

# Communities that Care

## COALITION



## COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN 2020

# Communities that Care

## COALITION

The Communities That Care (CTC) Coalition has been working since 2002 to improve the health and well-being of young people in Franklin County and the North Quabbin.

CTC maintains this **Community Action Plan** to help direct community resources toward effective and coordinated solutions for reducing youth substance use, improving youth nutrition and physical activity, reducing racism, and increasing health equity.

The action plan is based on local data, national research and best practices, and community input. It is the result of the combined efforts of many different coalition members representing a wide range of community agencies.

*Since the Coalition's inception, this collaboration and Action Plan has helped to **mobilize more than seven million dollars**, spread throughout the community, toward youth development strategies in the Community Action Plan.*

The Communities That Care Coalition considers this Community Action Plan to be a dynamic work in progress, with specific strategies and programs changing to respond to the evolving needs of the community.

The Communities That Care Coalition of Franklin County and the North Quabbin is not a legal entity, but a collection of organizations and individuals joining forces for a common cause. Our **Principles of Operation** can be found on our coalition's website at [www.CommunitiesThatCareCoalition.org](http://www.CommunitiesThatCareCoalition.org)

### **The Communities That Care Model:**

The CTC model is not unique to Franklin County. It is a proven community change process based on more than 30 years of research by J. David Hawkins and Richard Catalano of the University of Washington Social Development Research Group. In randomized controlled trials, CTC has produced results both in producing high-functioning coalitions and in reducing risky youth behaviors. It is listed in the Surgeon General's Report on Addiction as an effective program, and has been used by communities across the nation.

For more info visit: <http://www.communitiesthatcare.net/about/>

Our local coalition has been a featured community on the national CTC website, and has represented CTC on national panels and conferences.



# Our Vision and Mission

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The Communities That Care Coalition's **vision** is for Franklin County and the North Quabbin Region to be a place where young people are able to reach their full potential and thrive with ongoing and coordinated support from schools, families, and the community.

The Communities That Care Coalition's **mission** is to bring together schools, families, youth, and the community to improve youth health and health equity.

## Our Values

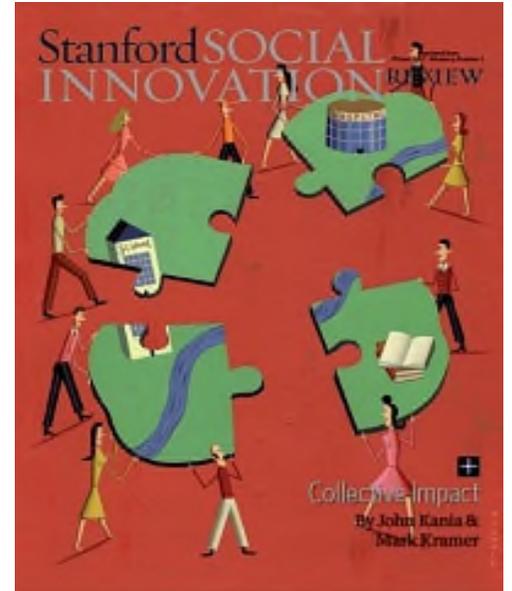
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- We strive to **build connections** among youth, families, schools, and communities to decrease youth substance use and violence, promote academic success, and improve mental health and general well-being.
- We acknowledge that our social system is fundamentally and intentionally unjust, and that racism, inequity, and intolerance are public health issues that must be addressed. We work to **create a socially and economically just, safe, and inclusive environment** for all members of our community.
- We think beyond preventing harmful behaviors to **promoting positive youth development**. We seek strategies that are empowering and build young people's resilience and their capacity to make healthy choices in the long run.
- We use a public health model and address the underlying risk and protective factors. We **use approaches that have been researched and proven to be effective** and strategies that are appropriate to our region, **based on current local data**.
- We **engage and support our community**, using a **collective impact model**, in order to achieve **sustainable impact**.
- We recognize that young people make choices in an environment shaped by their families, peers, schools, communities, and culture; we work for **positive change in individuals and the environment in which they live**, and we advocate for policy change at the local, state, and national levels.

# Our Approach

## Collective Impact

In “Collective Impact” initiatives like ours, many organizations from different sectors of the community come together and agree on common goals and shared measurement. The Communities That Care Coalition has been recognized nationally and internationally as a model of a successful Collective Impact initiative (we were even profiled in the original series of articles that coined the term). Member organizations implement the programs, policies, and practices from the Community Action Plan, and a “backbone” structure holds the collaboration together and ensures effective and timely communication and evaluation. Coalition members actively support each others’ activities, which strengthens the overall impact of the Coalition’s work.



## “Upstream” Prevention

In the field of public health, people refer to efforts being “upstream” when they intervene before a problem even develops. The Communities That Care Coalition works to take an “upstream” approach whenever possible, focusing our prevention efforts on ensuring that young people have the **social and emotional skills** that will help them make healthy decisions, and helping make sure youth are well **connected to their families, their schools, and their communities.**

## Evidence-Based Practices

Central to the Coalition’s approach is the use of *evidence-based* practices. Whenever possible, we choose to use strategies that have been well-researched and shown to be effective.

## Creating Healthy Policies, Systems, and Environments

People’s health is determined in large part by the places where they live, learn, work, and play. As a coalition, we strive to create policies, systems, and environments that make healthy choices easy for and accessible to all.

- Policy changes include laws, regulations, procedures, incentives, or voluntary practices of governments and other institutions.
- Systems changes are changes that impact how organizations, institutions, and systems run.
- Environmental change approaches can include change of the physical, social, or economic environment.

# Our Approach

## Health Equity

Health Equity is the attainment of the highest level of health for all people. It requires valuing everyone equally with focused and ongoing societal efforts to address avoidable inequalities, historical and contemporary injustices, and the elimination of health and health care disparities (Healthy People 2020).



This image from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is one of many images that attempt to visualize the concept of health equity. New images are being developed to better account for systemic inequities.

The Coalition strives to ensure that our work contributes to decreasing the systemic inequities that discriminate against groups that have historically been economically or socially disadvantaged.

## Examining the White-dominant Power Structure and Addressing Racism

Racism extends far beyond individual racist attitudes and beliefs. The white-dominant power structure pervades our culture, institutions, and relationships. It perpetuates the web of intentional systems and structures that continue to give white people wealth, power, and privilege over people of color.

Our Coalition is striving to examine the white-dominant power structure and its impact, first within our Coalition, and ultimately by contributing to efforts to do so in the community.

In the Dismantling Racism Workbook, Tema Okun outlines the characteristics of white supremacy culture, including:

perfectionism, a sense of urgency, defensiveness, valuing quantity over quality, worship of the written word, belief in only one right way, paternalism, either/or thinking, power hoarding, fear of open conflict, individualism, belief that I'm the only one (who can do this 'right'), the belief that progress is bigger and more, a belief in objectivity, and claiming a right to comfort.

We strive to understand the ways in which our Coalition and our institutions exhibit these characteristics, and to implement meaningful antidotes that foster a culture of empowerment for all.

# Our Structure

## Organizational Structure:

The Communities That Care Coalition is a collaboration between many institutions, agencies, and individuals in Franklin County and the North Quabbin Region. The Coalition has six active workgroups and a Coordinating Council, as depicted below:



The Coordinating Council & workgroups meet approximately monthly.  
The Full Coalition (all workgroups, the Coordinating Council, and any interested community members) meets twice annually.

# Local Data

## Teen Health Survey:

The Communities That Care Coalition works with the school districts in the region to conduct the annual Teen Health Survey each year in February in all of the local public school districts. Approximately 1,500 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students (close to 80% of all students in those grades) take the anonymous survey each year. We alternate using the **Youth Risk Behavior Survey**, the **Prevention Needs Assessment**, and the US Department of Education’s **School Climate Survey**. These three surveys give us a wealth of high-quality information about risky behaviors, as well as the underlying risk and protective factors that increase or decrease young people’s risk of engaging in unhealthy behaviors. The surveys also allow us to compare our students’ needs to their peers across the state and nation, and to track changes across time.

## Positive Social Norms:

Many youth and adults in the community don’t realize how many young people are making healthy decisions. For example, did you know that youth drug and alcohol use rates have recently reached an **all time low**?

Following research about the impact of positive social norms, the Communities That Care Coalition works to spread the word that most local teens choose not to use. It is easier for young people to make healthy decisions when they know they are in good company!

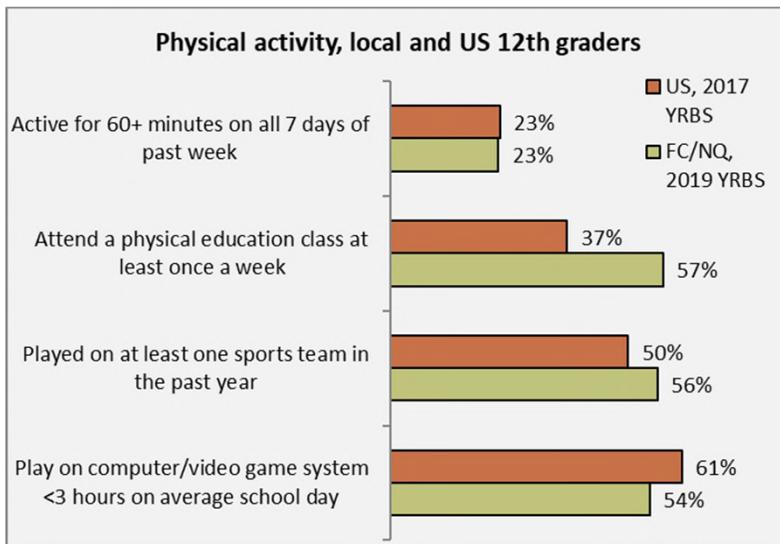
**Most local teens are choosing NOT to use!**

**7 out of 10 don’t drink**

**8 out of 10 don’t use marijuana**

**9 out of 10 don’t smoke cigarettes**

**9 out of 10 don’t misuse prescription drugs**



There are a lot more kids in society making a choice not to use. I think kids are easier on one another...peer pressure is lower.  
– SCHOOL STAFF

Teens vape in school. There are strawberry and pineapple flavors. Vaping is a common thing.  
– YOUTH

I’m not a drinker...We talk about it a lot. The perception is that it will lead to harm.  
– PARENT

## Focus Groups & Interviews:

In late 2015 and early 2016 the Coalition’s Coordinating Council and young people from Community Action Youth Programs conducted a series of focus groups and key stakeholder interviews with youth, parents, school staff, law enforcement officials, substance abuse treatment providers, people in recovery, and more. The results are available on the Coalition’s website.

# Our Priority Risk Factors

Rather than focusing directly on problem behaviors, Communities That Care focuses on addressing the *risk and protective factors* that increase or decrease the risk of problem behaviors. By creating supportive and healthy family, school, and community environments, and by giving young people the social and emotional skills they need to succeed, we can help raise young people who are healthier, happier, and more resilient.

In 2003, we identified the following priority risk factors that were particularly elevated locally:

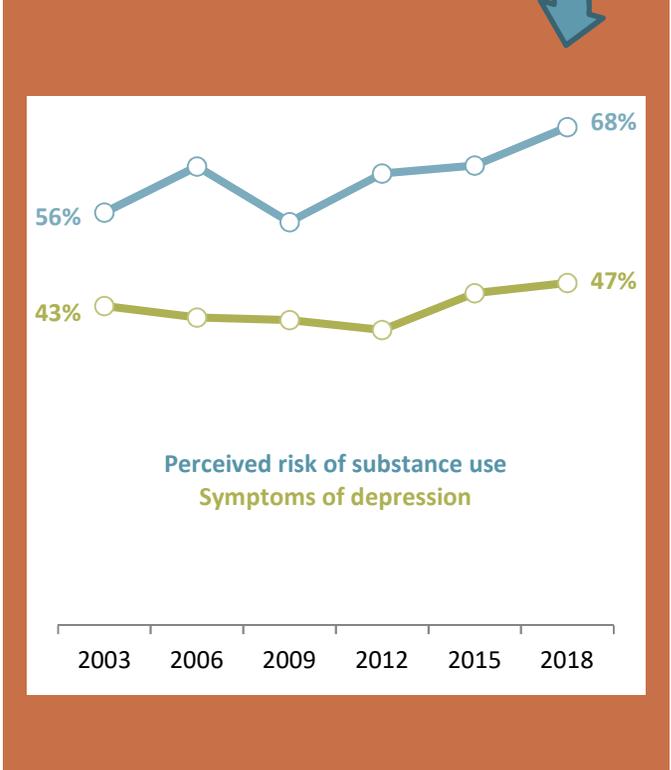
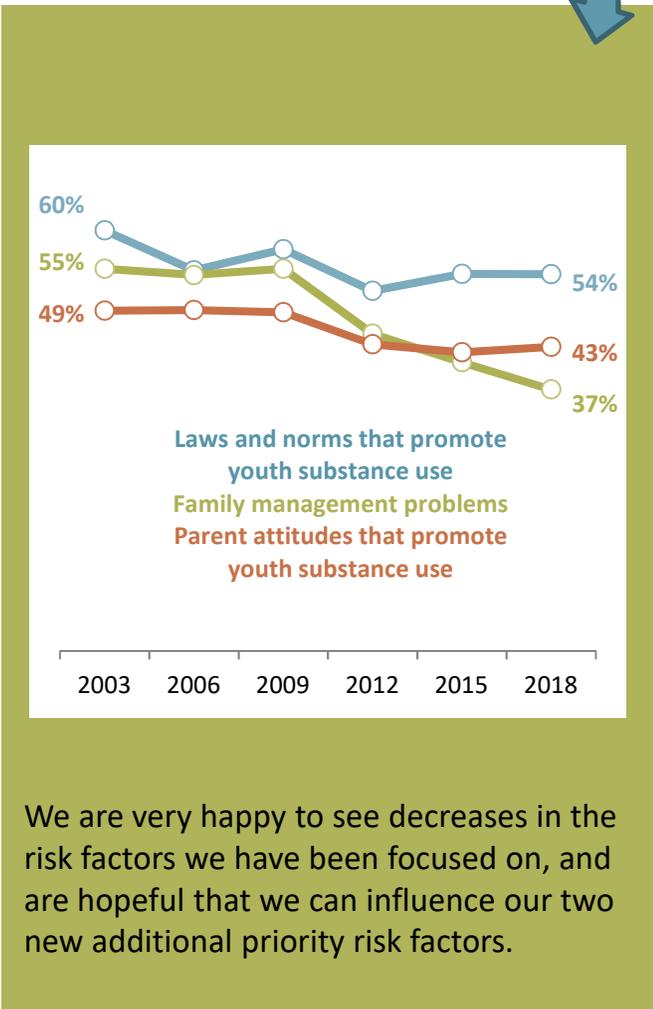
- **Community Laws and Norms Favorable to Substance Use**
- **Parental Attitudes Favorable to Substance Use**
- **Family Management Problems**

The Teen Health Survey measures 30 risk and protective factors (such as family attachment and low commitment to school) that directly affect young people’s risk of drug and alcohol use, violence, school dropout, depression, and other problems.

Our coalition focuses our efforts on building *all* of the protective factors and several *priority* protective factors.

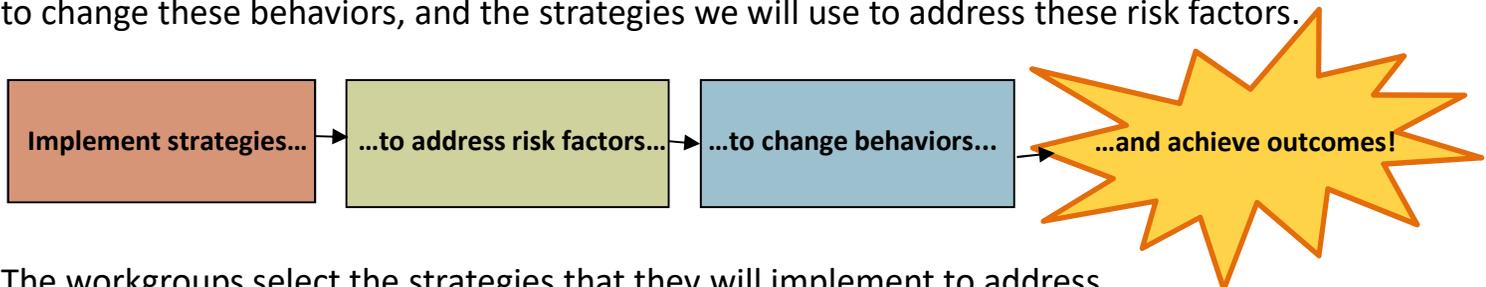
More recently, the coalition has added two more priority risk factors that have been increasing in our region, even while other risk factors were decreasing:

- **Perceived Risk of Harm from Substance Use**
- **Symptoms of Depression and Anxiety**



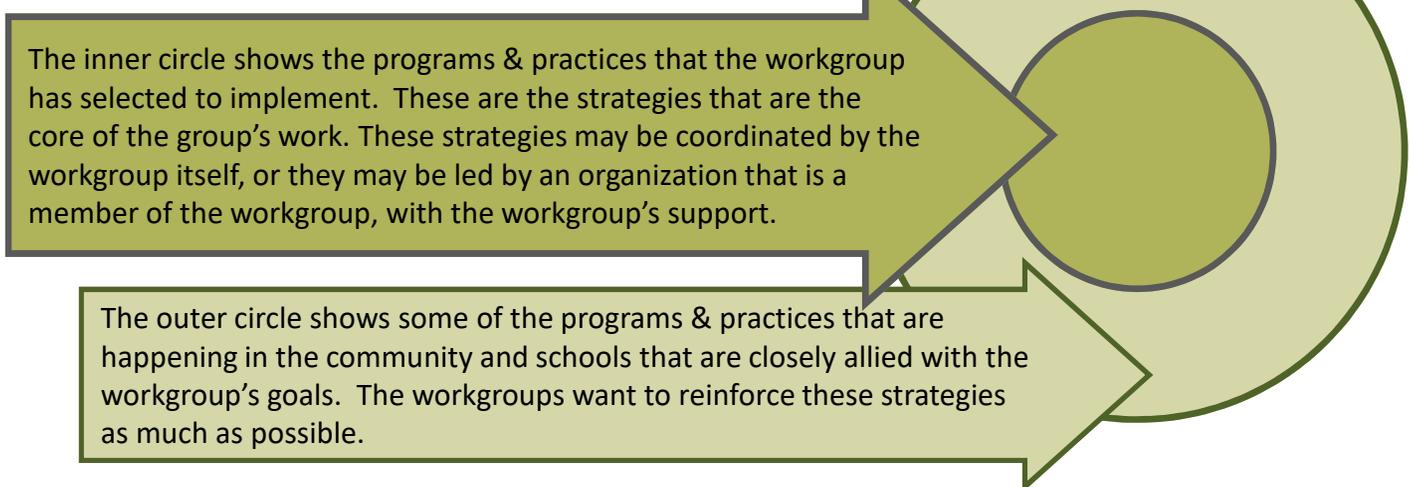
# Our Plans

The Coalition has used all of this local data and national research to develop the plans or **logic models on the following 2 pages**. The plans show the outcomes we are trying to achieve, the behaviors we are working to change, the risk factors we are addressing in order to change these behaviors, and the strategies we will use to address these risk factors.



The workgroups select the strategies that they will implement to address our priority risk factors as effectively as possible based on local data, national research, and community resources, with sustainability, health equity, and our coalition values in mind.

Following the logic models, the next 6 pages show the strategies each workgroup has selected to focus on, presented in the form of a “bullseye” for each workgroup.



This Community Action Plan, like any active strategic plan, is constantly evolving based on new information we receive, what resources are available, etc. For the most current information, please contact the coalition directly (contact information on back of plan).

# Communities that Care

## Our Plan for Youth Substance Use Prevention

Regional School Health Task Force	<p><b>Implement these strategies...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct the annual Teen Health Survey</li> <li>Support evidence-based prevention efforts, including the LifeSkills curriculum, SBIRT screenings, and the Preventure program</li> <li>Research and promote best practices in mental health promotion in schools</li> <li>Research and promote best practices in addressing racism and other forms of oppression in schools</li> <li>Promote best practices in <i>school policies</i> that support student health, well-being, and equity, including Restorative Practices</li> <li>Link CTC to schools</li> </ul>
Parent Education Workgroup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pool resources between community agencies to provide programs, tools, and resources for parents</li> <li>Support evidence-based parent education programs</li> <li>Provide positive, educational, effective messaging, materials, and events for parents</li> <li>Promote the importance of family dinners &amp; family connection</li> <li>Engage parents of color and parents with low household incomes in workgroup leadership, outreach, and advocacy</li> </ul>
Youth Leadership Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help connect existing youth groups throughout the region</li> <li>Provide training and leadership development for local young people</li> <li>Lead social norms marketing and social marketing campaigns</li> <li>Increase the number of youth on local boards, commissions, and leadership positions, and support youth in these opportunities</li> <li>Lead youth advocacy for municipal policies that support positive youth development</li> </ul>
Policy and Practice Change Workgroup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partner with RECOVER Project &amp; Youth Leadership Board to build policy advocacy skills among youth, people in recovery, and community members</li> <li>Advocate for best practices in local &amp; state policies for preventing youth substance use, including policies that addresses root causes and promote health equity and racial justice</li> <li>Promote a vision of a recovery-friendly, youth-friendly community, including events, parks, and public spaces</li> <li>Promote community norms that are trauma-informed and that support community connectedness and community resiliency</li> <li>Promote server training for alcohol &amp; marijuana businesses</li> <li>Support alcohol, tobacco, &amp; marijuana compliance checks</li> <li>Promote prescription drug drop boxes &amp; Take-Back Days</li> </ul>
Racial Justice Workgroup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and share best practices in promoting racial justice</li> <li>Identify and connect with existing organizations that serve marginalized people</li> <li>Provide training and leadership development for racial justice issues to existing CTC members and to the community</li> <li>Advocate for local and/or state level policies that support the equitable distribution of resources.</li> <li>Work with youth to identify racial justice advocacy issues.</li> </ul>

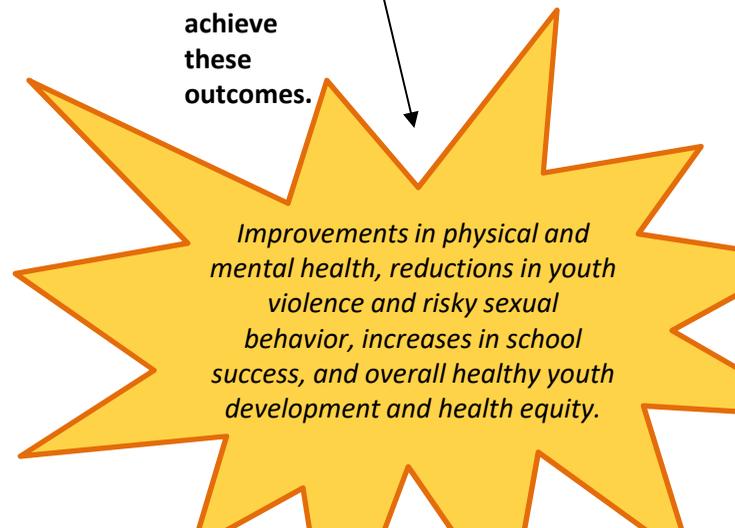
**...to address these risk factors...**

- Decrease low perception of harm from drug use
- Decrease parental attitudes favorable to drug and alcohol use
- Decrease family management problems
- Decrease laws and norms favorable to drug and alcohol use
- Decrease symptoms of depression and anxiety

**...to change these behaviors.**

- Decrease youth alcohol use and binge drinking
- Decrease youth cigarette use and vaping
- Decrease youth marijuana use
- Decrease youth misuse of prescription drugs

**...to achieve these outcomes.**



**Implement these strategies...**

<p><b>Healthy Eating:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote Farm to Institution activities</li> <li>Promote increased access to healthy, local food for all</li> <li>Work with partners to change the story about hunger on the local, state, and national levels</li> </ul>
<p><b>Active Living:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote walking trails and paths</li> <li>Promote Complete Streets</li> <li>Promote community use of public spaces</li> <li>Promote walking, biking, and public transportation for recreation and utilitarian uses</li> <li>Promote physical activity strategies in schools</li> <li>Promote workplace wellness</li> </ul>

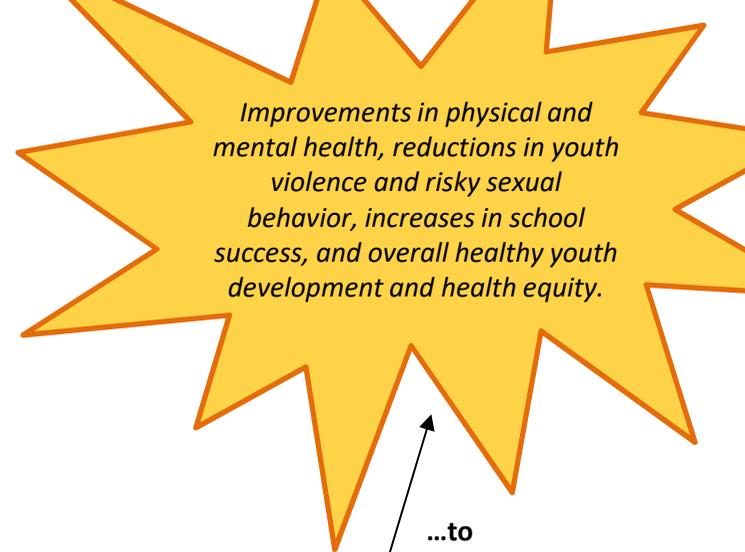
**...to address these factors...**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase access to and demand for healthy, local foods</li> <li>Increase availability of healthy, local foods through institutions</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase access to opportunities for physical activity</li> <li>Improve the built environment to facilitate active living</li> </ul>

**...to change these behaviors....**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consumption of fruits and vegetables increases</li> <li>Physical activity increases</li> </ul>
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**...to achieve these outcomes.**



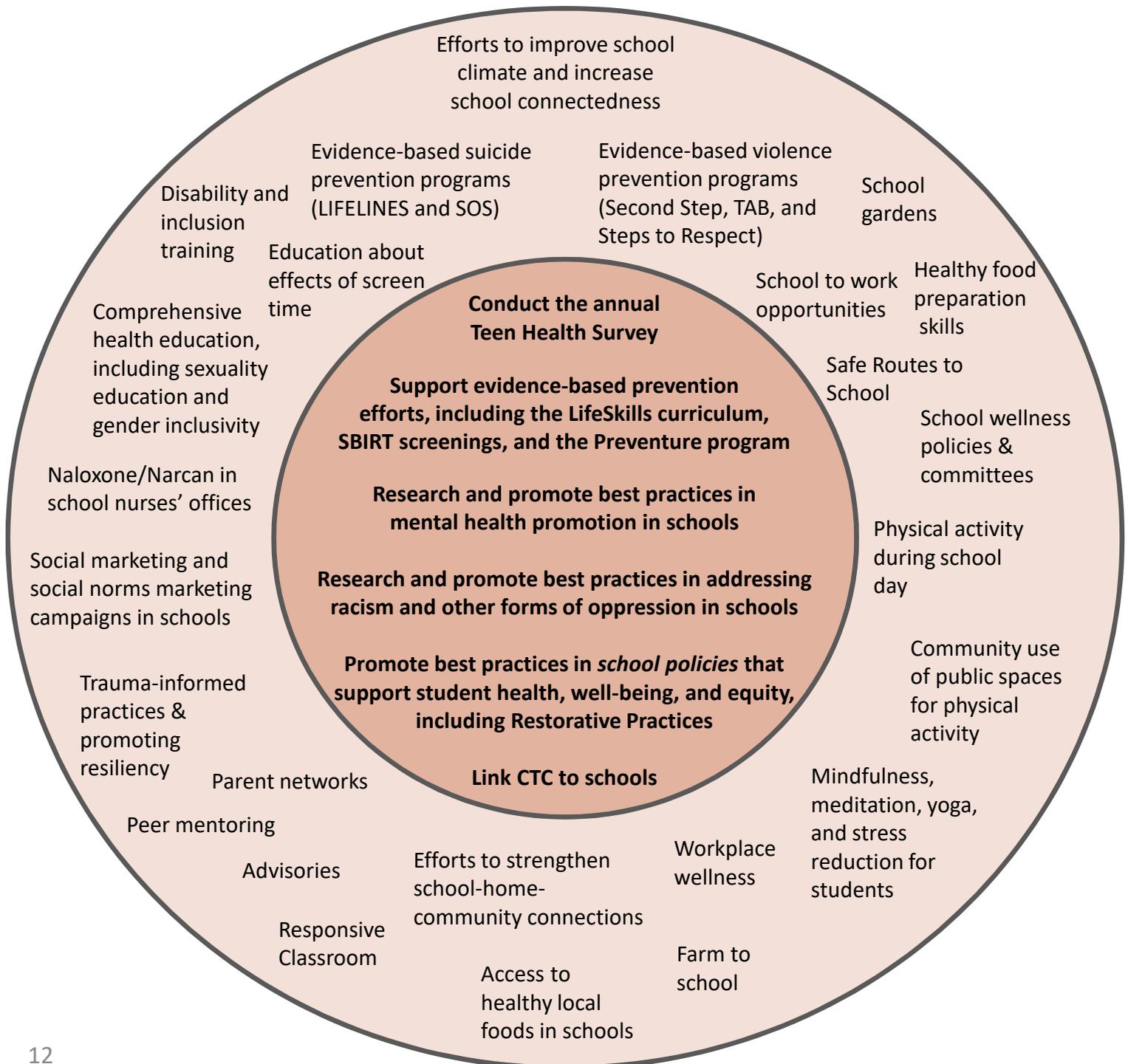
# Communities that Care

## Our Plan for Healthy Eating and Active Living

# Regional School Health Task Force

 The Communities That Care Coalition works to improve youth health and well being, and promote health equity and racial justice. The goals of the Regional School Health Task Force are to reduce youth substance use, improve nutrition and physical activity, and increase health equity, with a focus on the coalition’s priority risk factors.

 The Regional School Health Task Force includes representatives from all of the school districts in Franklin County and the North Quabbin, as well as key community partners. Members of this workgroup serve as liaisons between the Communities That Care Coalition and the schools, and work together to plan effective health and equity promotion efforts within and through the schools.



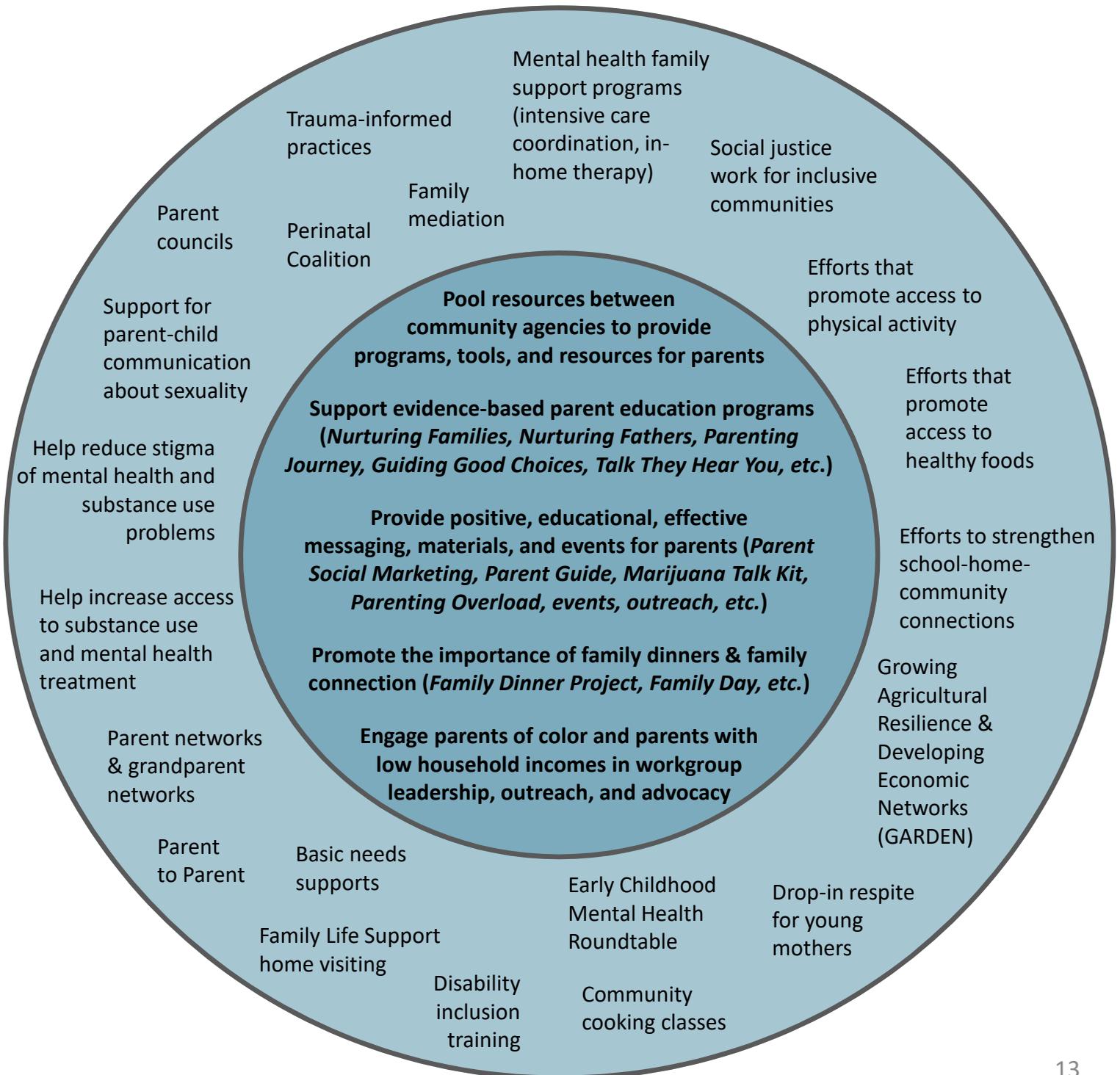
# Parent Education Workgroup



The Communities That Care Coalition works to improve youth health and well being, and promote health equity and racial justice. The goals of the Parent Education Workgroup are to reduce youth substance use, improve nutrition and physical activity, and increase health equity, with a focus on the coalition's priority risk factors: *family management problems, parental attitudes favorable to youth substance use, perception of harm from youth drug use, and symptoms of depression and anxiety.*



The Parent Education Workgroup brings together many different agencies that work with parents and families, as well as parents themselves. Members of the group work together to plan effective prevention and health-promotion efforts that support the family/home environment.



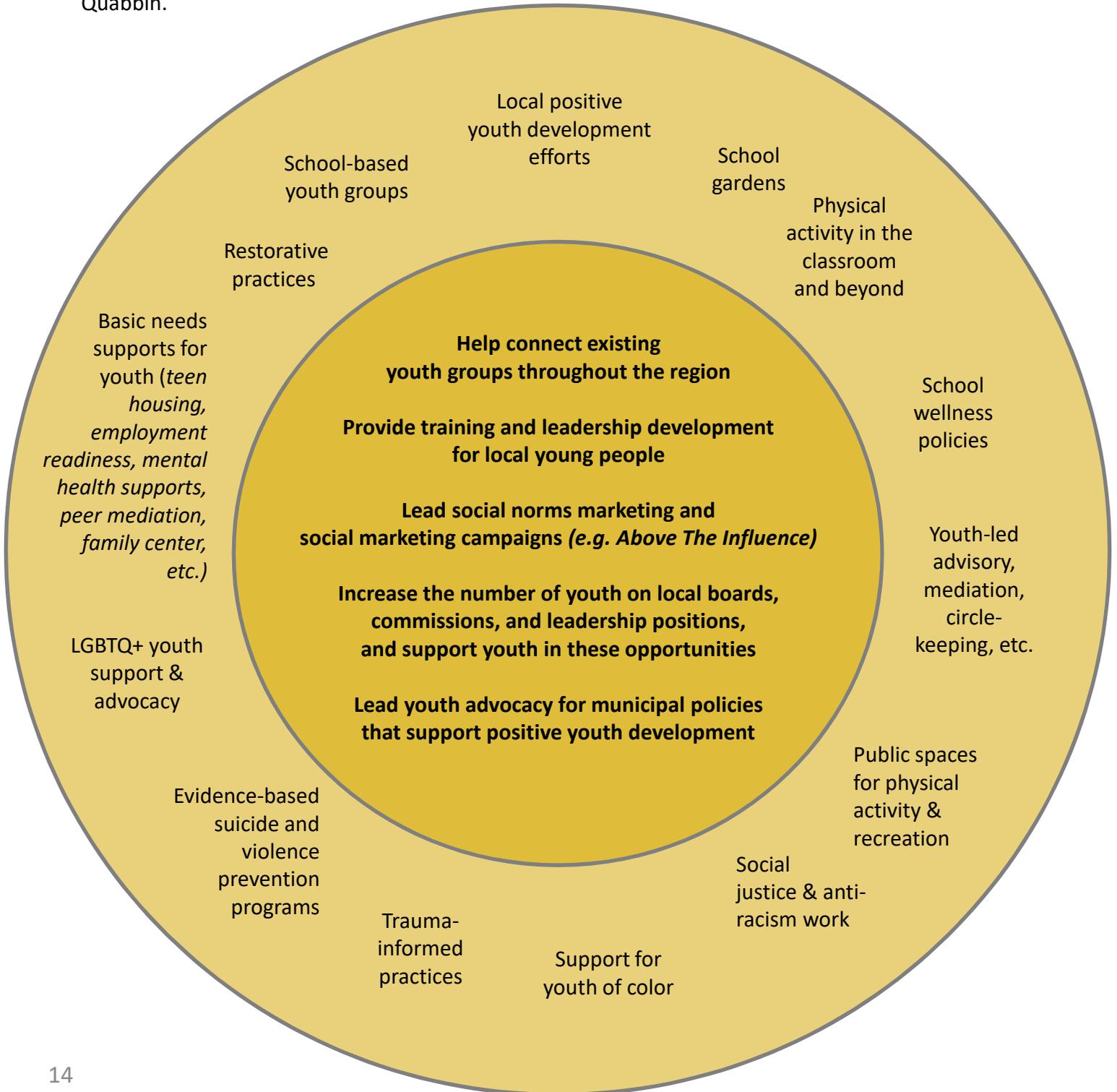
# Youth Leadership Board



The Communities That Care Coalition works to improve youth health and well being, and promote health equity and racial justice. The Coalition's Youth Leadership Board aims to empower young people with the skills and opportunities to become effective leaders, as well as expand the coalition's reach and efficacy in reducing youth substance use, improving nutrition and physical activity, increasing health equity, and reducing priority risk factors.



Youth Leadership Board members are young people ages 13-24 from around the region who participate in trainings and actions to build youth voice, and improve youth health and health equity in the region. The Youth Leadership Initiative is coordinated by Community Action Youth Programs in collaboration with the many fabulous youth groups that already exist in Franklin County and the North Quabbin.



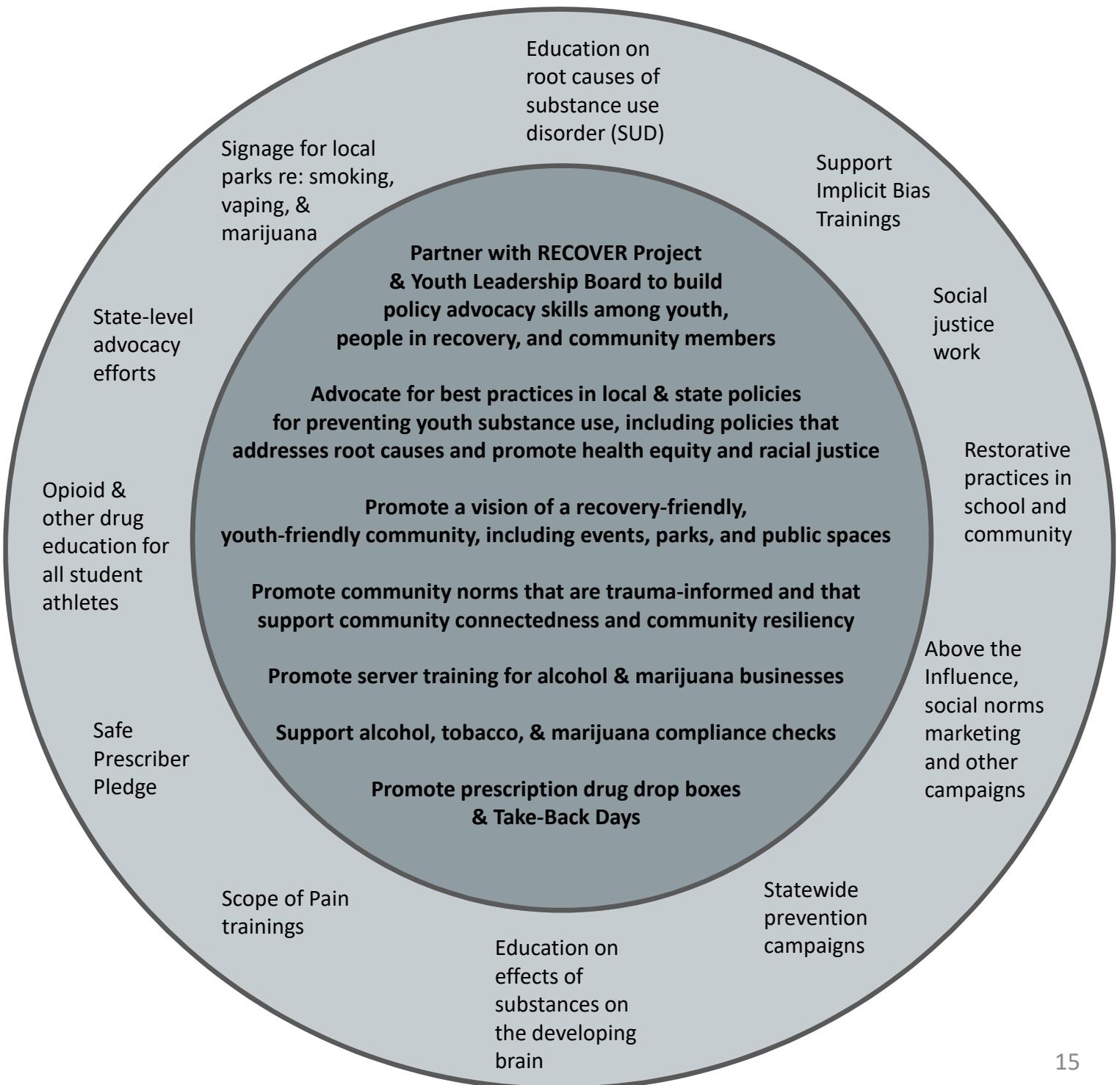
# Policy and Practice Change Workgroup



The Communities That Care Coalition works to improve youth health and well being, and promote health equity and racial justice. The goal of the Policy and Practice Change Workgroup is to reduce youth substance use and increase health equity, with a focus on reducing the risk factors *Community Laws and Norms Favorable to Youth Substance Use* and *Perceived Risk of Harm from Youth Substance Use*.



The Policy and Practice Change Workgroup brings together public health officials and professionals, town officials, law enforcement, people in recovery, and other partners who wish to create policy-level and norms change for substance use prevention.



# Mass in Motion Steering Committee

 The Communities That Care Coalition works to improve youth health and well being, and promote health equity and racial justice. The goals of the Mass in Motion Steering Committee are to improve nutrition and physical activity, and increase health equity, with a focus on policy, systems, and environment change.

 The Mass in Motion Steering Committee brings together town officials, transportation planners, people involved in various aspects of the food system, health care, fitness, schools, public health, and others in order to plan policy, systems, and environmental changes that increase health equity and remove barriers to accessing healthy food and physical activity.



# Racial Justice Workgroup

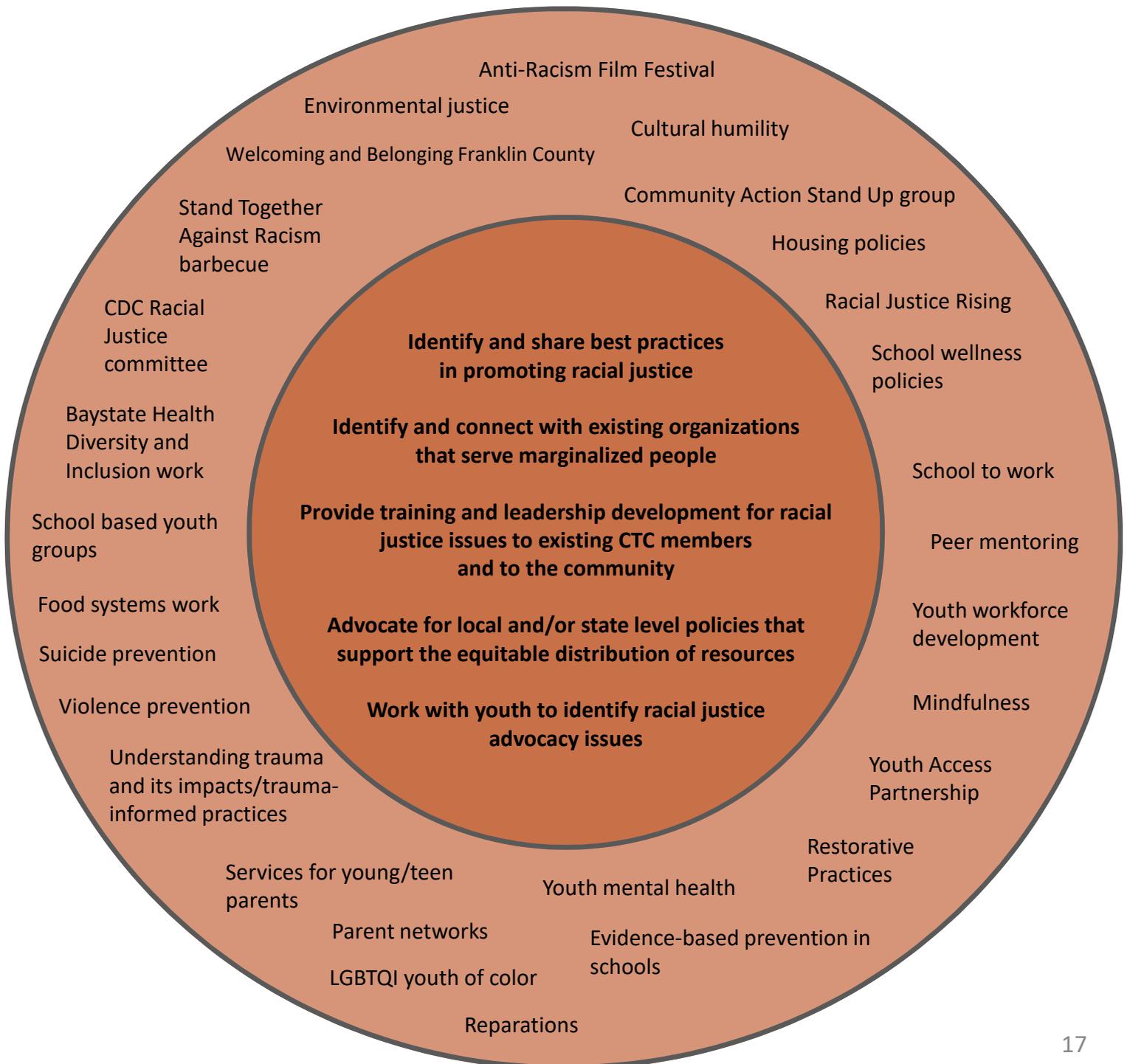


The Communities That Care Coalition works to improve youth health and well being, and promote health equity and racial justice. The goals of the Racial Justice Workgroup are to

- 1) To increase the racial diversity within the Coalition at all participation and leadership levels.
- 2) To increase understanding among Coalition participants of racial justice and its critical role in increasing health equity
- 3) To identify and lead new coalition strategies to improve health and wellbeing for people of color from a systems level

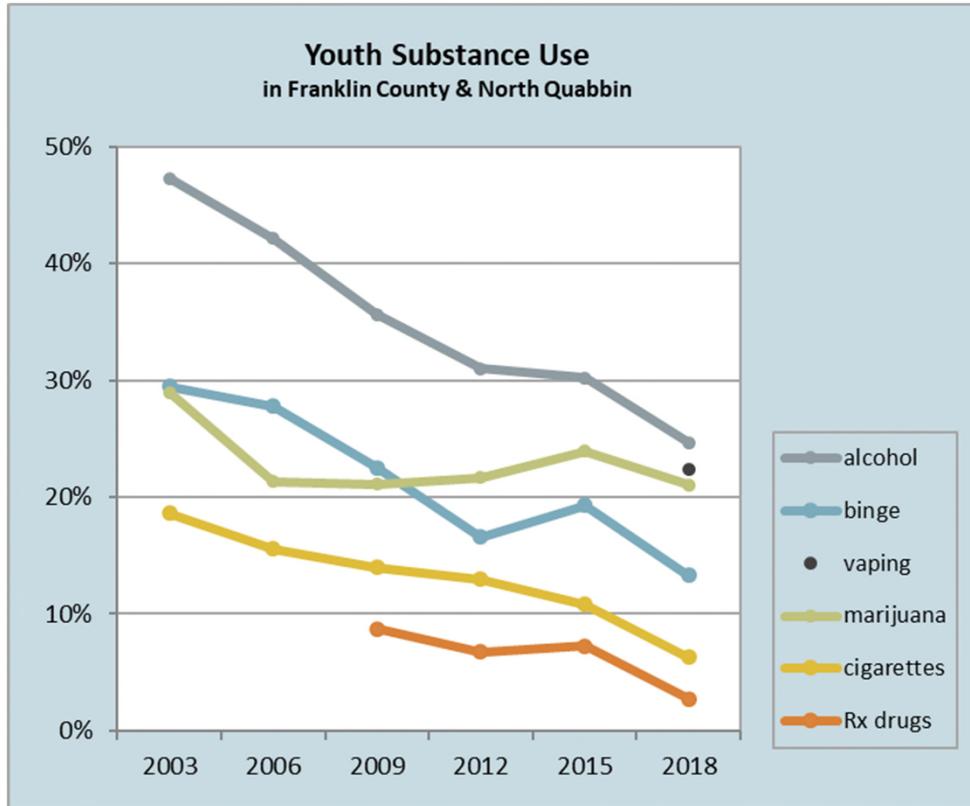


The Racial Justice Workgroup brings together coalition and community members with a common interest in racial justice and youth health and health equity. The group is committed to having its membership remain a majority people of color.



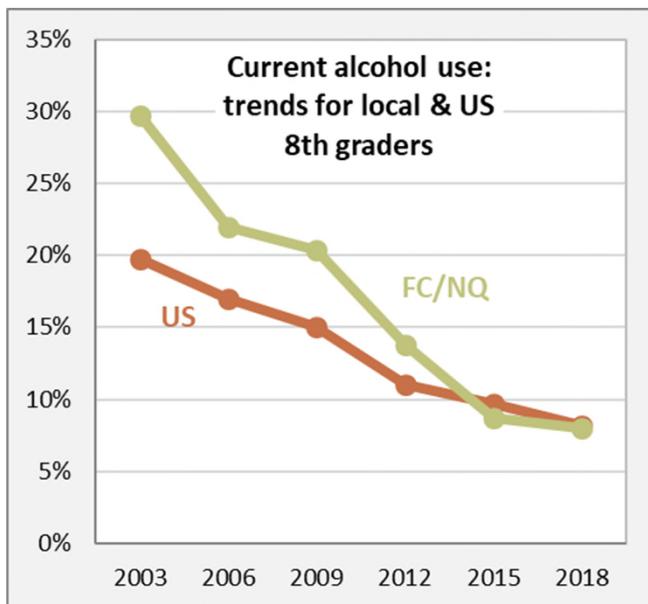
# Measuring Up

Since the Coalition's launch in 2002, Franklin County and the North Quabbin region have seen significant reductions in our coalition's priority risk factors (graph on page 8) and in drug and alcohol use by local youth.

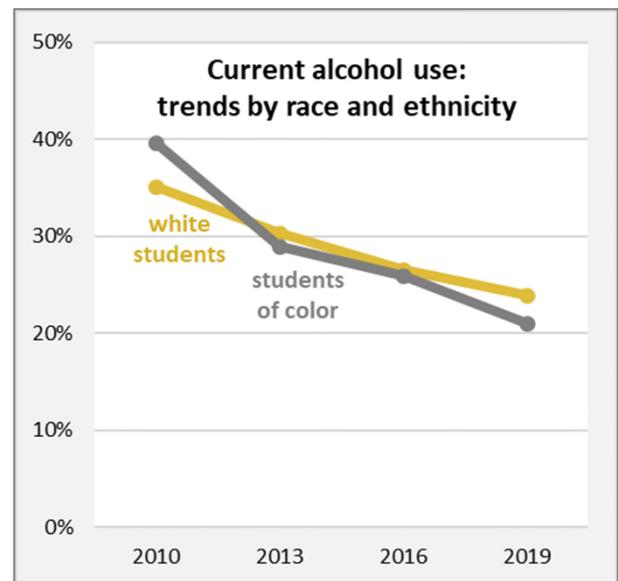


- alcohol use is down 48%
- binge drinking is down 55%
- marijuana use is down 27%
- cigarette smoking is down 66%
- prescription drug misuse is down 68%
- we're working to reduce vaping rates

Local reductions in youth drug and alcohol use far outpace national declines.



As drug and alcohol use has declined locally, disparities have also declined, creating greater equity for historically disempowered groups.

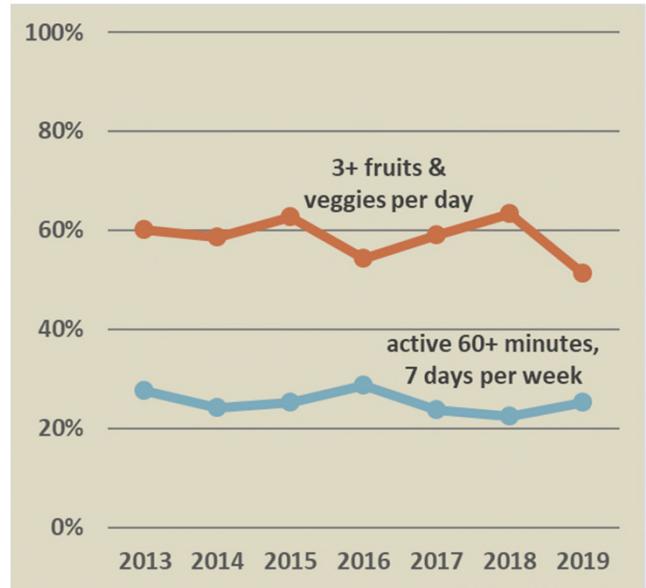


# Measuring Up

The Coalition launched its Healthy Eating & Active Living initiative in 2011, and first received funding for this work in 2012 with the following goals:

- Increase the % of young people who exercise for an hour or more each day
- Increase the % of young people who eat 3 or more fruits and vegetables each day

We are tracking these measures and working to increase our capacity to make a population-level difference in these areas.



## Coalition Timeline & Milestones

Coalition Kick-Off Meeting

Coalition completed 5 Trainings on Communities That Care Model

Teen Health Survey first administered in five school districts

Coalition Principles of Operation adopted

Workgroups formed

Original Community Action Plan approved

Coalition mentors GMCSP

Coalition selected as CADCA national “Coalition of the Year”

Community Action Plan Updated

Mike Fritz Community Builder Award Established

Coalition mentors NQCC

Sara Cummings Coalition Leadership Award Established

Coalition received state “Healthy Communities” Award

All 9 FC/NQ school districts participate in Teen Health Survey

Coalition mentors Greenfield’s 4SC

Healthy Youth Initiative Kickoff Meeting

Coalition featured in SSIR’s Collective Impact articles

Regional School Health Task Force selects LifeSkills curriculum

Coalition presents at White House Summit on prevention in education

Institute of Medicine publishes paper on CTC & BFMC collaboration

Youth Leadership Board initiated

Racial Justice Workgroup launched

Parent Leader Program piloted

August 2002

October 2002-April 2004

April 2003

November 2004

March 2005

September 2005

October 2006-2008

September 2007

January 2008

May 2008

October 2008-2010

January 2009

June 2009

March 2009

October 2010-2012

December 2011

January 2012-2015

Spring 2014

June 2014

May 2016

Spring 2016

Spring 2019

Fall 2019

# Coalition Membership

The Coalition gains its strength from its membership. Hundreds of individuals from numerous organizations participated in the development of the original Community Action Plan published in 2005, the updates in 2008, 2010, and 2016, and this 2020 update. Hundreds more have been involved in carrying out and supporting the strategies in the plan. Their time and dedication is essential and invaluable. The following organizations are currently active in the Communities That Care Coalition:

30 Towns of Franklin County & North Quabbin ♦ All of our Elected Officials ♦ Athol Area YMCA ♦ Athol-Royalston Regional School District ♦ Baystate Franklin Medical Center ♦ Behavioral Health Network ♦ Big Brothers Big Sisters of Franklin County ♦ Center for Human Development ♦ Clinical & Support Options ♦ Collaborative for Educational Services ♦ Community Action Pioneer Valley ♦ Center for Community Resilience after Trauma ♦ Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts ♦ Community Health Center of Franklin County ♦ Department of Mental Health ♦ Department of Public Health ♦ Department of Youth Services ♦ DIAL/SELF Youth and Community Services ♦ Erving School Union 28 ♦ Four Rivers Charter Public School ♦ Franklin County Chamber of Commerce ♦ Franklin County Community Development Corporation ♦ Franklin County Food Council ♦ Franklin County Probate and Family Court ♦ Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority ♦ Franklin County Sherriff's Office ♦ Franklin County Technical School ♦ Franklin Regional Council of Governments ♦ Franklin/Hampshire Substance and Tobacco Prevention Partnership ♦ Frontier Regional School District ♦ Gill Montague Community School Partnership ♦ Gill Montague Regional School District ♦ Greenfield City Council ♦ Greenfield Community College ♦ Greenfield Community Television ♦ Greenfield Health Department ♦ Greenfield Housing Authority ♦ Greenfield Parks & Recreation Department ♦ Greenfield Police Department ♦ Greenfield Public School District ♦ Greenfield Safe Schools Safe Streets Coalition ♦ Healthy Families of Franklin County and North Quabbin ♦ Heywood Hospital ♦ Institute for Health and Recovery ♦ Interfaith Council of Franklin County ♦ Just Roots ♦ Learn to Cope ♦ LifePath ♦ Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission ♦ Massachusetts Trial Court ♦ MassHire Franklin Hampshire Workforce Board ♦ Mohawk Trail Regional School District ♦ Montague Catholic Social Ministries ♦ Montague Parks & Recreation Department ♦ New England Learning Center for Women in Transition ♦ North Quabbin Community Coalition ♦ Office of District Attorney David Sullivan ♦ Olive Street Development, LLC ♦ The Opioid Task Force of Franklin County and the North Quabbin Region ♦ Partners for a Healthier Community ♦ Partnership for Youth ♦ Pioneer Valley Regional School District ♦ Quabbin Mediation ♦ Ralph C. Mahar Regional School District ♦ RECOVER Project ♦ Reinventing Justice ♦ Second Congregational Church of Greenfield ♦ The Brick House Community Resource Center ♦ The Family Center ♦ The Mediation and Training Collaborative ♦ The Garden ♦ The Literacy Project ♦ The Salasin Center ♦ Tobacco Free Community Partnership ♦ Tobacco Free Mass ♦ United Arc ♦ United Way of Franklin County ♦ University of Massachusetts College of Nursing ♦ University of Massachusetts School of Public Health ♦ Valuing Our Children ♦ Western Massachusetts Food Processing Center ♦ Western Mass Recovery Learning Community ♦ Western Massachusetts Training Consortium ♦ Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts ♦ YMCA in Greenfield ♦ In addition to the many organizations listed above, we are grateful to the numerous youth, parents, community members, elected & town officials, funders, & organizations who have supported the Coalition in countless ways. ♦ Sincere apologies to those we have left off this list inadvertently. Special thanks to Baystate Franklin Medical Center for their generous support of CTC and this Action Plan.

**For more information about the Communities That Care Coalition contact our Co-Coordinators:**

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[www.communitiesthatcarecoalition.org](http://www.communitiesthatcarecoalition.org)