

Darienite

News for Darien

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Five-Year, \$625K Fed Grant Includes Funds to Expand Pot, Alcohol Education for Darien Kids, Parents

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Categories : [Education](#), [Healthy Living](#), [Parents & Kids](#)

Tagged as : [Community Fund of Darien 2021](#), [Darien Thriving Youth Task Force 2021](#), [Drinking in Darien 2021](#), [Marijuana 2021](#)

Date : October 15, 2021

More education efforts about teen marijuana and alcohol use will be coming in the next five years now that the Thriving Youth Task Force of Darien has been awarded \$125,000 per year for the next five years by a grant from the federal government.

The federal Drug-Free Communities (DFC) Grant, managed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, will support TYTF activities. The task force is organized by The Community Fund of Darien, which runs the TYTF program.

Janet King, executive director of The Community Fund of Darien, said the funding will not only allow her organization to continue the Thriving Youth Task Force's programs in teen substance use prevention and

education, but to expand them.

“The DFC Grant gives us a fantastic opportunity to further engage our community to work together towards this goal,” she said.

The TYTF intends to expand education efforts about marijuana use and alcohol.

“This work is especially timely in light of the state’s recent marijuana legalization,” Thriving Youth Program Director Emily Larkin said.

“The Thriving Youth Task Force’s programs will provide parents with critical information about how marijuana impacts the teen brain and strategies for keeping open lines of communication with their teen around all substance use,” Larkin said.

The DFC Grant funding will allow the Thriving Youth Task Force to:

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Continue to survey 7th through 12th grade students about their mental health and substance use trends and share the results with parents and the community. This year’s free community presentation of the student survey findings will be held on Wednesday, October 20 at 7 p.m. in the Middlesex Middle School auditorium and will also be live streamed via Zoom. Registration is requested for in-person attendance and required for Zoom attendance. [You can register here.](#)

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Use student survey findings **to inform community and school efforts** to promote the development of Darien youth into healthy, resilient adults and to reduce at-risk behaviors.

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Convene community partners to collaborate on teen mental health and substance use

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Increase public awareness of the risks of substance use and risky behavior through community programs and social marketing, such as the nationally recognized “06820” campaign.

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Expand the scope of its work to include **a focus on marijuana use in addition to alcohol use.**

The TYTF is a volunteer coalition made up of made up of Darien students and adults in Darien community organizations. Its task is to promote and empower positive youth development, with the goal of reducing teen substance use.

Created in 1997, the Drug-Free Communities Grant funds community-based coalitions such as Darien's Thriving Youth Task Force that engage multiple sectors of the community to prevent youth substance use.

The twelve sectors represented by TYTF members are youth, parents, businesses, media, school, youth-serving organizations, law enforcement, religious/fraternal organizations, civic and volunteer organizations, healthcare professionals and local government.

This membership diversity helps coalitions connect their communities' resources to each other and adopt a balanced and comprehensive approach to reducing substance use.

More About the Thriving Youth Task Force

From the task force's Web page:

TYTF Executive Board?

Allegra Erickson, Co-Chair

Georgette Harrison, Co-Chair

Christina Passarretti, Vice-Chair

Marli Hayes, Programming Committee Co-Chair

John Novak, Programming Committee Co-Chair

James Palmieri, Liaison to Darien Police Department

?Shelley Sheridan, Community Liaison

Jennifer Fallon, Communications Chair

Emily Larkin, Grant Program Director

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?Contact us at ThrivingYouthDarien@gmail.com

About The Community Fund of Darien

[The Community Fund of Darien's](#) mission is to inspire people and mobilize resources to strengthen our community. Its vision is for all community members to have the opportunity to reach their full potential as healthy, educated, and self-sufficient individuals.

TCF initiates solutions, builds collaborations, and implements and supports programs to strengthen youth, adults and families, for lasting and positive impact in Darien, Norwalk and Stamford.

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Since 1951, TCF has distributed over \$20 million to local nonprofits and community initiatives, impacting thousands of lives in our community.