

AROOSTOOK SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION PRESENTS**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW** ASAP!**ASAP'S COALITION NEWSLETTER****DECEMBER 8, 2009**

AMHC Aroostook Chiefs of Police Association Aroostook Teen Leadership Camp CADET Cary Medical Center
Community Voices Healthy Aroostook Link for Hope Coalition Power of Prevention UMPI UMFK WAGM-TV

**TREATMENT EFFORTS
BY REBECCA MILLER, LINK FOR HOPE COALITION**

Her name is Susan* and she was 18 years old when I first met her professionally. I was working as a victim/witness advocate in the District Attorney's Office and Susan was a victim of a rape. In actuality, she was fortunate to have escaped with her life. But now she had to face her accuser and tell a courtroom of strangers what happened to her. During the two years it took to resolve this case, whenever Susan came to my office she was alone. No mother, no father, no one to walk this road with her except me, another stranger. She was frightened and I felt inadequate to alleviate her fears. We got through the trial, conviction and sentencing and my job was over. However, Susan would never leave my heart. Susan did not have the ability to take care of herself. She refused to seek help for the trauma she had experienced. I helplessly watched as she stuffed her feelings and drank herself into oblivion. She got involved in unhealthy relationships over and over again and experienced more violence. She bore children but lost custody of them because she was unable to keep them safe. Today my heart continues to break as I watch her continue on in a vicious cycle: she seeks treatment, gets sober, gets a job and then slips back into her addiction.

Susan is just one of the many, young and old, who have lost everything dear to them because of an addiction. To say addiction in our society has reached epidemic proportions is a gross understatement. Of the indictments issued during a recent Grand Jury in Aroostook County, 78% were substance abuse related and the average age of the defendant was 34. Through my job I have experienced the pain of trying to explain to a grandfather why his grandchild would steal his pain medication; I have witnessed suicide attempts; I have seen violence committed against a "loved" one; I have seen children abused, neglected and forgotten; I have seen parents' and grandparents' hearts broken and faces aged beyond their years; I have held a sobbing mother shortly after she learned her addicted son was dead. And where is the Church in all this? What is the Church doing for these walking wounded?

About two years ago, Pastor David Tuttle of the New Limerick Baptist Church was given a vision to start a faith-based treatment center in Aroostook County. He contacted a few like-minded believers and we have been meeting weekly since May 5, 2008 to pray, brain-storm and pray some more. Out of that time Resting Arms Ministries, Inc. was born. We have been fortunate to have the opportunity to meet with Stan Farmer, co-founder of His Mansion Ministries in New Hampshire (www.hismansion.com). HMM is a model of a healthy faith-based treatment center where there is accountability, mentoring, modeling and life skills taught everyday through healing in the contents of community. Mr. Farmer and the Board of Directors of HMM have 38 years of experience they are willing to share with RAM.

If anyone would like more information about what God has planned for Aroostook County, please contact any of our board members. We would be more than willing to have you join us in this endeavor and ac-

cess your expertise. There is much work to be done and at this point, we are looking for prayer warriors! We are more than willing to do an informational presentation. Resting Arms Ministries Board Members: David Tuttle, 694-1595; Dana Jones, 532-1552; Eric Lincoln, 532-4262; Carol Westerdahl, 532-6782; Rebecca Miller, 538-9026. *Not her real name.

AROOSTOOK TEEN LEADERSHIP CAMP UPDATE

By Jack Foster

The **Aroostook Teen Leadership Camp** (ATLC) program held its 23rd annual summer camp program from July 26th to July 30th at Limestone Community School/MSSM. 55 students from 5 County schools, entering grades 7-9, attended along with a30 staff. 24 of the staff were high-school and college students who attended a previous ATLC summer camp program as students, and two were adults who attended a summer camp as students - some time ago! During summer camp, students listened to national motivational speakers who focused on different aspects of leadership, attended workshops on leadership and drug-awareness issues, participated in small discussion groups and team-building activities, enjoyed evening social activities, and formed lasting friendships.

In August, post-camp activities have begun. Students signed up as members of 6 different planning committees, all of which will have held their first meeting. These committees plan different parts of next summer's camp or plan follow-up activities such as the Camp Reunion in November or ATLC Monthly Activities. Planning committees usually meet bi-monthly from August through April.

Over 30 students and staff attended the Disc Golf Outing in Caribou, which was the August Monthly Outing. In September, ATLC assisted the Masonic Scottish Rite Club of Aroostook County with their Dyslexia Walk-a-thon. ATLC's October Outing will be Goughan Farm's Corn Maze. Other outings will continue until May.

11 students serve on the ATLC Advisory Board. The Advisory Board meets monthly for two hours to review and evaluate ATLC programming, oversee program administration, and recommend future program direction. As Board members, students learn and use a higher level of leadership skills.

Sixteen students who attended this past summer's camp have signed up as members of our two "ATLC Weekend Teams", and one of our student program staff members serves as a Team Co-Supervisor. There will be four trainings for Team members, two in September and two in October. The trainings teach Team members how to plan, - put together - and present a workshop, and how to conduct and process team-building activities. Our Weekend Teams will present 4-6 "ATLC Weekend" programs to Aroostook County students in grades 6-8, who didn't attend summer camp, during the school year. ATLC Weekends are presented to groups of 12 - 30 students on Saturdays at their school. There is no charge for this program to either students or their school.

Like the summer camp program, ATLC Weekends focus on leadership development and drug prevention. Students attending an ATLC Weekend are encouraged to plan and carry out one drug prevention activity at their school, and planning for this activity begins during each ATLC Weekend Program. ATLC Weekend Programs will be presented from November until April.

A number of ATLC students continue to be involved with ASAP as members of the northern Youth Advisory Council. Two ATLC students recently attended the national Underage Drinking Enforcement and Training Coalition Convention in Dallas, Texas and returned with new ideas for ATLC.

ASSETS IN ACTION

Asset Building in Houlton: ASAP has been working with Link for Hope Coalition to pull together a coalition of community leaders to decide how to target asset building in Houlton. In, ASAP, MSAD 29 Civil Rights Team Students, and Link for Hope hosted a Houlton Community Conversation during which 8 Houlton Superheroes were presented with awards and the results of the Houlton Asset Survey were revealed. ASAP is also providing guidance to the Houlton Recreation Department as it evaluates how it can add assets to its existing programs, especially the programs that serve youth ages 12-15 years old who may be at risk for abusing substances and other harmful behaviors. ASAP is continuing to collaborate with MSAD 29 Civil Rights Team Students on asset building in Houlton schools.

ASAP staff presented to Houlton Community Members about the Houlton community asset survey results and how *His Mansion Ministries* and the community at large, a locally based treatment initiative, can incorporate asset building strategies into every day life.

Asset Building in Caribou: ASAP is working with CADET on implementing assets into the community at large. Caribou's middle school principal has allowed ASAP to pull eight 7th and 8th grade youth from classroom time to participate in the Caribou Developmental Asset Youth Team meetings on a weekly basis. These youth bring assets back to their classroom and school via special projects. The ultimate goal is to expand the group once these 8 are trained and able to train fellow students. The group hosted a booth at Caribou's Parent Teacher Night and handed out over 100 pieces of information about Asset Building.

ASAP is coordinated Red Ribbon Week with the Caribou Developmental Asset Youth Team, which will be a week of Drug Free choices activities in the community and school. ASAP staff also coordinated Red Ribbon Week activities for the Van Buren and Mars Hill school districts.

ASAP, CADET, and the Caribou Developmental Asset Youth Team are planning a Town Hall meeting to release Asset Survey Results to the community with the help of CADET.

ASAP presented to Aroostook County Library Directors about how Asset Building can be applied in a library setting. ASAP also presented for Parent Night at the Caribou 21st Century After School Program.

Asset Building in Fort Fairfield: ASAP presented to the 21st Century After School Program staff about the importance of assets and how school, youth and communities benefit from asset building. ASAP will be working with Fort Fairfield town leaders as they make a plan for asset building in their community for the next 10 years.

STOP GRANT ACTIVITIES

Law Enforcement: The 6 STOP Grant police departments receiving STOP Act Grants through ASAP Coalition (Ashland, Caribou, Houlton, Madawaska, Presque Isle, and Sheriff's Office) used their funding for diverse underage drinking enforcement activities from January–October 2009. Overall, the departments conducted 31 compliance checks of retail outlets licensed to sell alcohol; 46 party patrols; 11 parking lot surveillance details; and 3 shoulder tap details. They also sent officers to attend an underage drinking enforcement training in Spring 2009. The training was sponsored by Healthy Aroostook and Power of Prevention. All of the departments also used grant monies to purchase portable breathalyzers for use during OUI details and party patrols.

Prevention Campaign: The Parents Who Host Lose the Most Campaign was launched for its second year in the County. Local radio and television stations ran advertisements in May and June 2009. The advertisements focused on educating parents about the risks of hosting alcohol parties for teens.

School Prevention: Schools receiving STOP Grant funding through ASAP (Ashland, Hodgdon, Mars Hill, Van Buren) have begun efforts to implement underage drinking activities. This Fall, the schools distributed information to parents about 1) alcohol free activities available in their local areas and 2) school policies and practices related to alcohol use. Grantee schools will be completing several other activities this Winter and Spring.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG RETURN 2009

ASAP members CADET, Healthy Aroostook and Power of Prevention coordinated the 2nd annual Prescription Drug Return, which was held in Presque Isle this year. The Return collected over 400 lbs of prescriptions, which was largely due to the efforts of local County police departments. Local police departments willingly accepted unused and unwanted medicines from community members throughout the year leading up to the Return, which was in August 2009.

RX ABUSE PREVENTION:

In Spring, 2009, ASAP and Power of Prevention facilitated a training about Maine's Prescription Monitoring Program for health care providers at Northern Maine Medical Center. 15 health care providers attended the training. The trainer was Daniel Eccher, Maine's PMP Coordinator.

WEED & SEED GRANT APPLICATION

ASAP Coalition coordinated the planning and submission of a grant for Federal funding through the Weed and Seed Program. As part of the process, ASAP collaborated with over 12 County agencies to assess community needs and perceptions of crime related problems and develop a strategic plan to address the issues of prescription drug diversion, child abuse/neglect, substance abuse, and juvenile/adult recidivism. If awarded, the Town of Houlton will serve as fiscal agent for the grant, which will be for \$200,000 per year for 5 years (totaling \$1,000,000). The project would begin in October, 2010.