

# Community Health Connections

A publication of ACCESS Health, Your Healthy Maine Partnership

## What do Brunswick parents think about walking and biking to school?

APRIL 2010

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Mid Coast Hospital is the  
lead agency for ACCESS Health



and biking year-round!

As part of this initiative, the safe routes team surveyed parents to gain insight about their attitudes towards walking and biking to school. The survey was created and compiled by the National Center for Safe Routes to School. 20% of parents with children attending Brunswick elementary schools responded. Four major concerns were identified that, if improved, would increase the number of children safely walking and biking to school.

So what are our plans to share this information? Survey data will be used to educate the community, promote improvements, and potentially obtain grant funding. The safe routes team has presented to the Brunswick School Board and has plans to provide presentations to both the Brunswick Town Council and the local Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee.

The Brunswick safe routes program was recently awarded funds from the Bowdoin College Common Good Grant to use for a pedometer project, and won a raffle to be used for safety vests for volunteers helping out on walk and bike to school days. We are hopeful that our efforts will lead to more grant seeking. But in the meantime, what can we do without funds? Increase police presence daily, keep sidewalks clear from snow and debris, repaint crosswalks, obtain and maintain crossing guards at major intersections and advocate for change.

If you are interested in the full survey reports please visit our website and click on the physical activity tab. Finally if you're passionate about this issue please join us in our efforts by contacting ACCESS Health.

Cheers to safe walking and biking!

In October, 2008 the Brunswick School System held its first walk and bike to school day. The enthusiasm and interest among both children and adults was enough to leave them asking "when are we going to do this again?" Through the teamwork of supportive administrators, local volunteers, school staff, and ACCESS Health, Brunswick conducted 3 more successful walk and bike to school days in the spring. And now children are walking

### Top 4 concerns

- 71% Traffic speed
- 60% Intersections and crossing safety
- 40% Sidewalks or paths
- 21% Crossing guards





# HATS OFF!

## This Issue: Pat Conner

Pat Conner, founder of Mid Coast Hospital's Substance Abuse Prevention Program and Communities Against Substance Abuse (CASA), is planning her retirement. CASA's accomplishments reflect Pat's many valuable contributions to our community, and her dedication to prevention, especially substance abuse prevention.

Thanks to Pat's leadership and mentoring, all our school districts incorporate evidence based substance abuse prevention programming; all our police departments have strong underage drinking policies; retailers and restaurants look to Mid Coast Hospital as a resource for liquor law training and support; and underage drinking rates have decreased county-wide.

During Pat's tenure, ACCESS Health and the Substance Abuse Prevention staff have developed a strong collaboration. Although we will miss her greatly, we will be able to continue our important community work thanks to the training and funding secured by Pat's foresight. We would like to suggest that Pat follow her own words of wisdom and view her retirement as a marathon, not a sprint, and enjoy every minute of it – hats off to Pat Conner!

## YAP Yap!

By Rebecca Farnham, YAP Coordinator

Winter certainly didn't slow down the enthusiastic crew of students that make up the Youth Advocacy Program! Students found great ways to pass the cold dark winter months by lighting the way with some fun community and school based activities. Too bad it went so quick. If only we had school ALL summer long, YAP events would never end!

Here are some highlights of what's been keeping us so busy

YAP students from Brunswick and Mt. Ararat kicked off the winter with **"Take It to the Streets"** in front of LL Bean in Freeport on December 23<sup>rd</sup>. Students advocated against big tobacco companies and how they underhandedly target Maine youth to gain young "replacement smokers." News Channel 13 aired footage of the event on the 6 o'clock news!

Brunswick YAP students created a series of video clips called **"Tobacco Free Tuesdays"**. These clips featured YAP members who highlighted facts pertaining specifically to youth. BHS students also honored **Kick Butts Day** on Wednesday March 24<sup>th</sup>, a nationally recognized day. Each day of that week students masking taped 7 bodies on random areas of the school to symbolize the 7 smoking related deaths per day in the state of Maine. Students also played an audio sound of a flat line 7 times throughout the day over the intercom.

The Freeport YAP received a mini-grant from Healthy Casco Bay to use towards an **After School Healthy Snack Cart**. The YAP students felt there was nowhere to obtain healthy snacks after school while participating in sports. The students met with their food service director to pick out "Healthy" snacks to sell and establish a reasonable price. YAP students took turns running the cart each day after school from 2:30-3 and received a small stipend.

Mt. Ararat High School YAP coordinated a well received series of events that involved the entire student body. **"Wellness Wednesdays"** was created to promote that "fitness can be fun" and to give students an opportunity to engage in physical activity. The success of Wellness Wednesdays was also made possible by the school faculty who volunteered to advise and lead activities. A special thanks to Sarah Sanders, professional Zumba instructor who donated her time in kind to the school wide event.

The YAP students are planning a few more events to finish up the school year, followed by a grand finale Year End Celebration to honor all of their hard work and efforts to advocate for change in their school and communities!

# Just the Facts...

## About thirdhand smoke

- ◆ Term coined in Mass. General Hospital study published in the Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics in 2008, which defines particulate residue from tobacco smoke.
- ◆ Gases and smoke particles cling to walls, clothes, upholstery, rugs, skin and hair in homes and cars for months, even years.
- ◆ Among the substances in third-hand smoke are hydrogen cyanide, used in chemical weapons; butane, which is used in lighter fluid; toluene, found in paint thinners; arsenic; lead; carbon monoxide; and even polonium-210.
- ◆ Approximately 90% of residue will stick to nearby surfaces.
- ◆ Cleaning or ventilation does not eliminate risk.
- ◆ Children are especially susceptible.
- ◆ Toxins are transferred to babies in breast milk.
- ◆ Linked to allergic responses in both children and adults.

FMI visit [www.pediatrics.org](http://www.pediatrics.org)

## MSAD 75 Partnership

By Mary Booth, School Health Coordinator



### Slip Slop Slap - Be Careful in the Sun or You could be Zapped!

MSAD 75 is encouraging all students to practice sun safety this time of year.

There is nothing like being outside on a beautiful sunny day in Maine when the weather turns mild! Unfortunately, the sun can cause damage to our skin if we are not careful. The problem is that we cannot see the damage immediately, except for the occasional sunburn. Years of exposure to the sun can lead to unhealthy skin conditions and in many cases cancer. The best defense against unhealthy rays of sun includes three easy actions.

1. Slip on a shirt.
2. Slop on sunscreen.
3. Slap on a hat.

Enjoy the great outdoors but keep your skin safe while doing it.

## Communities Against Substance Abuse (CASA)



keeping our kids safe from drugs & alcohol  
[midcoastparentsconnect.org](http://midcoastparentsconnect.org)

CASA is excited to announce the launch of Mid Coast Parents Connect – the new parent outreach campaign designed to give parents tips on keeping our kids safe from drugs & alcohol. Parents will be able to visit [www.midcoastparentsconnect.org](http://www.midcoastparentsconnect.org) for tips, guidelines, upcoming events and reputable websites. Facebook users can become fans, and participate in meaningful discussions with other parents and local experts. Look for our new logo on magnets, bumper stickers, grocery bags and banners in your community – and come say hello!

For more information, call Parent Outreach Specialist Heidi Tucker, 373-6958, or email [prevention@midcoasthealth.com](mailto:prevention@midcoasthealth.com).

## Sagadahoc County Board of Health

*from the SBOH 2009 Annual Report*

The Board of Health has continued the excellent progress and leadership in Medication awareness and proper disposal with another two very successful “take-back” programs in 2009. We collected a new record amount of surplus each time, keeping unneeded pharmaceuticals out of the County’s waste stream or the hands of those who might misuse or abuse them. The Board has also provided technical assistance to several other counties as they consider replicating our model.

Our medication collections have received major attention within and outside Maine and we plan to maintain a high profile this year. The Board has received financial support from the Davenport Foundation to continue the program, and we plan at least two collection events in 2010 with our broad community coalition. We will also be working with the Commissioners, enlisting their support, as we continue to advocate for important state legislation for broader and more aggressive actions across Maine.

The next medication collection will be on June 10-11, 2010. FMI, contact *Healthline* at 373-6585.

## What’s New:

Keep ME Well is a new online tool that provides individuals with a personal health report card which is created based on answers to a series of questions. The report assesses risk for chronic disease and points out how to take action to improve health, and it also provides a list of local resources. Another important feature, especially for those uninsured or underinsured, is information about low cost healthcare services. Please visit [www.KeepMEWell.org](http://www.KeepMEWell.org) to take the questionnaire.



## On the Horizon:

### **ACCESS Health Annual Meeting and Celebration**

Thursday, May 27, 2010, 4:00 PM

Mid Coast Hospital Café, Brunswick

Keynote Speaker: Ed Miller, American Lung Association of New England

*Youth smoking rates: Can we afford to let them rise?*

*Welcome and light refreshments 4:00-4:15 PM*

*Program: 4:15-6:30 PM*

**Open to the public**

To RSVP for this event, contact Susan Van Note, [svannote@midcoasthealth.com](mailto:svannote@midcoasthealth.com), 373-6973