



# An Ounce of Prevention

Fairfax County  
Neighborhood & Community Services  
Prevention Unit

Issue 4: Oct/Nov 2015

## Out of School Time Network

Jonathan Melendez, Prevention Specialist, NCS

Out of School Time (OST) program providers and stakeholders are encouraged to join a new effort to develop a local OST network in Fairfax County.

Research shows quality OST programs are important and play a key role in the success of children and youth. Correlation exists between frequent attendance in OST programs and positive outcomes, including improved academic achievement, school attendance, student behaviors, and relationships (peer to peer, adult to youth).

State wide, 18% of school-aged children (nearly a quarter million children) are alone and unsupervised during OST hours. Results of a recent survey of FCPS middle school parents showed that 37% of after-school program participants would be home alone if not for the FCPS Middle School After School Program. OST hours are the peak time for juvenile crimes and risky behaviors, including alcohol and drug use. Some national studies find that youth who do not spend any time in OST activities are 49% more likely to have used drugs and 37% more likely to become a teen parent. Youth are also at the highest risk of becoming a victim of violence after school, particularly between the hours of 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. The highest amount of juvenile crime occurs between 3 and 4 p.m., the hour after most children are dismissed from school.

High-quality OST programs offer excellent opportunities for youth to develop skills in supervised, safe, and engaging environments. Quality OST programs address achievement gaps and support the overall well-being of youth as they move through school, career and life.

Fortunately for our residents, there are many OST programs offered throughout Fairfax County. Many of these programs are operated by County agencies, but a great number of quality programs are offered by private businesses, non-profit organizations, faith-based organizations, and others.

To that end, OST program providers are currently in the early stages of establishing a countywide Out of School Time Network of public and private OST programs. The benefits of such a network would be invaluable in ensuring each youth participating in an OST program is receiving quality programming. This network would provide a place to share resources, trainings, and deliver consistent messages regarding OST programming to youth and stakeholders. Within this network, a continuum of services would be estab-

lished across the different age groups, promoting smooth transitions between OST programs when participants age out of one program and begin another. For private programs, the network could provide access to County resources, increase partnership opportunities, provide higher visibility, and help market their programs.

**OST program providers and others interested in joining or helping to develop the Fairfax County OST Network are encouraged to attend an upcoming information session. Information sessions (lunch is provided) are scheduled for:**

**October 20, 2015, 11:30a.m.—1p.m.**

[South County Government Center](#), Room 505A

**October 23, 2015, 11:30a.m.— 1p.m.**

[Pennino Building](#), 10th Floor, Hall of Honor

To RSVP for one of the information sessions, or for more information, please contact Jonathan Melendez at 703-324-5556 or [Jonathan.Melendez@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Jonathan.Melendez@fairfaxcounty.gov).



*Service learning is often a key component of OST programs. Photo courtesy of Stone MS.*

### **Inside this Edition:**

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## Kids at Hope Promoting That “All Children and Youth are Capable of Success, No Exceptions!”

Claudia Thomas, Family Engagement Representative, Fairfax County Public Schools



Have you ever asked yourself why is it that some children and youth do well and some do not, even when they come from similar circumstances? And equally important, “What makes the difference?”

[Kids at Hope](#), a child and youth development research and professional development organization, has explored those

questions for the past 22 years. Here is what it has discovered. First and most importantly, it’s not the risk or challenging social economic circumstance that prevents children from succeeding, it is the absence of *hope*. Children who learn to **be hopeful do better** in life than children who grow up hopeless. That finding in and of itself is revolutionizing our understanding of what children need to be successful.

So what is hope and why is it so powerful? Hope is not a feeling that some people have and others do not. Hope is a brain process that is learned and ultimately is translated into a life skills strategy. Similar to learning to read, write, tie one’s shoes, drive a car, people learn about the dynamics of hope and how to use it to set goals, establish pathways to achieve those goals, and muster the energy to actively pursue its achievement. Kids at Hope has defined hope as the ability to visit one’s future at four destinations – home and family, education and career, community and service, and hobbies and recreation; return to the present; and prepare for the journey. Neuroscientists call that “mental time travel.”

Additionally, Kids at Hope has identified three universal truths that, when adopted as a cultural framework, can

facilitate the understanding and dynamics of hope:

**Universal Truth #1: We Believe-** Children succeed when they are surrounded by adults who *believe* that they can succeed.

**Universal Truth #2: We Connect-** Children succeed when they are *connected* and surrounded by caring adults (these adults are called ACES).

**Universal Truth #3: We Time Travel** – Children succeed when they can articulate their future (in four domains rather than one; home and family, education and career, community and service, and hobbies and recreation).

Kids at Hope appears simple, yet it is also quite powerful. It has the ability to inspire, empower and transform entire youth serving communities, schools, and institutions. It serves as a model for community –wide family engagement and a prevention strategy that supports the success of all children and youth, no exceptions! In addition to the ongoing successful implementation of Kids at Hope Herndon (to include the [Herndon High School](#) pyramid in conjunction with the Town of Herndon Parks and Recreation Department), most recently the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services has begun the implementation of the Kids at Hope strategic cultural framework in NCS programs throughout Fairfax County.

To find out how you can become an ACE or if you would like more information about Kids at Hope, please contact Claudia Thomas, Family Engagement Representative, FCPS Region 1, at [cethomas1@fcps.edu](mailto:cethomas1@fcps.edu) or 703-204-4335.

## Research Highlight: How Social Competence in Kindergarten & Future Wellness are Related

In a longitudinal study that spanned two decades, researchers found that children’s social skills in kindergarten were strongly associated with important young adult outcomes across a variety of domains. Kindergarten teacher ratings were used to assess children’s ability to share, problem solve, cooperate, and otherwise demonstrate social and executive function skills. Children who scored higher on these ratings were, 13 to 19 years later, more likely to attain posi-

tive outcomes related to education, employment, mental health, economic security, criminal/juvenile justice, and substance use. Findings reiterate the critical importance of non-cognitive skills to school readiness and success.

Jones, D.E., et al. (2015). [Early social-emotional functioning and public health: The relationship between kindergarten social competence and future wellness](#). *American Journal of Public Health*. doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2015.302630

## Things You Should Know About: New Regional Suicide Prevention Website

A new suicide prevention resource is available in Northern Virginia. Funded by the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, the five Community Services Boards in the region have come together to form the Suicide Prevention Alliance of Northern Virginia and recently launched a website, [www.suicidepreventionnva.org](http://www.suicidepreventionnva.org). The site is a resource for best practices in prevention, information on

how to help yourself or someone at risk of suicide, local data and trends, local events, opportunities to get involved, and much more. Over the coming months, new features and resources will be added, but [www.suicidepreventionnva.org](http://www.suicidepreventionnva.org) is already a go-to source for local suicide prevention information.



## Messaging Tools

Every issue, we will feature messaging that you can use to share prevention resources available in Fairfax County. Feel free to, without attribution, use these messages in your outreach efforts.

### This Month's Resource: *Safe Disposal of Prescription Drugs*

The Unified Prevention Coalition of Fairfax County has partnered with Fairfax County and Covanta to sponsor prescription drug take-back events. The most recent was September 26, 2015; additional events are planned quarterly. Updated event dates and information can be found at <http://www.unifiedpreventioncoalition.org> and used to fill in the blanks below when publicizing them.

### Newsletter Article

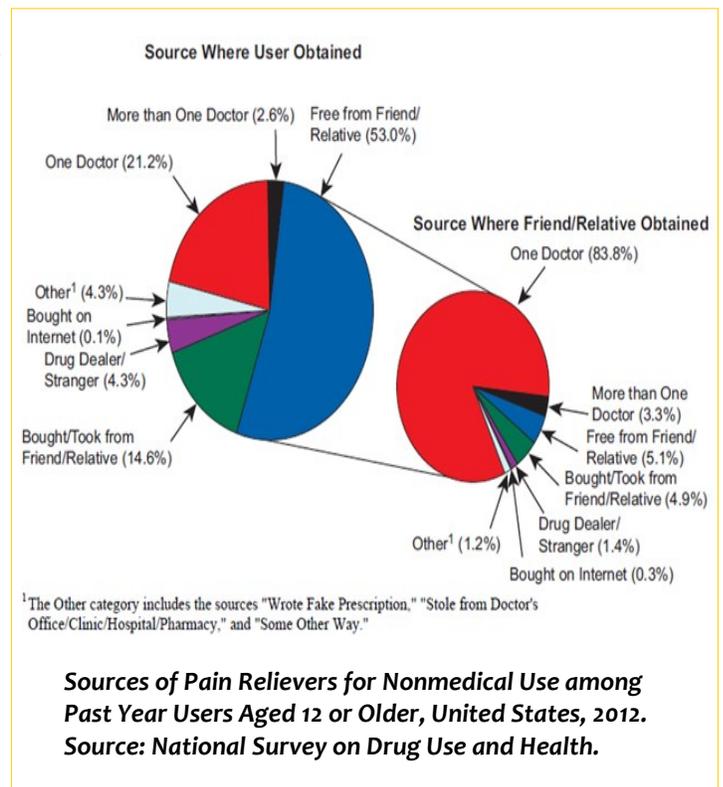
#### Fairfax County Announces Drug Take-Back Day: Operation Medicine Cabinet Cleanout Provides Free, Confidential Environment for Painkiller and Prescription Disposal

The Unified Prevention Coalition of Fairfax County, in partnership with Fairfax County Government, Covanta, and more than 130 local pharmacies, will host a Drug Take-Back Day, Operation Medicine Cabinet Cleanout, on [enter date].

According to the 2013-2014 Fairfax County Youth Survey, over 13% of high school seniors have used painkillers without a doctor's order. Moreover, four out of five heroin abusers report prior abuse of prescription drugs. Nationally, about 90% of painkillers used for nonmedical purposes were initially obtained legitimately from a doctor.

"There is an alarming connection between prescription drug abuse and heroin abuse," said Whitney Strand, Executive Director for the United Prevention Coalition. "To combat this community issue, we need to provide a free, safe, confidential, and ecofriendly solution for Fairfax County's young adults. Operation Medicine Cabinet Cleanout, with the help of countless local partners and law enforcement, achieves just that."

Individuals can bring unused or expired medications (pills or liquids – no pressurized canisters or needles) to any of the eight local Fairfax County district [police stations](#) for disposal from [enter times] on [enter date].



### Facebook Post

Start gathering medicine that is expired or is not currently being used – do not save medicine for future use. Clean out your medicine cabinet and make your home safe from drug theft and abuse. Disposing prevents accidental poisoning, abuse, and protects the environment. Drop them off on [enter times and date] at any Fairfax County police station. See <http://www.unifiedpreventioncoalition.org> for more information.

### Tweets

Holding on to extra painkillers, just in case, is not a good idea. Get rid of them at our event on [date]: <http://unifiedprevention.org>

Safely dispose of unused Rx drugs at 8 locations across Fairfax, [times] on [date]: <http://unifiedprevention.org>



Contact Us:

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Fairfax County Neighborhood &
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Email:

ncs-prevention@fairfaxcounty.gov

Website:

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ncs/
prevention

Twitter:

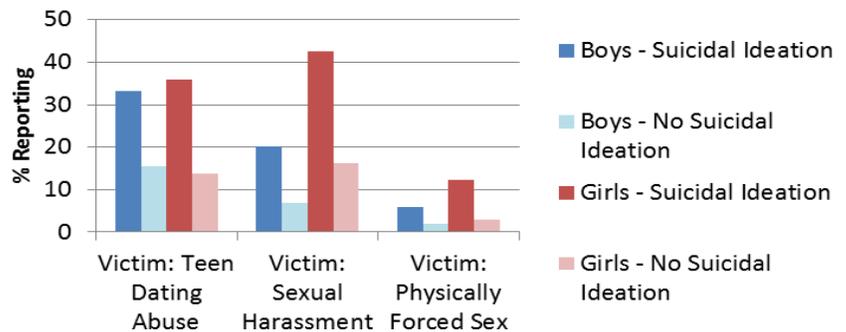
@ffxyouththrive

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Youth Survey Spotlight

Suicidal Ideation and Victimization-
Related Risk Factors



Experiencing abuse is a major risk factor for suicidal ideation (thoughts about
suicide) and behavior. Data from the 2013 Fairfax County Youth Survey show
how much this is the case when it comes to sexual abuse and harassment. In
the examples shown above, both boys and girls who have had thoughts of
suicide are more than twice as likely to have been victims of dating abuse or
sexual harassment or have been physically forced to have sex. More details
on the risk and protective factors for suicidal ideation among boys and girls
can be found under "Other Studies" on www.fairfaxcounty.gov/youthsurvey.

2014 Youth Survey data was released on September 29th, after we went to
press. Highlights will be included in our next issue.

Stakeholders Discuss Ways to Improve School Attendance

On September 21, 2015, over 200 stakeholders attended the
Community Dialogue on School Attendance to identify strategies
to address chronic absenteeism and truancy. (See the Au-
gust/September issue for background information.) The event
was kicked off by Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bul-
ova, School Board Chairman Pat Hynes, County Executive Ed
Long, and FCPS Chief of Staff Marty Smith. These elected and
appointed officials discussed the community-wide implications
of absenteeism and demonstrated their united commitment
address the attendance issue.

Mary Ann Panarelli, the Director of Intervention and Pre-
vention Services for FCPS, gave an overview of attendance
data and efforts in Fairfax. She was followed by Vidhya An-
anthakrishnan of the Vera Institute, and Jodi Martin of the
Clark County (WA) Juvenile Court, who shared how their county
has effectively addressed truancy. Participants then attend-
ed breakout sessions to discuss strategies to implement in
Fairfax. A report of recommendations will be presented to the
Successful Children and Youth Policy Team, which will endorse
next steps for the development and implementation of strate-
gies. Future issues of "An Ounce of Prevention" will include
additional details; you can also follow the work by subscrib-
ing to the SCYPT email list at http://bit.ly/scypt.



Dialogue attendees share their ideas during breakout sessions



Fairfax County is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in all county programs, services and activities.

