



July 15, 2022

Dear Parents and Community Members,

Happy summer from the Northeast Prevention Coalition! The Northeast Prevention Coalition, serving Caledonia and southern Essex County, seeks to come together to support prevention and promote education for youth, as well as all ages, concerning substance use, misuse, and abuse. Our vision is for Northeast Kingdom communities to support healthy choices. The school year has come to an end and the long awaited summer is here. Children, youth, and adults alike are gearing up for fun in the sun. We are writing to ask for your help in ensuring that the summer festivities our children and youth attend are memorable and safe. Please join us in making every effort to prevent alcohol and other substance use during these times.

According to the 2019 Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), 63% of Caledonia County youth in 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades say if they wanted to get alcohol, it would be easy or very easy to get. The YRBS also states that 53% of Caledonia County youth in 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades say if they wanted to get marijuana (cannabis), it would be sort of easy or very easy to get. According to [ParentUP VT](#), *"Thousands of teens die from alcohol-related deaths every year. Nearly one-third of underage drinking deaths involve impaired driving. The rest involve alcohol poisoning, homicides, suicides, and accidents."* Please, please remember that it is against the law to host a gathering where alcohol is consumed by minors. Youth often underestimate the impact that alcohol and other substances, such as cannabis, have on driving. It can impair vision, distort perception of time and space, inhibit reflexes, and may cause drowsiness. These effects are especially alarming when we take into account a youth's inexperience behind the wheel of a vehicle.

In 2017 Vermont children and youth were surveyed about an array of concerns that they have and how they navigate them. When asked what would help them, they said the number one solution would be more supportive adults in their lives. **We know that the single most common factor for children who develop resilience to stress and adversity is having at least one stable relationship with a supportive parent, caregiver, or another adult in their lives** ([Harvard Center for Developing Child](#)). According to the [Askable Adult Campaign](#), qualities of adults who are "askable" include patience, consistency, respectfulness, honesty, kindness, attentiveness, trustworthiness, lightheartedness, open-mindedness, non-judgment, and knowledgeability. No matter your relationship to them, "You matter to me" is the message that all children and youth in your life should get from you. Tell them that they matter to you and show up for them over and over again.

You can learn more about these helpful tips and how to take action from [The Askable Adult Campaign](#) and from [ParentUp VT](#). You can access additional Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey data from [Vermont Department of Health](#). If you would like more information about the Northeast Prevention Coalition's efforts or how to join the effort by becoming a member, please contact Carolyn Towne, Substance Misuse Prevention Coordinator at 802-748-7551 or [c.towne@nvrh.org](mailto:c.towne@nvrh.org). Thank you for your assistance in ensuring a safe summer and in cultivating a community where children and youth can thrive.

Sincerely,

Northeast Prevention Coalition

*(Our membership includes representatives from Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital, Umbrella Inc., Vermont Department of Health, Vermont Department of Liquor and Lottery, Northeast Kingdom Youth Services, Kingdom Recovery Center, and more, including concerned parents, youth, law enforcement, religious and fraternal organizations, local businesses, schools, civic/volunteer organizations, and media)*