



Health, Housing and  
Human Services Council

# YOUTH DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE ACTION TEAM REPORT

## Youth Drug and Alcohol Abuse

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### Contact Information

For more information about the needs assessment follow-up process or to obtain a copy of the Summary Report, please contact Jan Lambert, HHHS Executive Director at 842-9335.

For more detail about the action team's discussions, key findings, and recommendations, please request the complete action team report.

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## Background

Youth drug and alcohol use emerged as a significant concern in the HHHS Needs Assessment. The people under 25 focus group stated Bainbridge Island had serious drug problems due mostly to lack of things to do, that many young people can afford drugs, and that accessibility is easy. Many in the group thought the drug problem was getting worse. They also felt that many young people on the Island have a serious problem with drugs, but there is no place to seek confidential help. The group also noted services needed include better drug counseling and education.

**The Healthy Youth Survey 2002** of youth in the Bainbridge Island School District reported the following information regarding youth drug and alcohol abuse:

<u>Question:</u>	<u>Grade 6</u>	<u>Grade 8</u>	<u>Grade 10</u>	<u>Grade 12</u>
Smoking cigarettes in the past 30 days	0.7%	3.0%	14.2%	21.7%
Drinking alcohol in the past 30 days	1.4%	10.4%	41.9%	9.9%
Using marijuana or hashish in the past 30 days	0.7%	3.7%	22.1%	23.0%

The report also includes specific figures on other drug use, confidence levels for percentages, state comparisons and other health risk behavior information.

Following the Health Youth Survey, in fall of 2003 a group of concerned parents, citizens, school district personnel and representatives of youth serving organizations formed the "Just Know Coalition" to begin to address these issues. The Coalition has also served as Action Team addressing Youth Drug and Alcohol use in order to make recommendations on behalf of HHHS.

## Key Findings

- **Youth drug and alcohol use is a symptom around a broader issue of youth development.**  
The meaningful engagement of youth and the validation of youth as contributing members of the community are key issues of focus as the community works to increase the percentage of young people who consistently make "healthy choices" regarding drug and alcohol use.
- **Current data collection efforts provide strong support for concerns regarding levels of student drug and alcohol use.**  
Systems are in place to continue data collection at regular intervals to assess impact of community efforts to reduce drug and alcohol use by our youth.
- **Youth and adults continue to voice concerns regarding the lack of institutional engagement and validation of youth.**  
Youth seek to be seen as "contributing members" of our community (e.g. lack of City youth advisory board, youth-oriented business practices/hours of operation)
- **Existing youth focused organizations struggle to provide quality youth programs and services without adequate facilities or stable funding sources.**  
These existing organizations include youth focused agencies such as Bainbridge Youth Services, Boys & Girls Club and The Teen Center.

## **ACTION TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Establish a clear mission and direction for the “Just Know” community based coalition that ensures sustainability and focused activity for this group.
- Implement specific policies and practices that serve to validate and legitimize the role of youth in our community. For example, establish a youth advisory board structure for the City and other organizations.
- Create a stable funding mechanism to support enhanced funding for youth focused initiatives/programs. Programs to be implemented via existing youth focused organizations such as Bainbridge Youth Services, Teen Center, and Boys & Girls Club, using Bainbridge Youth Services Trust Fund concept as an example.
- Create a task force to explore options for creation of a multi-generational community center facility that provides the infrastructure and physical space to support expanded youth activities on Bainbridge Island.
- Enhance youth access to confidential medical, counseling, and social services resources on Bainbridge Island through the expansion of existing programs/services and/or the creation of new partnerships and programs.
- Work with “youth-oriented” businesses and organizations on Bainbridge Island to encourage expansion of programs, hours of operation and the direct involvement of youth in the shaping of programs and services offered by these groups.