ECCPASA is excited to announce our recent acceptance of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA) Underage Drinking Prevention National Media Campaign Community Outreach Pilot Site Program Grant. With this grant, ECCPASA will be working in conjunction with SAMHSA to “involve parents in the prevention of underage drinking in their children ages nine through fifteen.” The goal is to achieve behavior change in parents of children within that age range.

ECCPASA was one of five agencies throughout the entire country to receive the six-month grant! During the next six months, several of our agency’s programs will be delivering prevention messages for parents and caregivers of youth nine to fifteen years old. The messages will “encourage them to take action to reduce the risks associated with underage drinking.” These messages will be disseminated through ECCPASA’s current programming, local substance abuse coalitions, local businesses, and media outlets. Some of the ways in which the messages will be distributed are through ECCPASA’s Parent Forums and Strengthening Families Programs, parent handbooks, TV and radio spots, print Public Service Announcements (PSA), social media, entertainment media, and different parent portals.

While baby steps are currently being made to reduce underage drinking, there is still much work that needs to be done. Many parents are not ready to accept that their children are actually drinking. Of those who do acknowledge it, many do not know how to initiate conversation with their children about this difficult subject or may see no reason to because they believe that their child will drink regardless of what they say. However, research has shown that youth who have parents who talk openly with them about the risks of underage drinking actually drink less or not at all.

This campaign will “define a call to action for parents and offer them specific ways to engage in prevention behaviors with their children.” ECCPASA Executive Director, Andrea J. Wanat, is very excited to get started on this project. “We hope that after providing parents with the tools they need to communicate with their child about underage drinking, they will talk to their child and can prevent youth drinking.”

Keep an eye out for our upcoming parent messages to help prevent underage drinking!
Letter from the Executive Director
Andrea J. Wanat, MA, CPP

Spring is here, and we are rejuvenated with several exciting new projects and opportunities. In the past couple of months ECCPASA was notified that we were awarded two SAMHSA Grants! One project involves acting as a pilot site for a national media campaign focusing on underage drinking. This project began March 1st and will continue through the end of the summer. Keep your eyes open for some exciting “messaging” that’ll come with this grant. Also, ECCPASA staff will be focusing on an opportunity to further examine the effectiveness of our Focus on Consequences for Adolescents Program (FOCA). As recipients of the SAMHSA “Service to Science” grant, we hope to strengthen our current research to further prove the effectiveness of this unique intervention program for 14-20 year-olds who have been referred to our agency for violating underage drinking or substance abuse policies throughout the county.

Other noteworthy upcoming events include Alcohol Awareness Month in April and our summer camp that will run from June 25th – July 6th at St. Margaret’s School located on Hertel Avenue. As always—have a happy and healthy spring season. Make sure to encourage safe, substance-free alternatives for youth throughout “April is Alcohol Awareness Month” and as they enter the prom and graduation season. For ideas on local April is Alcohol Awareness Month events please visit www.px20.org or call our office at 716.831.2298.

Andrea
ECCPASA Calendar of Events

Spring Community Education Offerings 2012
Registration begins at 8:30 am. Classes begin promptly at 9:00 am and end at 12 pm.
All classes are held at the Harlem Road Community Center
4255 Harlem Rd. ~ Amherst ~ NY ~ 14226
Classes cost $15 each

- CASAC/CPP/CPS credits available
- Light breakfast served

April 18th - What’s Happening on the Street?
By: Sargent Daniel Dytchkowskyj, Erie County Sheriff’s Office
Do you ever wonder what our police officers are really seeing as they drive around our streets? Sgt. Daniel Dytchkowskyj will be joining us to discuss some of the "current trends" he is seeing in our area. Sgt. Dytchkowskyj has worked with the Sheriff’s Office for nine years and has been a police officer for thirteen years. He is the Commander of the Erie County Sheriff’s Office Traffic Bureau and Accident Investigation Unit. In addition, he serves as Vice-Chairman for the United States Department of Transportation’s Traffic Safety Advancement Group. This group advises the USDOT on matters pertaining to first responder safety and using technology to reduce death and disability of responders and the general public on our nation’s highways. In addition to "current trends," Sgt. Dytchkowskyj will also discuss the legal ramifications of these "trends" and share some of his experiences while on the job. He will also share with us some of the Sheriff’s Office’s new gadgets that aid the officers in detecting alcohol and drug use.

May 2nd – Exploring Ethics
By: Sally Yageric, CPP, ECCPASA Public Educator
Many times those of us who work in substance abuse prevention, treatment, or other human-service careers are put into situations where our beliefs, values, morals and ethics are tested. This training will focus on examining ethics and accepted standards in these types of settings. Participants will identify standards of conduct, set professional goals with the ethic standards in mind, and utilize a method of decision-making for difficult ethical situations.

SPECIAL EVENT!
All-day training from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm.
Cost is $60, Light refreshments will be served

May 23 – Current Trends and the Adolescent Brain
By: Michael Nerney
Michael Nerney is an internationally known lecturer on substance abuse prevention and education. He previously worked as the Director of the Training Institute of Narcotic and Drug Research, Inc. and currently serves as a consultant for a number of federal and state agencies as well as two major television networks. During this full-day training, Mr. Nerney will educate on current trends in the substance abuse field and how they interact with, and can affect the adolescent brain. He will provide an in-depth look at how the adolescent brain works, and how it is altered when substance use/abuse is an issue.

To Register Contact: Shirley Liddle
ECCPASA
1625 Hertel Ave. Buffalo, NY 14216
Shirley@eccpasa.org
Or visit us online at www.eccpasa.org

Meet Our Interns

ECCPASA has added two new interns to our staff to aid in various projects around the office and to learn the ins and outs of substance abuse prevention. We are pleased to introduce Elizabeth Radley and Kristyn Ramsey.

Elizabeth Radley joined the ECCPASA team as an intern for the fall and spring semesters. Liz obtained her undergraduate degree in Social Science from the University of Buffalo and is currently working towards her Master’s degree in Social Work at the University of Buffalo. She is interested in the areas of mental health, reproductive health, and substance abuse, and though she’s not quite sure which of these areas she’d like to pursue, she is hoping her internship experience will help her decide. While Liz may be undecided as to which areas of social work she’d like to follow, she does know one thing; she wants to work with both youth and adults “to empower them to make choices for themselves, and to lead the lives they want to lead.” While interning, Liz is able to experience a piece of each program ECCPASA offers.

Kristyn Ramsey is currently enrolled in the Master’s in Mental Health Counseling Program at Canisius College. She also attended Medaille College where she received her undergraduate degree in Psychology. Even as an undergrad, Kristyn knew she wanted to pursue a career in mental health, serving those specifically with substance abuse issues. As Kristyn nears the completion of her Master’s degree, she is certain she wants to work with adults who have substance abuse problems, possibly even specializing in those who have dual-diagnoses: substance abuse and mental health disorders. Kristyn spends most of her time here at ECCPASA with our Strengthening Families Program working with families (parents and children together) who have been impacted by substance abuse and are moving towards overcoming these obstacles.
ECCPASA’s Strengthening Families Program (SFP) continues to serve families of Erie County who struggle with substance abuse issues. The Strengthening Families Program began at ECCPASA in 1998, and has served more than 500 families, approximately 300 of them successful graduates. The idea of the program is to “break the cycle of addiction,” says program coordinator Janice Burns. Families with all types of issues come to the program for various reasons: some are court ordered to attend, others have heard success stories from previous graduates of the program, and some came through as children and are back as parents with their own children in tow. Strengthening Families doesn’t just work with parents; it is a program with strict curriculum that works with both parents and children together to make them a stronger family unit. While some families may be hesitant at first, by the end, the graduates can’t thank the program’s staff enough for making their family stronger and closer than ever!

The SFP entails two distinct parts, one of which is taught to the parents separately from their children, who are learning their own curriculum in a room across the hall. While the parents are learning basic parenting skills including listening skills, providing their children with their undivided attention, conflict resolution and how to follow-through with “say what you mean and mean what you say,” their children are learning their own age-appropriate curriculum such as listening and decision making skills, keys to personal success, and goal setting. After the parents and children complete their curriculum separately, the families reunite for a delicious dinner provided by a Buffalo-based catering company. The importance of eating together as a family and talking to one another is stressed during this time. This is an important concept as evidence has shown that youth who eat dinner with their families on a regular basis are a lot less likely to experiment with alcohol and other drugs.

After dinner is completed the families come together in the classroom to learn the family piece of the curriculum. This is where communication and attention skills are taught, practiced, and put to the test. Games and other activities are also learned by the families that are inexpensive, even free, and can be done at home to strengthen that family bond while away from the program setting.

The Strengthening Families Program often runs two simultaneous sessions, one for parents and children of ten years old and up, and another for those with children ages nine and under. Until recently the youngest age of children that were able to attend were children that were at least five, but thanks to a new curriculum and some clever work by ECCPASA staff, the program now accepts families with children as young as three! The “older” group currently meets every Thursday evening for a total of ten weeks and the “younger” group meets every Wednesday evening for fourteen weeks. At the end of every session a gradation is held to celebrate the families’ successful completion of the program.

If you ask program facilitators, Mary Carroll and Jan Burns, they would say it seems like the program is constantly ongoing! As one group graduates another is just gearing up to start. The most recent group to graduate was the “older group,” those with children ages ten and older, and they celebrated their graduation with a dinner, receipt of a certificate of completion, and an indoor “winter carnival.”

Two new Strengthening Families sessions have already begun and will run through the better part of May. Those sessions will wrap up with a combined graduation on May 16th and will be open for the community to attend. For more information on ECCPASAs Strengthening Families Program, and/or to make a referral please contact Mary Carroll at mcarroll@eccpasa.org or call 716.831.2298 ext. 32.
Strengthening Families Program News and Highlights

- ECCPASA holds an ongoing support group that is open to all Strengthening Families Program graduates as well as any parents in the community. The group meets every Tuesday from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm at St. Mary’s School for the Deaf. The support group allows parents to talk to one another about issues and problems they may be dealing with in their own families and SFP staff use SFP curriculum topics to help the families work through these issues.

- The Strengthening Families Program is collaborating with Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) to teach families about the importance of nutrition and healthy eating. It is a weekly program that will touch on a number of topics including healthy eating, how to read food labels, food safety, and how to make healthy family meals on a budget. Each week after the lesson, participants will have the opportunity to cook their own healthy recipe with help from the CCE’s instructor.

- Strengthening Families intern, Kristyn Ramsey, from Canisius College has applied for a grant to write a curriculum to celebrate National Kick Butts Day, which empowers youth to say no to tobacco. Knowing how to stand up to the bullying advertisements of the tobacco industry is an important skill for young people to have. The curriculum is designed to educate the teens and their families on the harms of smoking cigarettes and other tobacco products. One of the activities Kristyn is doing is highlighting all of the 4,000 plus chemicals found in ONE cigarette.

- Several of the teens who are either current or previous SFP members have also joined the local chapter of PeaceJam which is open to all members of the community. ECCPASA SFP Program Coordinator, Jan Burns, helps facilitate the Buffalo-based PeaceJam group. PeaceJam is a world-wide organization that works to promote peace and non-violent conflict resolution by empowering teens to make a difference in their community. Our local chapter meets every Tuesday after school at St. Mary’s School for the Deaf at 3:30 pm and again at Compass House at 6:30. It is free and open to all high school students.

For more information on any of the programs listed above contact Jan Burns at 716.831.2298 ext. 31.

Testament of Success!

A previous graduate of the Strengthening Families Program recently reached out to SFP staff to express how much the program meant to her as a youth, and the difference it made in her life. The young woman, who attended the program ten years ago as a child with her father, asked if it was possible for her to come back into the program - this time as a parent. She revealed that she is not battling substance abuse, but she remembers how the program had helped her and her father become closer and to communicate effectively with one another. She hopes the SFP will have to same effect on her and her children’s relationship. Program Coordinator, Jan Burns reported “the young woman has attended some classes with her oldest daughter and I am touched that she remembered our program after all these years!”
The Jolly Boys of Williamsville Give Back

The Jolly Boys of Williamsville, and friends of ECCPASA, once again awarded us this year with a donation from their organization. The Jolly Boys are a charitable group of men who are “dedicated primarily to the welfare of the youth of Amherst, New York.” In addition to donations, the Jolly Boys also issue annual scholarships and regularly provide goods to food pantries across Western New York.

ECCPASA has received donations from the Jolly Boys for the past three years to provide services to several parochial schools in Amherst. Staff member and Skills for Tomorrow program facilitator, Mark Fenz, regularly visits seven Amherst schools to provide our Skills for Tomorrow program, which educates students on topics like self-control, responsibility, bullying, decision-making and other classroom issues. He delivers programming in the middle and upper elementary schools. Programs for Parents Coordinator, Sally Yageric, also holds evening programs to educate parents on their child’s life transitions as well as possible experimental substance use and how to deal with these important issues.

We want to once again thank the Jolly Boys for their generosity and we look forward to working with them throughout the year!

FDA Looks to Approve New Medical Marijuana Mouth Spray

There may be a new marijuana-based medication legally hitting the pharmacy shelves as early as next year. A British-based pharmaceutical company, GW Pharma, has developed a prescription drug from raw marijuana to help treat cancer and Multiple Sclerosis (M.S.) patients. The drug, Sativex, has already been approved and is currently being used in several countries including the United Kingdom, Spain, Germany, Denmark, New Zealand and Canada.

Sativex has so far shown success in treating muscle spasms and pain caused from Multiple Sclerosis, pain and Anorexia-cachexia syndrome due to cancer or AIDS, bladder dysfunction, Rheumatoid arthritis and neuropathic pain. The United States has taken notice of these positive results and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is currently reviewing the drug for approval here in America. GW Pharma hopes to have the FDA’s approval by the end of 2013.

While there are currently two marijuana-like medications on the market, Sativex will be the first of its kind. The current marijuana-like drugs, Marinol and Cesamet, are made of synthetic marijuana and are dispensed in pill form. Sativex is developed from raw marijuana and includes the two main psychoactive ingredients found in marijuana, delta 9-THC and cannabidiol. Sativex is a great alternative to medical marijuana because it will have the same desired effects, but will be controlled by the FDA and will not come with the health risks of smoking it, as Sativex is only available in the form of a mouth spray.

We will keep you up-to-date as Sativex goes through the process of being reviewed and hopefully approved by the FDA.
ECCPASA’s FOCA Program Receives Grant from SAMHSA

ECCPASA has recently received a grant which will assist with an integral evaluation project of our Focus on Consequences for Adolescents Program (FOCA). The grant’s purpose is to “build evaluation capacity for evidence-based interventions” and is funded through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies (CAPT), Services to Science Initiative. The grant will support a research project which will evaluate the effectiveness of the FOCA Program through the use of a comparison group and the development of a computer infrastructure for on ongoing data analysis. Our agency will receive $30,000 over a twelve-month period to complete this project. ECCPASA will continue to partner with the Town of Amherst Courts, researcher Dr. Michael MacLean of Buffalo State College, and other computer consultants to help implement this evaluation and enhance FOCA service delivery. “We are so grateful to have this opportunity,” stated Janice Burns, FOCA Program Coordinator. “Not only will it help us better serve our own clients, but the recognition from SAMHSA will enable us to promote the FOCA process to others who may want to implement it in their communities too!”

ECCPASA Teams Up With a Local College to Reduce Underage Drinking

The Erie County Council was awarded a year-long EUDL (Enforcing Underage Drinking Laws) grant this past fall to work in conjunction with the Hamburg Police Department and Hilbert College. We were only one of five agencies to be awarded this project across the state from the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS).

With this grant, a Hamburg Underage Drinking Coalition has been formed with representatives from Hilbert College, the Hamburg Police Department, ECCPASA staff and community stakeholders. Members of the coalition have been busy planning and implementing several grant-sponsored activities. Some of these include a survey of 349 students which focused on student alcohol use, perceived risks, and perception of others’ use, a campus-wide social marketing campaign, party patrols on the Hilbert campus that are carried out by the Hamburg Police Department, and compliance checks in which underage Hilbert Students will be used to conduct these “checks” in conjunction with Hamburg Police Officers. Underage students who are caught drinking on and off campus may also be referred to ECCPASA’s Focus on Consequences Adolescent Program (FOCA) with the hopes of reducing the reoccurrence of underage alcohol consumption.

Hilbert College Residential Assistants, or RAs as they are most commonly known, were also trained by WNY Prevention Resource Center staff in the Red Watch Band Training Program. The Red Watch Band Program was started by a mother who lost her son at a New York college from an alcohol overdose. She began this program in hopes that other mothers wouldn’t have to relive the same pain she experienced. The mission of the Red Watch Band Program is to provide campus community members with the knowledge, awareness, and skills to prevent toxic drinking deaths among students and to promote a student culture of kindness, compassion, and respect.

For more information on the EUDL grant or the Red Watch Training Program, or to see how your college can work with ECCPASA on future projects contact Erica Boyce at eiboyce@eccpasa.org or 716.831.2298 ext. 28.
The Erie County Council for the Prevention of Alcohol and Substance Abuse will deliver research driven education, prevention, intervention programs and services to promote and support the health and wellness of individuals, families and communities by focusing on solutions to alcohol and other drug misuse, addiction and unhealthy behaviors.

ECCPASA will provide leadership to fight the stigma associated with addiction through public education, policy awareness, liaison with health professionals and recovering communities, by providing objective information, referral, and linkages to those in need.

Support ECCPASA

As we continue to serve the community, please become an official “supporter” of our mission!

Your tax deductible contribution can be made at any time of the year:

$10.00  $50.00  $100.00
$25.00  $75.00  Other $____________________

Name:_____________________________________________________________________
Address:___________________________________________________________________
Phone:_____________________________________________________________________
Email:_____________________________________________________________________

Thank you for supporting the ECCPASA community efforts!

Please mail your tax deductible contribution to: ECCPASA, 1625 Hertel Ave., Buffalo, N.Y. 14216

Under contract with the Erie County Department of Mental Health. Funded by the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services, school districts and municipalities throughout Erie County, individuals, corporations and community service organizations. Member agency of the United Way of Buffalo and Erie County.