy Tanahashi-Works, Fitness Room After School with Justin Newton, our always popular Shooting and Editing for TV with

Greg Dolan, and two exciting new activities: Introduction to CPR with Anita Anzuoni, RN and Yoga for the Middle School Body and Mind with Nicole d'Entremont.

Activities begin the week of January 6th. The registration deadline for all programs is December 20th. *Space is limited; be sure to sign up as soon as possible to secure your spot.* You can find our flyer and registration form at:

www.bedfordma.gov/youth or (Click on the Youth Development section). Flyers are also available in our office at Town Center and at JGMS. Feel free to call Jessica Wildfong at 781-275-7727 ext. 262 or email at jessicaw@bedfordma.gov with any questions or concerns.



2013-2014 Youth and Family Services Committee:

Tom Pinney, Chair ♦ Kristina Philipson, at Large ♦ Alison Malkin, at Large

Caroline Fedele, Selectman Liaison ♦ Jeff Wardwell, Police

Ann Guay, School Committee ♦ Kevin Wormstead, Board of Health Liaison

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Fuel Assistance Available

If you could use some help paying your home heating bills, the Commonwealth's Fuel Assistance Program may be for you!

Bedford residents of all ages are invited to apply for the program which provides a benefit to those who meet certain income guidelines to pay fuel bills.

To be eligible, you must be a Bedford resident and have an income ranging from \$32,065 for a one-person household to \$81,396 for a six-person household. The income limit is higher for families with more than six members. The amount of money the program provides depends on the number of household members and the household income.

Those who enroll in the Fuel Assistance Program may also be automatically eligible

for a free home weatherization program, free heating system repair or replacement, free energy-saving devices, and discounts for many utilities.

To apply, Bedford residents under age 60 should call Bedford Youth and Family Services (BYFS) at 781-275-7727 and those age 60 or older should call the Bedford Council on Aging (COA) at 781-275-6825. The YFS or COA will set up a time to assist you with the application. Please be assured that all information given to the friendly agency staff who help you will be held in the strictest confidence.

Income Guideline:

Household Size	Yearly Gross Income
1	\$32,065
2	41,932
3	51,798
4	61,664
5	71,530
6	81,396

Remember, your taxes paid for this program, so if you think you qualify, apply for the benefits you deserve!



Veterans Service District

The mission of the Lexington/Bedford Veterans' Services Office is to support the veterans residing in our district by identifying veterans and their families in need of service and providing information and access to the services for which they are eligible under the law.

Our duty is to furnish information, advice and assistance to veterans and their dependents. Our focus is to enable Veterans to procure the benefits to which they are entitled and relative to employment, vocational or other educational opportunities, hospitalization,

medical care, pensions, burials and other benefits. The Lexington/Bedford Veterans' Services Office maintains strong working relationships with other federal, state, and municipal departments, community groups, and local services. Our office serves as the central point of access for Veterans services for all Lexington and Bedford residents.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts offers a need-based program of financial and medical assistance for veterans and their dependents known as M.G.L. Chapter 115. Qualifying veterans and their

dependents receive necessary financial assistance for food, shelter, clothing, fuel, and medical care in accordance with a formula which takes into account the number of dependents and income from all sources. Eligible dependents of deceased veterans are provided with the same benefits as if the veteran were still living.

The Veterans Services Officer, or VSO, helps veterans and dependents apply for a range of other programs including VA, Social Security,

Walk Like a Penguin! (or Winter Walking Tips)

Walking in the winter can be a safe and enjoyable experience if you dress correctly and are prepared for the weather. There are also some extra benefits to walking in the winter. The crisp cold air can clear your mind and reduce stress. Trudging through snow or walking into the wind takes more energy, which can be helpful for improved fitness and weight loss. Even if you have to walk slower because of the weather, you may be burning more calories. New England winters cover our sidewalks with everything from sleet and ice to snow and whatever you call that gray slush churned up by cars and plows. Regardless of weather conditions, we need to walk, whether for exercise or to reach our destination. The following tips are to help you and your family navigate the cold and slippery weather:

Be safe and be seen. Follow basic safety rules, like looking both ways before you cross a street, crossing at marked crosswalks, watching for traffic, paying attention to cyclists, and



walking to the right on trails and paths. Assume drivers can't see you and proceed with caution, especially when days are short and weather conditions unfavorable. Always make sure vehicles have come to a complete stop before venturing out in front of them. When dressing, wear layers, making the top layer a bright color and/or reflective. Don't put your hands in your pockets; this limits your ability to catch yourself if you start to fall.

Start your walk INTO the wind: You'll be better able to judge just how cold it is and whether you have dressed appropriately. Wear a hat and

keep in 35% of body heat.

Walk like a penguin! On obvious or suspected slippery areas, point your feet out slightly and extend your arms slightly away from your body. Both of these actions reinforce your center of gravity and balance. Move your feet slightly apart as you walk. This will give you better support and balance. If the street is really slippery, bend your knees a little bit. You may feel that you look funny, but it's worth it! When going down an incline, consider turning sideways. Do NOT cross one foot over the other, as you will have no balance while your feet are crossed. If the ground is steep, bend your knees.

For more safe walking or biking ideas, see www.bedfordma.gov/BedfordInMotion

Have Safe and Happy Holidays from the Staff at Bedford Youth and Family Services



Online Mental Health Screenings cont'd from page 1

Although the online screenings are not diagnostic, they do provide valuable insight helping to identify if someone is exhibiting symptoms associated with depression and other mood disorders and if they should seek help.



About Screening for Mental Health

For more than two decades, Screening for Mental Health, Inc. (SMH) has partnered with organizations to provide mental health education screening programs, including *National Depression Screening Day*, *National Alcohol Screening Day®*, and the *National Eating Disorders Screening Program®*. These programs are

designed to educate, reduce stigma and screen people for mood and anxiety disorders as well as alcohol problems. Individuals can locate a mental health screening site or take an online screening by visiting www.HelpYourselfHelpOthers.org

For more information about SMH, visit www.MentalHealthScreening.org

Thank you to our Donors:

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The Residents of
Bedford through
your Taxes

MDMA (Ecstasy) Drug Guides for Parents: Learn the Facts to Keep Your Teen Safe

What is MDMA?

MDMA stands for methylenedoxy-methamphetamine and is commonly known as Ecstasy. It is a synthetic drug with amphetamine-like and hallucinogenic properties. Molly, short for molecule, is considered to be pure MDMA and is classified as a stimulant.

What are the street names/slang terms?

E, Molly, Roll, X, STC, Adam, Love Drug

What does it look like?

Ecstasy comes in a tablet form that is often branded, e.g. Playboy bunnies, Nike swoosh, CK. Molly is the powder or crystal form of MDMA. Makers of Ecstasy and Molly can add anything they want to the drugs so their purity is always in question.

How is it used?

Users sometimes take it at “raves,” clubs, and other parties to keep on dancing and for mood enhancement.

What are its short-term effects?

Users report that Ecstasy produces intensely pleasurable effects, including an enhanced sense of self-confidence and energy. Effects include feelings of peacefulness, acceptance and empathy. Users say they experience feelings of closeness with others and a desire to touch others. Other effects can include involuntary teeth clenching, a loss of inhibitions, transfixion on sights and sounds, nausea, blurred vision, chills and/or sweating. Increases in heart rate and blood pressure, as well as seizures, are also possible.

What are its long-term effects?

Repeated use of Ecstasy ultimately may damage the cells that produce serotonin, which has an important role in the regulation of mood, appetite, pain, learning, and memory. Research suggests Ecstasy use can disrupt or interfere with memory.

8 Ways to Talk With Your Teen about Drugs and Alcohol

Talking to your teen about substance abuse doesn't have to be difficult. References to drugs and alcohol appear in headlines, sitcoms, movies and advertisements. Take advantage of these opportunities to start a conversation with your child.

1. Use blocks of time such as after dinner, before bedtime, before school, or on the drive to or from school and extracurricular activities to talk about drugs and why they're harmful.
2. Take advantage of everyday “teachable moments.” Teachable moments refer to using every day events in your life to point out things you'd like your child to know.
3. Point out alcohol, tobacco, and drug-related situations going on in your own

community. If you and your child are at the park and see a group of kids drinking or smoking, use the moment to talk about the negative effects of alcohol and tobacco.

3. Use newspaper headlines or TV news stories as a conversation starter. The daily news is filled with stories that detail the consequences of alcohol and drug abuse. Talk to your child about the mother who used drugs and was arrested. Who will take care of her baby now? Did she make a good decision when she used drugs?
5. Watch TV with your kids and ask them what they think. Do the shows and advertising make drug use look acceptable and routine? Or do they show its downside? How did that program make your child feel about drugs?
6. When discussing outside events like something on TV or in pop culture, ask open-ended questions, suggest Dr. Drew Pinsky, physician, board certified internist, and addiction medicine specialist. According to Dr. Pinsky, “What do you think about that?” is a great way to start. It takes the heat off them - and then you have an

opportunity to share with them your values, your ideas and educate.”

7. Share stories of people in recovery and stories of those lost to drugs and alcohol. Ask your teen their thoughts and feelings after reading the stories.
8. View The Partnership at www.Drugfree.org Drug Guide to learn more about the top drugs in your teen's world. Then ask your teen about these drugs— has he/she heard of them? What does she know about them? Does anyone in her school use these drugs? Any of his friends? Has he/she ever been offered to drink or smoke weed?

Do you suspect or know your teen is using drugs? Get step-by-step guidance at Time To Act website <http://timetoact.drugfree.org>

Sources: National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA); Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), The Partnership at Drugfree.org, <http://theparenttoolkit.org>

For more information call Prevention Services Coordinator, Jessica Wildfong at 781-275-7727 ext. 262 or email at jessicaw@bedfordma.gov

BYFS Staff Queries - Main Number: 781/275-7727

Sue Baldauf, Director, x263 - Counseling referrals or questions ~ General dept. questions ~ Community concern ~ Issue related to Violence Prevention Coalition, Bedford Community Partnership, Business Diversity Training, Progress Fund ~ Parenting Education Topic

Fran Stander, Administrative Assistant, x264 - General questions ~ General community & Resources ~ Job Match ~ Events & Press Releases ~ New Resident Packets ~ Volunteer Opportunities

Jessica Wildfong, Youth Development/Prevention, x262 - JGMS After School ~ Peer Mentoring ~ Youth Website ~ Other youth related issues - Alcohol, tobacco, or drug education ~ Diversion ~ Youth Risk Behavior Survey ~ Safe Homes ~ Fuel Assistance

Carla Olson, Safe Routes to School Coordinator, x260 most Thursdays

Ryan Lennon and Bill Linnehan, Veterans Agents, 781/275-1328 - Any veterans related question

Eliot Counselors: 781-275-7727 Julie Williams x261, Lynne Chapas x260; 978-369-1113 Kristen Herlihy x115, Julia Lawrence x161

Veterans Agent Hours

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and SNAP food stamp benefits, to name a few.

Bedford Veterans are

encouraged to contact Bedford VSO Bill Linnehan on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:30 a.m. to

4:30 p.m. if there are questions relative to any veterans benefits and services.

Phone number is 781-275-1328 and email is veterans@bedfordma.gov