

Community Coalition News

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Community Coalition
Ottauquechee Community Partnership (OCP)



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Coming Up

- ◆ Next Coalition Meeting
December 14th
Focus on
Supporting Safe
Spaces in Our
Communities
5pm Teagle
Library
- ◆ Second Monday's
for Parents
December 13th
7pm Teagle
Library
- ◆ **January is
National
Mentoring Month**

Working in Partnership

Welcome to the first Community Coalition News!

Within these pages you will find the results of community coalition conversations, as well as updates on collaborative projects, activities, ideas, and events focused on the health and wellbeing of our communities.

The Community Coalition meets from 5-7pm every 2nd Tuesday of every month during the school year in the Teagle Library of the Woodstock Union High School and

Middle School (WUHS/MS).

Please let us know if you'd like to be involved in or to find out additional information about any of these activities. Contacts are included wherever possible.

To join and add your update to these pages, please come to the next Coalition Meeting, December 14th at 5pm.

The Theme of the December meeting will be "Supporting Safe Spaces in Our Communities".

WUHS / MS Students - We Want You!

Come to the next Coalition Meeting!
Teagle Library - Dec 14th - 5pm!

Safe Spaces in Our Communities

The focus of our November 9th meeting was Safe Spaces in our Communities, with a particular spotlight on safety for youth. Updates around the table had a specific focus on Safe Spaces.

We collectively explored the questions:

- What defines a Safe Space?
What does it look and feel like?
- Where are Safe Spaces in our

communities? What keeps them safe? Do they need more support? How can they strengthen each other, and provide inviting open spaces for more people? Do people know about them? Is there a need for more?

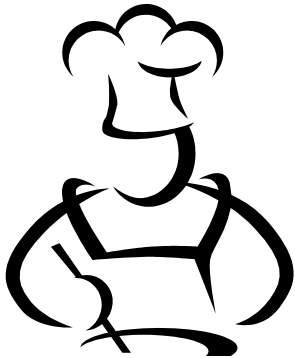
- How can we collaborate to strengthen the Safe Spaces and make sure people know about them?

Who Was at the November Coalition Mtg?

Participating in the November 9th meeting were members of the community representing: parents of Students at WUHS/MS, Purple Crayon Productions/Artistree, the

Woodstock Recreation Center (the Rec), the Vermont Department of Health, and the Ottauquechee Community Partnership (OCP).

What is a Safe Space? What does it feel/look like?



Coalition Members noted that safe spaces are welcoming spaces. They are places where kids feel both trusted and responsible and where they are safe from physical and emotional harm.

In safe spaces, kids feel safe to be themselves - without fear that others will make assumptions or judge them.

Safe spaces are tolerant places.

They are places to socialize and they are substance free and crime free.

There is a level of control within safe spaces; there are clear boundaries and high expectations around what behaviours are acceptable.

What Makes and Keeps A Space Safe?

Tyler Watson won the Health Eating, Active Living (HEAL) Challenge!

Healthy eating video demos from the Market on the Green are available on the OCP website - see www.ocpvt.org/healthy-eating-demos/

People. People who intentionally keep them safe. Places that post rules and provide training to staff on secure and welcoming environments.

Having teen staff can create a more welcoming environment for other teens.

“Cool” spaces are not necessarily safe - and they are often unsupervised. It is important to develop “cool” safe spaces.

Growing up in a program can keep kids engaged in the program

(Spectrum Teen Center was cited as a positive example of this).

It is really important for there to be support for youth during transition times (9-13 years of age).

It’s also important for kids to have transportation to safe spaces from school - and also transportation from that space to their home/community (i.e. bus, carpool).

One coalition member noted that there is a state summer camp training on how to deal with specific issues in order to keep children safe.

Building Community Coalition Capacity

Through the Community Coalition’s focused discussions, the Coalition will work to build stronger partnerships around the work that is already being done and open opportunities for new collaborations and synergies.

The VT Dept of Health and OCP will offer a training for local community members and groups in order to raise awareness of the concepts “environmental strategies” and “population-level change” in January.

More information to come!

Where are Safe Spaces?

Over the past few years of conversations and community dialogues, young people have often pointed to Cumberland Farms and Maplefields as safe, welcoming spaces.

Staff at the Recreation Center (the Rec) and Pool intentionally provide many options for Safe Spaces for kids, including the pool, the basketball courts, and Vail field.

Purple Crayon Productions and Artistree staff are also working to create a welcoming environment for teens by offering a number of workshops and opportunities for young people to explore art together.

The Norman Williams Public Library has many options for kids of

different ages. Coalition members felt that the library seems to be a 'self-organizing' safe space for youth.

Spectrum, located at the Rec, was identified as a space where some young people feel safe to socialize together.

Schools can be safe in places and at times, and unsafe in places and at other times, depending on whether kids are or feel protected (for example, from exposure to drugs, bullying, peer pressure, etc.)

After school programs provide safe spaces.

Approved Shining Light Mentoring sites are meant to be safe spaces.



What Do Young People Think?

Coalition members agreed that in order to really understand what makes a safe space for youth, we need feedback from young people themselves. Coalition members discussed how to launch a survey so that youth could anonymously provide their opinions. From a brief brainstorming session, survey

questions included: When you do have free time, where do you like to go? What makes a good place to hang out? Are there public places that can't hang out that you would like to? Are there places you feel uncomfortable being? Join us to discuss further at the next Coalition meeting!

Who is The Rec?

The Rec is a non profit organization, and they operate 2 pools which are open in the summer, an outdoor basketball court, and the Little Theater. The Rec also takes care of and schedules use of

Woodstock's Vail field. For more info, see <http://www.woodstockrec.com> or contact Gail Devine at gdevine@woodstockrec.com

Who is Purple Crayon Productions/Artistree?

Artistree Community Art Center and Purple Crayon Productions are community spaces where people are given the opportunity to have meaningful and satisfying experiences through visual arts

and music. They are non-profit organizations that share a space on Route 12. For more info, see www.artistreevt.org or contact Tayo Skarrow at ts@purplecrayonproductions.org

December Community Coalition Meeting

Theme:

Supporting Safe Spaces in Our Communities

- What do youth think?
- Do people know about the safe spaces that exist?
- Is there a need for more safe spaces?
- How can we collaborate to strengthen the Safe Spaces that exist and make sure people know about them?
- How do we support the people who make these spaces safe?



OCP

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The Community Coalition is convened by OCP every 2nd Tuesday of the month.

OCP is a 501c3 non-profit organization serving the towns of Barnard, Bridgewater, Killington, Pomfret, Reading and Woodstock.

We're on the Web!
<http://www.ocpvt.org>

Who is the VT Dept of Health?

The Vermont Department of Health is the state's lead agency for public health policy and advocacy. The Dept of Health supports the Community Coalition in

substance abuse, obesity and tobacco prevention discussions and activities. For more info, see <http://healthvermont.gov/> or contact Lee Larson at: lee.larson@ahs.state.vt.us

Who is the OCP?

OCP is a non-profit organization with a mission to explore options to living safer, healthier, and more balanced lives and to provide an atmosphere of

intergenerational support and mutual concern for the well-being of all community members. For more info, see <http://www.ocpvt.org> or contact Jim Grossman jgrossman@ocpvt.org

The Short on Mentoring

OCP's *Shining Light Mentoring Program* partners with area schools to support students who voluntarily choose to have another non-parent, positive adult in their lives.

Woodstock Union Middle/High School: The Shining Light Mentoring Program is in its tenth year of making mentoring matches at the WUMS/HS. We currently have 16 matches, and our goal is to finish the 2011 year with 25 matches. There are at least 20 additional students within the 7th and 8th grades who want a mentor.

New Elementary School programs:

The new mentoring program at Reading Elementary School is moving along with 4 mentors involved so far and another mentor training is scheduled for December. Matches will be made soon after that.

Bridgewater Elementary School

The Bridgewater Elementary School mentoring program is still in its early stages. More mentors are needed for all 3 programs. For information on becoming a mentor, contact Krystal Waite at kwait@ocpvt.org

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