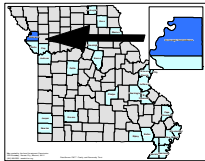
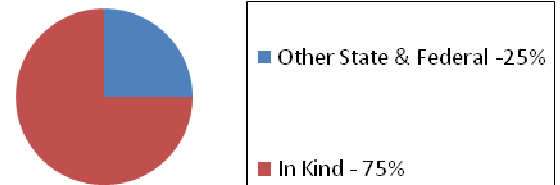


St. Joseph Youth Alliance

Established: 1995



2007-2008 Funding



FY08 Result Achievement: Provided increased education and awareness to youth and adults to reduce the illegal use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs.

September 2008

Community Profile:

The St. Joseph Youth Alliance is located in the City of St. Joseph, chosen this year for the second time as one of the 100 Best Communities for Young People by America's Promise—The Alliance for Youth. Although most of our supports and services are central to Buchanan County, some of our initiatives provide services in the following Missouri counties: Andrew, Atchison, Caldwell, Clinton, Daviess, Dekalb, Gentry, Holt, Nodaway, and Worth. Programmatically, the work of the Alliance focuses on the areas of early childhood education, youth mentoring, teen pregnancy and parenting support, child abuse prevention, youth volunteerism, youth asset development, youth leadership, and youth substance abuse prevention.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Buchanan County population is 84,955. The 2006 racial composition of the county was over 92% White, 4.5% Black, .5% American Indian/Alaskan Native Persons, .6% Asian, and 2.7% Hispanic.

The Alliance is a membership organization that is governed by a 15-member board of directors. Currently our partnership has 15 employees, 8 AmeriCorps members, and is managed by an executive director who has the support of a leadership team. This team works to implement the policies set by the board of directors.

In an effort to create a drug-free community, the Alliance has become increasingly involved in a variety of comprehensive community engagement initiatives. Through these partnerships, we work together to positively change community attitudes and behaviors surrounding drugs, alcohol and tobacco, ultimately encouraging youth to choose substance-free lives.

Current Initiatives Include:

- **Safe Prom & Graduation Initiative**-involved local businesses placing "Stop Underage Drinking" on their marquees during prom and graduation. Local florists, beauty salons, formal wear merchants, and restaurants handed out "celebrate sober" messages with each prom related order. Over 50 businesses participated in this awareness campaign. The Alliance also partnered with other businesses to host 4 safe after prom parties for high school students. The youth enjoyed bowling, pool, games, a disc jockey, and an opportunity to observe a hypnotist, eat, and win prizes. Over 200 youth were in attendance. Underage drinking information was distributed to all youth.

Major Collaborative Accomplishment:

- **Alcohol Compliance Checks**-a strategy implemented by the Youth Alliance in partnership with the St. Joseph Police Department. In the fall of 2007, 72 package retailers were checked with a 56% buy rate. This serves as baseline for our work. One of the keys to reducing underage drinking is to limit youth access to alcohol.

Rock in Prevention:

Following recent data reports on underage drinking, Youth Alliance and its partners recognized the need for an education and awareness campaign targeting drug and alcohol prevention for both youth and adults alike. Community partners took the initiative and responsibility for this community-wide campaign aimed at making Buchanan County a healthier and safer place to work and live. The Rock in Prevention Town Hall Meeting was one of the key components of the campaign. One hundred seventy-one people attended the March 20, 2008, event at the Civic Arena in downtown St. Joseph. This town hall featured Rock in Prevention, a musical group that delivered an interactive, educational, and fun prevention program encouraging youth to lead drug and alcohol-free lives. The key to this type of program is to reach youth with a persuasive prevention message before they experiment the first time with alcohol. Erica Whaley, a speaker from Think First Missouri, spoke that evening about underage drinking and the impact it had on her life. Erica, a paraplegic, told her story about being involved in an alcohol-related car crash and the impact and consequences it has made in her own life. She encouraged each youth to not get involved with underage drinking and to make healthy decisions. An open forum was held at the end of the meeting to discuss issues regarding underage drinking in the local community.

Rock in Prevention Partners:

City of St. Joseph, MO Dept. of Transportation, Think First Missouri, Preferred Family Healthcare, MO Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse, St. Joseph School District, Northwest MO Tobacco Coalition, Buchanan County Sheriff's Dept., St. Joseph Safety Council, Partners in Prevention, AmeriCorps, and the Drug Free Community Coalition.