

Bemidji Area Prevention Alliance

Summary Report

Projects Funded by George W. Neilson Foundation

Year One: 2010-2011



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Background

BAPA and the Neilson Foundation: Partners in Prevention

What is BAPA?

Established in December 2009, the Bemidji Area Prevention Alliance (BAPA) is a collaboration of prevention-based organizations and community partners focused on increasing protective factors and reducing risk factors as a means of reducing and eliminating substance abuse, violence, bullying and suicide for the residents of the Bemidji area.

Vision of BAPA

Working collaboratively by integrating and aligning our resources, we will make our community safer and healthier. Our prevention efforts are focused across the six substance abuse prevention domains and will be designed to increase protective factors and reduce risk factors. The six domains are: individual, family, peer, school, community and society (environmental).

Funding from Northwest Minnesota Foundation's Community Connections program and the Neilson Foundation helped build the structure of BAPA, preparing the Alliance to receive support for prevention efforts from the George W. Neilson Foundation.

As of July 2011, BAPA membership includes 54 individuals representing 20 organizations. Member meetings are held at least quarterly. (A BAPA membership list is located in the Appendix of this report.)

Neilson Foundation Funding: A Commitment to Prevention

The George W. Neilson Foundation identified substance abuse issues as a key focus area that they wished to address, and in June 2009 they contacted Jill Naylor-Yarger, who at that time was the Drug-Free Coalition's Executive Director. The Foundation wanted Ms. Naylor-Yarger's input on how best to move forward with this new funding focus.

After meeting with the Foundation, Ms. Naylor-Yarger convened a group of area prevention and substance abuse service providers to identify, discuss, and prioritize the current and future needs for substance abuse services in the Bemidji area. The various program and agency representatives who attended this meeting were invited due to their involvement with a variety of substance abuse prevention, intervention, treatment, and continuing care services in Bemidji and the surrounding area. The invitees were encouraged prior to the meeting to suggest the names of other possible attendees, who were also invited.

Present at the meeting were private and nonprofit mental health providers, adolescent chemical dependency counselors, and representatives from county probation services, Beltrami Area Service Collaborative (BASC), suicide prevention, violence/bullying prevention, and outlying substance abuse services in Hubbard County. Many community needs were discussed. When asked where to place our greatest efforts, it was clear **that a prevention focus was the overwhelming priority**. The findings of this group were presented to the Neilson Foundation.

In the Fall 2009, the George W. Neilson Foundation announced a commitment of \$1 million to alcohol and drug abuse prevention programming in the Bemidji area over a five-year period.

In December 2009, a large meeting was held with a wide range of stakeholders in attendance. BAPA steering committee members were chosen by ballot. For the next few months, the elected steering committee worked on the development of operational procedures and the grant application process for the first round of grant awards in the spring of 2010. The BAPA steering committee strives to find a healthy balance between effectively channeling Nielson funds into programming and developing and implementing strategies to assure the long-term sustainability of a prevention alliance.

Projects Receiving Neilson Foundation Funding: Year 1

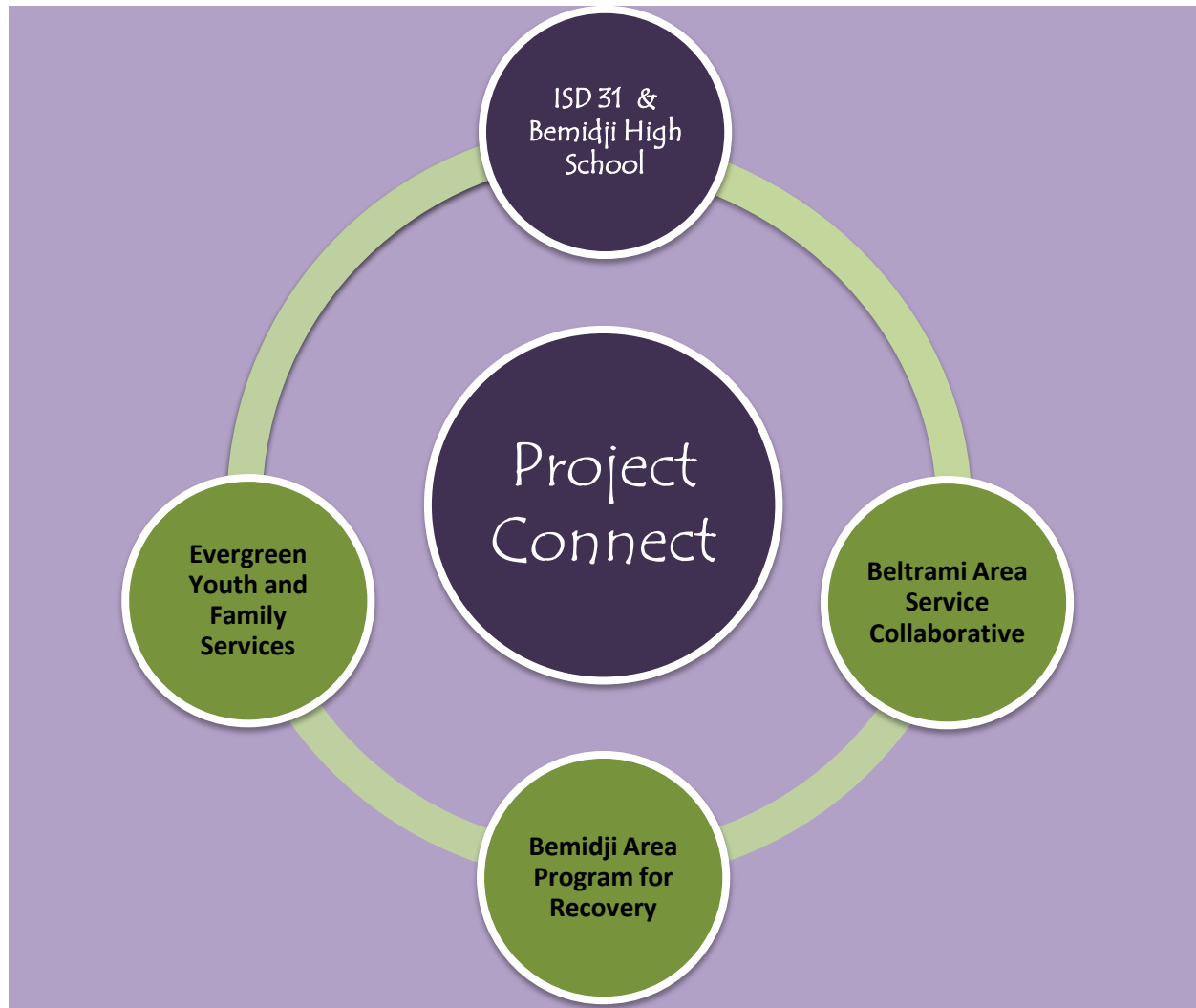
Neilson Foundation prevention funding was distributed through a grant application process designed by the BAPA steering committee. In May 2010, the first year of Neilson funding recipients were announced after an independent group reviewed all applications.

In 2010-2011, Neilson Foundation funding was awarded to the following projects:

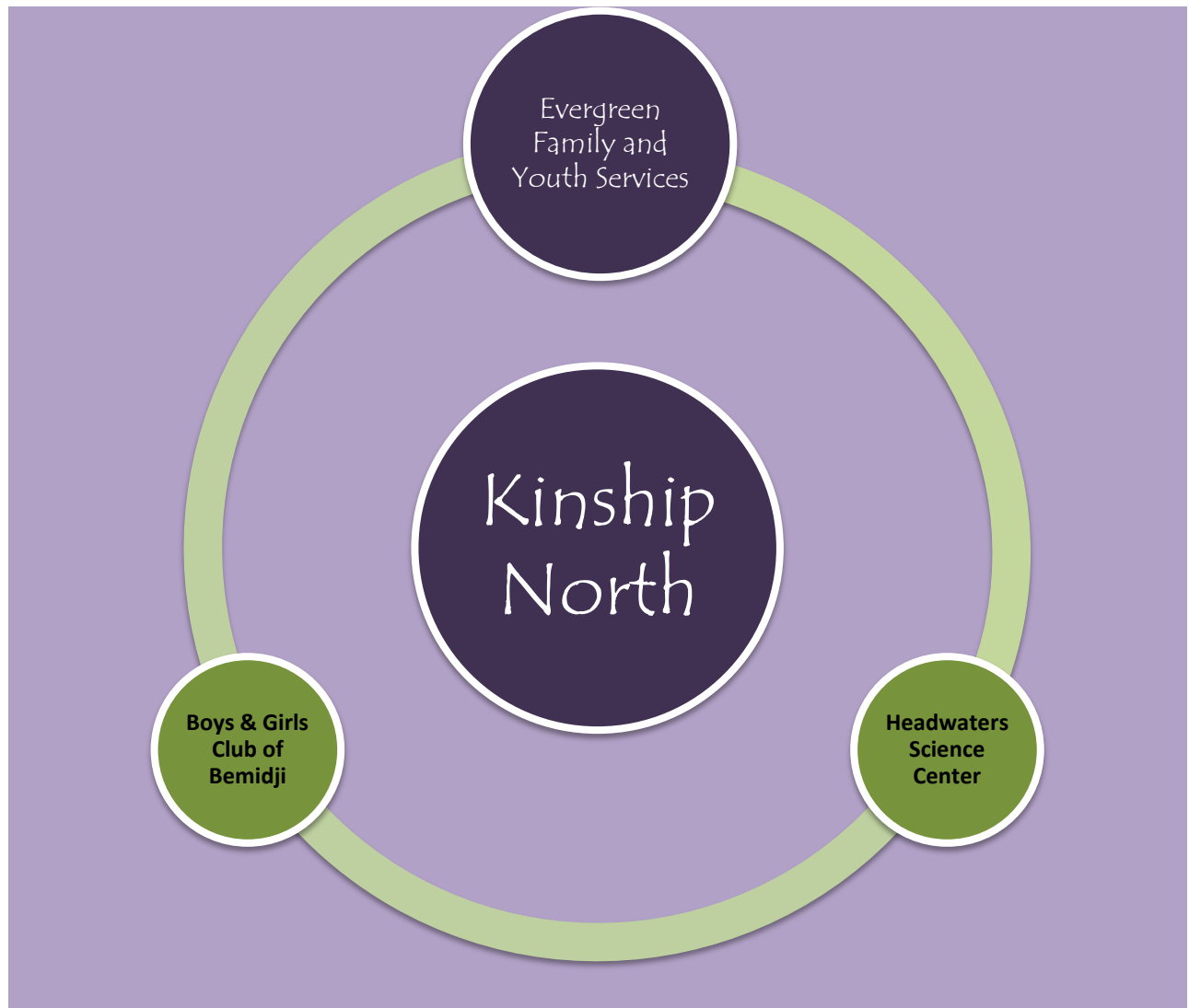
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|-----------------------------|----------|
| 1. Building Assets Together | \$77,530 |
| 2. Project Connect | \$68,095 |
| 3. Kinship North | \$24,383 |

On the next few pages, diagrams illustrate the partners who collaborate on the three projects listed above. It is important to keep in mind that all project partners contribute cash and non-cash resources, such as staff and administrative support. Some project partners receive no direct Neilson Foundation funding, but their project—as well as the whole Alliance—benefits from this injection of funding and the collaborative efforts that are taking place.

Project Partners: Who is around the "table"?



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What the Research Says:

Effective Community-wide Substance Abuse Prevention Programming

Knowledge Alone Is Not Enough

Prevention research shows that teaching about the harms and risks associated with substance use and abuse alone cannot, by itself, produce measurable and long-lasting changes in substance abuse-related behavior and attitudes (*Drug Abuse Prevention: A School and Community Partnership*, 2011). **Rather, an effective approach to prevention programming includes three key components:**

❖ Building Knowledge

Programs teach about the impacts of drug and alcohol use, as well as warning signs of depression and suicide.

❖ Fostering Skills

Programs should offer opportunities for youth to interact and practice skills that decrease the likelihood of substance use and abuse. This includes skills such as:

- resisting peer pressure
- decision making
- goal setting
- leadership
- social skills
- coping skills
- working toward peaceful conflict resolution
- connecting to peers

❖ Promoting Protective Factors and Reducing Risk Factors

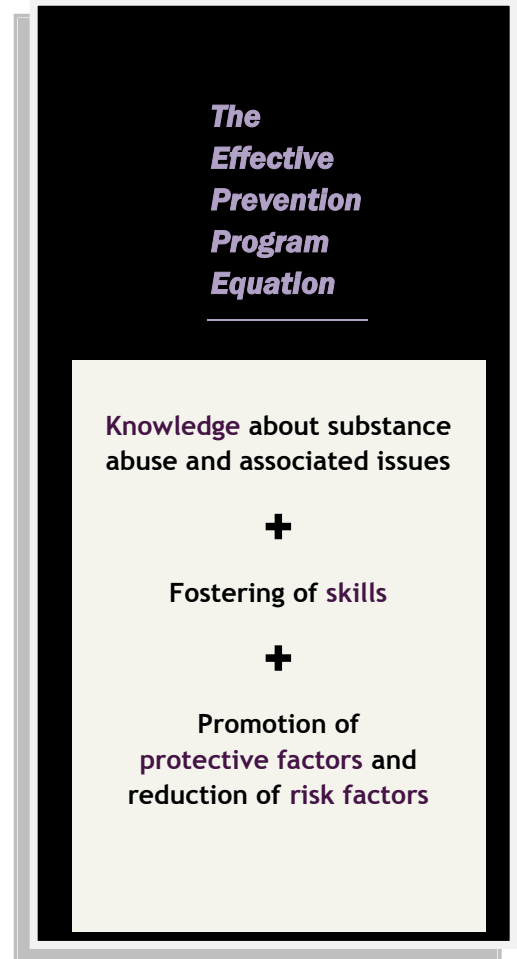
Risk factors increase the likelihood that a youth will engage in problem behaviors such as drug use or violence.

Protective factors minimize the negative consequences of exposure to risk factors by either reducing the impact of the risk itself or changing the way a person responds to risk.

Six Domains of Substance Abuse Prevention

To reduce risk factors and promote protective factors, programs should focus on impacting the six substance abuse prevention domains. They include:

1. Individual
2. Peer groups
3. Family
4. School
5. Community
6. Society (environmental)



Each of the three key components of substance abuse prevention is addressed collectively by the projects receiving Neilson Foundation funding through BAPA. Some of these projects were in place before BAPA's formation and are building on past successes with the generous support from the Neilson Foundation; other projects were implemented in this first year of Neilson Foundation funding.

Neilson-Funded Projects: Progress in Year 1

Project Evaluations: Outputs and Outcomes

All Neilson-funded projects developed evaluation plans and, during this first year of funding, took the first steps outlined in those plans.

School-aged youth in the Bemidji area are the primary target population for programming. Family members, teachers, school support staff, administrators and the community as a whole are all target population members and vital partners in this prevention work.

Collectively, the various project outputs were impressive. Project leaders developed partnerships and obtained signed memorandums of understanding. Along with their partners, they wrote curriculum, conducted trainings for program delivery, nurtured support for this work within the community, and—of course—delivered the programs to their target population. (See each project's outputs in the later sections of this report.)

For most projects, baseline data was gathered to use in measuring the impact (outcomes) for the target population. Several projects developed pre and post surveys that will be administered annually for comparison.

In the second year, program partners will review all intended outcomes to be sure that they are measurable and that methods are in place to assess each desired outcome. All programs will assess whether and to what extent short-term outcomes and, in some cases, medium-term outcomes were achieved.

What are Outputs and Outcomes?

Outputs:

Outputs are expressed in size or scope of services or products *delivered* or *produced* by a program. Frequently expressed in quantity or by reporting the production of something new. Outputs lead to outcomes.

Examples:

- 30 students participated in class about impacts of drug use
- Leadership curriculum developed for at-risk youth
- Partnership agreements signed with 3 schools to review health curriculum

Outcomes:

Measurable changes that occur because of program activities and services—the *impact*. Could be changes in learning, action, or condition.

Examples:

- 90% of students show growth in knowledge about impacts of drug use (pre- and post-tests used)
- 25% increase in school attendance for at-risk students in leadership program
- School health curriculum revised to include only best practice methods

NOTE:

After just one year of Neilson Foundation funding, most projects are primarily reporting program **outputs**. In Year 2, projects should be ready to report on some **outcomes** of their work.

Evaluating the Local Youth Population’s Wellbeing

The View from 30,000 Feet

Along with reporting the outcomes of individual projects, BAPA is planning to work with community and school partners to evaluate the wellbeing of the local youth population as a whole. By assessing the protective factors and risk factors present in the lives of Bemidji area youth, partners can determine what prevention programming is needed now and in the future. Publishing data about our youth population’s wellbeing will hopefully serve as a “call to action” to the community, leading to an increase in the number of churches, schools, community leaders, nonprofits, parents and others will join in efforts to address the needs of our youth.

By assessing the protective factors and risk factors present in the lives of Bemidji area youth, school and community partners can determine what prevention programming is needed now and in the future.

Many factors influence the wellbeing of our youth population. Neilson Foundation funded projects are reaching thousands of Bemidji area youth, but it would be difficult to draw a straight line between these programs and the entire local youth population’s outcomes.

Rural northwestern Minnesota has the state’s highest poverty rate, high rates of single parenthood, and shortages in nearly all areas of health care. Family instability is a reality for many youth. With the added pressure of a downturn in the economy, shortages in affordable housing and unstable funding for supportive services, the coming years may be challenging. That said, BAPA partners are ready to face the challenge of maintaining or decreasing current youth substance use levels.

With the help of a consultant, BAPA has identified two key tools that will be used to gauge the wellbeing of our local youth—the **Minnesota Student Survey** and the **Olweus Survey**.

Evaluation Tools

1. Minnesota Student Survey

The Minnesota Student Survey (MSS) is administered every three years to 6th, 9th and 12th graders—most recently in 2010. The survey questions relate to both the home and school life of students. Topics include family relationships, feelings about school, substance use, wellness activities, and more. Participation in the survey is voluntary, confidential and anonymous.

The MSS process is led by the Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota Department of Health (Center for Health Statistics) and carried out at the local level by school districts. School district participation is not mandatory; however, most of Beltrami County public schools choose to participate.

Statewide results can be compared to local school results. Some trend data is valid, but due to question re-wording some data cannot be compared from year-to-year.

The MSS will be administered again in 2013. BAPA plans to report on the outcomes and trends by comparing 2010 data to the 2013 data (with the cooperation and agreement of the school district). In the appendix of this report is a list of the MSS data sets that BAPA has identified as a focus for assessment of youth wellbeing. Also in the appendix are substance use data for 6th, 9th and 12 graders in 2010.

2. Olweus Survey of Bemidji Middle School Students

The *Olweus Bullying Prevention Program* is a whole-school program aimed at preventing or reducing bullying throughout a school setting. Bemidji Middle School adopted this program in 2004 and has surveyed its students annually using the Olweus Questionnaire. In the appendix of this report is a summary of recent BMS Olweus survey results.

A study by the Oregon Research Institute found significant associations between peer harassment of students in middle school and a variety of problem behaviors, such as alcohol abuse, once these students reach high school (Journal of Early Adolescence 2005). Other credible studies link bullying to absenteeism and school dropout. Given these links, BAPA will be interested in reviewing the annually Olweus Bullying Survey results and working with Bemidji Middle School to report on trends.

Project Summaries

An Introduction

The next section outlines each Neilson Foundation funded BAPA project. Again, these include:

1. Project Connect
2. Kinship North
3. Building Assets Together

Essential information about each project is shared, including:

- a project summary
- main activities/components
- partners
- desired general outputs/outcomes
- output/outcomes achieved in the first year of Neilson funding
- the project's approach to building knowledge, fostering skills, promoting protective factors and reducing risk factors
- a look ahead at plans for Year 2

Project Connect

Project Connect is a new homeroom program at Bemidji High that seeks to reduce and prevent substance abuse by decreasing educational barriers for students while building relationships and a positive school culture.

Beginning in January 2011, students meet once a week with a licensed staff member (teacher, administrator, or licensed support staff) who will serve as their designated advisor throughout their high school career. Advisors meet with students to review their academics and attendance, they address life skills and prevention topics, and work to develop a positive, trusting relationships with the youth in their homeroom.

If an advisor becomes concerned about a student, a referral is made to the Homeroom Coordinator, who will connect them with needed supportive services. Project Connect partners provide some of the prevention and intervention services for students, and they are joined by other community nonprofits in addressing student needs.

One of the principle referrals that can be made is to Teen Journey, a group that meets during the school day to educate and support students at-risk for drug or alcohol use. Highly qualified and experienced staff from Bemidji Area Program for Recovery facilitate these group sessions.

Truancy Tracker is a program of Beltrami Area Service Collaborative (BASC). Trackers monitor attendance and offer support to students who are frequently absent. The program has shown great success at area schools. Neilson Foundation funding provided an opportunity to expand the program into Bemidji High School.

Main Activities/Components

- BHS Weekly Homeroom Sessions
- Student Support Team
- Teen Journey group
- Truancy Tracker Program position at Bemidji High School
- Coordination of: referrals, homeroom schedules and topics, communication between Project Connect partners, BHS staff training

Partners:

- Independent School District 31*
 - Beltrami Area Service Collaborative*
 - Bemidji Area Program for Recovery*
 - Evergreen Youth and Family Services*
- *Received some Neilson Foundation funding (amounts vary)

Desired Outcomes—General Categories

Specific outcomes have been established in the evaluation plan under each of these general areas:

- Increase formal collaboration among school staff and community organizations to support students
- Increase in early identification of chemical use, abuse and dependency
- Increase in referrals to support services
- Increase in student attendance
- Increase in feelings of school connectedness and relationships with healthy adults

Outputs/Outcomes Summary in Year 1

1. Signed Memorandums of Understanding between collaborating agencies.
2. Homeroom “curriculum” of prevention topics and activities created
3. Establishment of weekly designated time for homeroom in the rigorous schedule at BHS
4. Sixty-six grade-specific homerooms established at BHS and Lumberjack Alternative High School with an average of 18-20 students in each homeroom meeting with a designated teacher, administrator, or support staff member 30 minutes once per week.
5. Teen Journey Support Groups led by Bemidji Area Program for Recovery during the school day for students at-risk for drug or alcohol abuse. Twenty-seven group sessions held serving 19 youth. Referral numbers surpassed original projections. Positive feedback from participants.
6. Thirty-five referrals to the student support team/homeroom coordinator with follow-up supportive services.

7. Truancy Tracker program monitoring and supporting students struggling with school attendance. *(This position only filled during the first semester of the academic year, as the employee left for another job opportunity. This is addressed in next year's planning.)*
8. Student Support Team meetings held as needed
9. Administered "pre-test" to students in homerooms to establish baseline on several desired outcomes
10. Coordination and support of Project Connect by:
 - Homeroom Coordinator (contract position with Beltrami Area Service Collaborative),
 - Bemidji High School administration and support staff (ISD 31 funded positions);
 - Educational Success Coordinator (Beltrami Area Service Collaborative employee)
11. Provided support for high quality relationship-building retreat for incoming freshman facilitated by the Rob Kesselring of Uncommon Seminars.

Project Connect

Three Key Components of Effective Prevention Programming

How does Project Connect cover the key components of effective prevention programming? As discussed on page 9, these key components include:

1. Building knowledge
2. Fostering skills
3. Promoting protective factors/reducing risk factors on six levels or "domains"

No one program needs to (or for that matter *could*) "cover all the bases" of prevention programming. This section just inventories which components are the focus of Project Connect.

Building knowledge

Homeroom

Concepts of healthy and unhealthy

Teen Journey

Substance use topics such as cocaine, marijuana, pills, patterns of use, alcohol, hallucinogens, triggers, addiction and chemicals, methamphetamines, mind mapping addiction

Fostering Skills

Homeroom

Life skills, self-management, time management and balance, academic goal setting, planning and decision making, interpersonal skills, planning, goal setting

Teen Journey

Positive peer pressure and support, interpersonal skills, decision making, self-expression, restraint, responsibility,

Truancy Tracker

Time management, planning and decision making, communication, resistance skills

Other

Referrals are made to other supportive services that will foster valuable skills

Promoting Protective Factors and Reducing Risk Factors

The bulleted lists below show which factors Project Connect is aiming to impact within the domains that make up the youth's world—as an individual, in their family, their peer groups, their school, their community and their overall environment.

Individual

- ◆ school engagement
- ◆ achievement motivation
- ◆ responsibility
- ◆ restraint
- ◆ integrity
- ◆ honesty
- ◆ personal power
- ◆ high self-esteem
- ◆ sense of purpose
- ◆ positive view of personal future
- ◆ learning that effort leads to achievement

Family

- ◆ parent involvement in schooling
- ◆ family boundaries
- ◆ positive family communication

The family domain comes into play with Project Connect primarily through the Truancy Tracker Program—working with parents to increase student attendance, encouraging communication, and helping families create boundaries for behavior. Referrals made through the Homeroom program help parents get services and support for their student, thereby enhancing the strength of the family through new resources.

Peer

- ◆ Building positive peer influences—connecting to peers who model positive behaviors

Project Connect encourages students to participate in activities. Through participation, youth can connect with peers who value involvement with the school and community. Teen Journey works with at-risk youth, conveying information to the group members who can then support one another in healthy decision making.

School

- ◆ adult role models available
- ◆ academic achievement monitored, supported
- ◆ school boundaries clear
- ◆ high expectations of students
- ◆ accessible creative activities, clubs, sports programs
- ◆ create caring school climate
- ◆ increase student bond with school
- ◆ school engagement
- ◆ clear, consistent message about substance abuse from entire school personnel
- ◆ clear standards of behavior (consistent attendance for instance)
- ◆ safe, trusting environment to build rapport with adults

Community

- ◆ Community values youth through its actions

Our community demonstrates that it values youth when we build and connect students with supports that will help them live healthier lives. Partnering and collaboration lead to better, more expedient access to services. Organizing around our youth's needs sends a message to families and students that there's a network of caring in our community.

A Look Ahead

Due to the solid efforts of many partners to launch the program and based on lessons learned in the first year of programming, Project Connect will experience a few positive changes in the coming year.

1. The Homeroom Program will run the entire school year in 2011-12.
2. Rather than having a non-professional Truancy Tracker staff position and a half-time Homeroom Coordinator, Project Connect will combine these into one full-time position with benefits in 2011-12. Having one professional available full-time on-site to coordinate and provide some direct services to students will enhance the program outcomes.
3. Funds will go toward a BHS freshman retreat in October. Ninth grade is a pivotal year in determining the overall wellbeing and academic future of students. The freshman retreat will focus on building connections between students and among students and BHS staff, and set a positive course for the high school experience.
4. The Support Team found it helpful to seek out Homeroom advisors when they became concerned about a student. Advisors see students regularly and can check into the concerns through their Homeroom connection. This will, in all likelihood, continue in the coming year.
5. BHS Link Crew members, a student leadership group, will assist with developing curriculum for use by the Homeroom advisors.
6. Grade-specific curriculum will be developed for Homeroom advisory time. Ninth and tenth graders will focus on transition issues and character development, while upper grades will focus on transitioning into life after high school and post-secondary planning. Academic check-ins will continue for students of all grade levels, as will the Homeroom referral process.

Kinship North

Kinship North is a formal mentoring program in the Bemidji area that offers kids an opportunity to connect with a caring adult volunteer mentor. Evergreen Youth and Family Services is the parent organization of Kinship North, a program that has been in existence for 14 years. Neilson Foundation funding has allowed the program to build on the foundation of what's been successful in the past and to expand in some exciting new directions.

Main Activities/Components

- ❖ **Mentorship:** Screened and trained adult mentors commit to one year of mentoring the same child for a minimum of one hour every week. Most Kinship kids are viewed as “at risk.”
 - ~ Kinship staff support of mentors/mentees/mentee families and coordination of ongoing matches
 - ~ Referrals for Kinship mentee families in need of other supportive services
 - ~ Annual family memberships at Headwaters Science Center for all mentees
 - ~ Memberships at the Bemidji Boys and Girls Club for all mentees
 - ~ Free activity passes for School District 31 events for mentors and Kinship Kids
 - ~ Movie nights for Kinship Kids
 - ~ Quarterly Kinship events involving partners such as the Science Center and Boys & Girls Club
 - ~ Community Service Project: Senior Clean-Up Day

Partners

- **Evergreen Youth and Family Services***
- Boys & Girls Club of Bemidji
- Headwaters Science Center

**Lead agency receiving the majority of funding for this project.*

Desired Outcomes—General Categories

- Reduce the rate of substance abuse among area youth
- Help create stable home environments
- Promote, encourage and help children succeed in school
- Enhance protective factors through positive, healthy activities with supportive adults

Outputs/Outcomes Summary in Year 1

1. Thirty-seven mentor matches met a minimum of one hour per week and participated in group activities
2. A total of 1,900 hours were spent in Kinship activities for mentees and mentors
3. Twenty-six families, including 51 children, now have free Headwaters Science Center memberships
4. Free BHS activity passes were given to each mentor match by School District 31
5. Monthly movie nights and quarterly events were held for mentor matches

Kinship North

Three Key Components of Effective Prevention Programming

How does Kinship North cover the key components of effective prevention programming? As discussed on page 9, these key components include:

1. Building knowledge
2. Fostering skills
3. Promoting protective factors/reducing risk factors on six levels or “domains”

No one program needs to (or for that matter *could*) “cover all the bases” of prevention programming. This section just inventories which components are the focus of Kinship North.

Fostering Skills

- ◆ social skills
- ◆ planning and decision making
- ◆ peaceful conflict resolution
- ◆ restraint
- ◆ resistance skills
- ◆ service to others

Promoting Protective Factors and Reducing Risk Factors

The bulleted lists below show which factors Kinship North is aiming to impact within the domains that make up the youth’s world—as an individual, in their family, their peer groups, their school, their community and their overall environment.

Individual

- ◆ engaged in creative, active or other youth activities
- ◆ less unstructured time
- ◆ caring for others--empathy
- ◆ integrity
- ◆ honesty
- ◆ responsibility
- ◆ personal power
- ◆ self-esteem
- ◆ sense of purpose
- ◆ positive view of personal future
- ◆ know that others have high expectations of them
- ◆ self-discipline
- ◆ flexibility
- ◆ resiliency

Family

- ◆ family support
- ◆ boundaries of behavior established
- ◆ positive family communication

One of the goals of Kinship North is improved relationships between Kinship kids and their parents/guardians. Several program components address this goal.

Referrals: Kinship North helps assess family relationships during the initial interview process to see if a family could benefit from referrals to other community resources.

Support and respite: Mentors provide respite for mentee’s parent, giving them a break from the pressures of parenting. Ninety percent of mentees are from single parent families.

Activities that include mentee parents/guardians build on the relationship and provide opportunities for a positive connection.

Peer

- ◆ positive peer influence

Activities that involve groups of Kinship Kids either alone or with their mentors connect youth through positive, substance-free, gang-free activities. Mentees can explore new hobbies and recreation that will help them build connections to other active youth by having a common interest.

Schools

- ◆ achievement motivation
- ◆ school engagement
- ◆ parent involvement in schooling

Access to Boys & Girls Club of Bemidji increases the academic supports available. Headwaters Science Center memberships provide a venue for hands-on learning. Mentors and parents are encouraged and supported in helping the child succeed academically. Free activity passes to all Kinship Kids from District 31 help connect youth to the school and build a sense of pride and belonging.

Community

- ◆ community demonstrates that it values youth
- ◆ community sees youth as resources
- ◆ boundaries for behavior established
- ◆ adult role model available
- ◆ sense of belonging to the community nurtured

A connection between youth and community is built through activities with the mentor. In many cases, the mentee is exposed to new facets of their community. Participation in service projects such as Senior Community Clean-Up Day helps youth develop their role as a community *member*. Each year, Kinship Kids are the honored guests at the program’s Spaghetti Fundraiser, a clear example of showing these youth that they are valued by adults.

A Look Ahead

In Year 2, Kinship North looks forward to the following:

1. Kinship North will undergo a formal evaluation using a resource called “What’s Working: Tools for Evaluating Your Mentoring Program.” Kinship Kids, mentors and parents will participate. A report that outlines outcomes of this evaluation will be shared with BAPA and the Neilson Foundation.
2. A new half-time program coordinator who is a social worker by training and also a former Kinship Mentor who is passionate about this work.
3. Maintaining at least 30 active mentor/mentee matches.

4. Potentially developing online mentor support system. This would allow for more frequent contact between Kinship coordinator and mentor and could possibly connect mentors to support one another. A key factor in the success rate of mentor matches is the support provided.
5. Kinship is exploring the addition of supervised pre-mentoring activities where potential mentors and youth on the waiting list for matches could meet. During the annual Kinship North Spaghetti Fundraiser in Spring 2011, two youth on the waiting list who attended the dinner were matched with adults who were in attendance.

Building Assets Together (BAT)

Building Assets Together actually refers to a group of several projects delivered by different partner agencies with Peacemakers Resources serving as the coordinator and fiscal agent of their efforts. Some of these projects existed in one form or another before Neilson Foundation's generous gift and were expanded or improved due to the new funding; other projects were created in the last year. The focus of BAT programming is on elementary and middle school-aged youth, their parents, school staff, and the community at-large.

Main Activities/Components

- **Bemidji Middle School programming**
Prevention Specialist on site (funded jointly by Neilson Foundation and Northwest Minnesota Foundation):
 - Facilitated Coping Skills Groups for 6th, 7th and 8th graders
 - Facilitated Concerned Persons Group
 - Peer Helpers: co-facilitated with BMS licensed social worker
 - Peer Leaders: co-facilitated with BMS licensed social worker
 - Involved with BMS's Positive Peer Relations Committee
 - Linked at-risk BMS youth with after-school activities at Boys and Girls Club
 - Facilitated Chemical Dependency Education Group for those with minor consumption, using or showing early warning signs
 - Provided individual support for students at-risk for substance exploration, suicide or depression
 - Conducted Prevention Week (teaching about available supports)
 - Created and made available resource information brochure for suicide prevention
 - Met with new, transferring students at BMS to offer support
 - Worked with several BAT partners to create a display booth at BMS Family Fun Nights and Parent/Teacher Conferences
- **Calvary Lutheran Church programming**
 - Sessions for Confirmation youth and parents on family communication and substance use/abuse.
 - Family Nights and Community Events with focus on healthy living and substance abuse prevention
- **Girl Scouts of MN and WI: Lakes and Pines "In the Zone: Living Drug-Free Program"**
Two six-week sessions held with a focus on knowledge about impact of drugs and alcohol abuse, healthy living, making positive choices with an "action project" as the culminating effort for the girls.
- **Beltrami Area Suicide Prevention Program "Look, Listen and Link"**
Suicide prevention and substance abuse education curriculum piloted at Schoolcraft Learning Community for 6th–8th graders

- **Social-Emotional Learning Classes: Central and Solway Elementary Schools**
Classes are taught once a week by teachers in both Central and Solway (District 31 elementary schools). Curriculum is a combination of published, research-based lessons and lessons developed locally and tailored for Bemidji area youth needs.

Partners

- Peacemaker Resources*
- Bemidji Middle School
- Boys & Girls Club of Bemidji
- Calvary Lutheran Church*
- Central Elementary School, Bemidji
- Evergreen Youth and Family Services/Bemidji Area Suicide Prevention Program*
- Northwest Minnesota Foundation
- Schoolcraft Learning Community
- Sexual Assault Program of Beltrami, Cass and Hubbard*
- Solway Elementary School
- Girl Scouts of MN and WI: Lakes and Pines*

*Received some Neilson Foundation funding (amounts vary)

Desired Outcomes—General Categories

- Provide information and skill-building experiences to youth to decrease risk and increase protective factors
- Increase parent/family awareness of substance abuse, related issues and risk/protective factors
- Promote collaboration and systems change.

Outputs/Outcomes Summary in Year 1

1. Calvary Lutheran Church

Confirmation Student/Parent Presentations

- 70 students in grades 6, 7, 8 and an equal number of parents and other adults attended presentations by Evergreen Youth and Family Services staff on family communication about serious and difficult topics, including substance use and abuse.
- Outcome highlight from the participant survey:
~ 72% of participants found the presentation “helpful” and 28% of participants found the presentation “very helpful”

Family nights/community events

- Peacemakers, Sexual Assault Program and Calvary collaborated to conduct a concert, family activities and youth-led skits —27 individuals attended
- Community-building activity--Alcohol-free Super Bowl party (lightly attended)

2. Bemidji Middle School

Coping Skills Groups

- 6th, 7th and 8th graders—44 participants
- Outcome highlights:
 - ~ Using the Stress Symptoms Assessment, students decreased their self-reported stress symptoms by an average of 35% from the first to the last session.
 - ~ Students improved their grades by at least one letter grade in at least one class and improved attendance by 10%.

Concerned Persons Group--13 participants

- Regular meetings were conducted with students that have a person of significance with substance abuse issues. Because this is generally a group that is at very high risk for substance abuse issues, the focus was on how to meet one's needs without the use of substances.

Chemical Dependency Education Group

- 21 participants with minor consumption, using or showing early warning signs
- Participants created a "plan for success" at the end of the sessions and identified internal strengths and external supports.
- On the whole, students reported positive changes in themselves by the end of the program.

Peer Helpers

- 8 students
- Served as tutors for special education students once per week for one hour.

Peer Leaders (co-facilitator with BMS licensed social worker)

- 36 students conducted presentations to their peers and younger students on conflict styles. They also gave tours to 5th graders, conducted "Kindness Week" activities, helped with Family Fun Night, coordinated the question of the week announcement, assisted students new to the school, and helped with Career Day.
- Created DVD on needs and feelings for presenting to other students

Other Efforts:

- **Individual support** provided for students at-risk for substance exploration, suicide or depression—119 students
- **Boys & Girls Club** applications given to 68 students
- **Kinship North** mentorship applications given to 23 students
- Provided information about warning **signs and risk factors of suicide and depression** through several means—school newsletter, website, information booths

3. Girl Scouts In-the-Zone: Living Drug-Free Program

- Two six-week sessions with 20 participants total (girls grades 6-8)
- Participants planned and implemented a 3-hour healthy living experience for girls in 2nd and 3rd grade. Parents commented that the student leaders' ability to facilitate the event demonstrated great initiative and leadership qualities.

4. Look, Listen and Link Program

- Suicide prevention, stress, anxiety, depression and substance abuse education curriculum— 45 participants in 6th-8th grade at Schoolcraft Learning Community
- Participants completed pre and post surveys of knowledge and attitudes. Results are below:

Post participation survey highlights (Look, Listen and Link Program):

- ~ 100% can recognize symptoms of depression in a friend
- ~ 98% can use the skills of Look, Listen, and Link to help a friend in need
- ~ 52% INCREASE in students who “strongly agreed” that *they know healthy ways to deal with stress*
- ~ 31% INCREASE in students who “strongly agreed” that *they could recognize warning signs of suicide*
- ~ 24% INCREASE in students who “strongly agreed” that *it is OK to tell a depressed friend that you are concerned about them*
- ~ 28% INCREASE in students who “strongly agreed” that *they feel comfortable talking to a depressed friend about where to go for help*
- ~ 28% INCREASE in students who “strongly agreed” that *there are situations when you need to ask an adult for help*
- ~ 98% can name adult resources to go to for help for a friend or themselves
- ~ 37% INCREASE in students who “strongly agreed” that *they would feel comfortable talking with an adult if a friend seemed depressed*
- ~ 95% would feel comfortable knowing what to say if approached to use drugs or alcohol, which was an INCREASE of 13%

5. Social Emotional Learning Classes

- 345 elementary students attended weekly Social Emotional Learning (SEL) classes
- Six out of 8 teachers in one school indicated that *most* students use the SEL skills they have been taught. Two out of 8 indicated that *some* students use the skills they learn in SEL class.
- A teacher at one of the schools expressed her belief that the program is helping the staff to create a shared vocabulary that helps everyone communicate more effectively. Concepts taught in the program are being incorporated in individual classrooms and in the whole school, creating a calmer and more peaceful learning environment.

“I liked how we got to teach each other the circle of hurt and the circle of peace.” – 4th Grader

- A parent commented: “We believe that conflict management teachings are of utmost importance for youth of all ages. In today’s society, unfortunately parents are so busy that these teachings fall by the wayside. Additionally, some adults have never learned effective conflict resolution skills to model for their children. Without your help many kids would not be taught these essential life skills.”

Building Assets Together

Three Key Components of Effective Prevention Programming

How does BAT cover the key components of effective prevention programming? As discussed on page 9, these key components include:

1. Building knowledge
2. Fostering skills
3. Promoting protective factors/reducing risk factors on six levels or “domains”

No one program needs to (or for that matter *could*) “cover all the bases” of prevention programming. This section just inventories which components are the focus of BAT projects.

Building Knowledge

Knowledge is gained by students, parents, teachers, community members.

- ◆ information about the dangerous effects of using different substances
- ◆ media messaging about drug and alcohol use (media literacy)
- ◆ early warning signs of substance abuse
- ◆ information about healthy lifestyle choices
- ◆ information on services and support for mental health, substance use and abuse, sexual abuse
- ◆ building assets in schools (presentation to school staff meetings)
- ◆ suicide warning signs and prevention

Fostering Skills

- | | |
|--|--|
| ◆ leadership skill development | ◆ dealing with stress, anxiety, depression, substance abuse (“Look, Listen, Link”) |
| ◆ social-emotional skills | ◆ seeking and obtaining help for self or others |
| ◆ coping skills | ◆ resistance skills |
| ◆ restraint | ◆ planning and decision making |
| ◆ using media to spread messages about positive behaviors | ◆ interpersonal competence |
| ◆ dealing with substance abuse of significant persons in their lives | ◆ peaceful conflict resolution |
| | ◆ sexual abuse |

Promoting Protective Factors and Reducing Risk Factors

The bulleted lists that follow show which factors Building Assets Together is aiming to impact within the domains that make up the youth’s world—as an individual, in their family, their peer groups, their school, their community and their overall environment.

Individual

- ◆ other adult relationships
- ◆ service to others
- ◆ feels safe
- ◆ adult role models
- ◆ involvement in creative and sports activities (less unstructured time)
- ◆ achievement motivation
- ◆ caring
- ◆ equality and social justice
- ◆ integrity
- ◆ honesty
- ◆ responsibility
- ◆ personal power
- ◆ self-esteem
- ◆ sense of purpose
- ◆ positive view of personal future

Family

- ◆ positive family communication
- ◆ family support
- ◆ parent involvement in schooling
- ◆ family boundaries

Peer

- ◆ positive peer influence
- ◆ caring

School

- ◆ caring school climate
- ◆ school boundaries
- ◆ high expectations
- ◆ encouraging involvement in activities
- ◆ school engagement

Community

- ◆ community values youth
- ◆ youth as resources
- ◆ encouraging involvement in activities
- ◆ religious community involvement

Social (Environment)

- ◆ resistance to media pro-use messages

A Look Ahead

In many ways, the second year of programming with Neilson Foundation funding will look similar to the first. A few adjustments will be made based on lessons learned and some “next steps” will be taken to expand the programming.

1. Work to develop more effective strategies to reach parents from a wide variety of backgrounds. At least some of these strategies will involve student-led options.
2. Train staff in at least 3 schools on positive communication, classroom management and school culture.
3. Review and purchase culturally sensitive materials for BMS intervention groups.
4. Implement Smart Moves prevention program intended to help youth avoid alcohol, tobacco, other drugs and premature sexual activity.
5. Share networking and knowledge of community resources with local churches.
6. Prepare to make recommendations to District 31 for the scheduled review of health curriculum in 2012.

APPENDIX

Bemidji Area Prevention Alliance Member Agencies*

1. Beltrami County Health & Human Services
2. Bemidji Area Program for Recovery
3. Bemidji Area Service Collaborative
4. Bemidji ISD #31 (Central & Solway Elementary)
5. Bemidji ISD #31 High School
6. Bemidji ISD #31 Middle School
7. Bemidji State University Student Center for Health and Counseling
8. Bemidji State University American Indian Resource Center
9. Bemidji Youth Advisory Council
10. Boys & Girls Club of the Bemidji Area
11. Calvary Lutheran Church
12. Community Resource Connections
13. Evergreen Youth and Family Services
14. Girl Scouts of MN & WI Lakes & Pines
15. Headwaters Regional Development Commission
16. Little Red Hen Consulting
17. Peacemaker Resources
18. Physician's Clinic of Minnesota
19. Sexual Assault Program of Beltrami, Cass and Hubbard Counties
20. United Way of Bemidji Area

*Others attend the meetings but have not signed a membership form

Assessing Minnesota Student Survey Results

According to the Minnesota Department of Health, the following area schools participated in MSS in 2010:

1. District 31: Bemidji High School and Bemidji Middle School
2. District 31 First City School
3. District 31 Lumberjack High School
4. Trek North Jr. and Sr. High
5. Voyageurs Charter School
6. Kelliher Public Schools
7. Red Lake Public Schools

Survey result reports are available for each of the seven schools or school groupings above, as are statewide and countywide reports.

BAPA has identified the following Minnesota Student Survey data sets for assessment of youth wellbeing:

Substance Use

Table 25: Summary of Substance Use

Table 26/27: Age of First Use—tobacco products

Table 30: Age of First Alcohol Use

Table 32: Drinking and Driving

Table 33: Marijuana and Other Drug Use and Age of First Use

Table 38: Parental Disapproval of Substance Use

Table 39: Perceived Risk of Harm from Substance Use

Table 40A: Consequences of Substance Use

have had to use more to get same effect, tried to cut down but couldn't, could not remember what had said or done, used more than intended to

Mental Health

Table 21A and 21B: Emotional Wellbeing/Distress

felt stress or pressure, discouraged or hopeless, level of fear

Table 22: Self-inflicted Injury, Suicidal Thoughts and Suicidal Behavior

hurting self, thoughts about killing self, tried to kill self

Table 24: Destructive and Antisocial Behavior

running away from home, hitting or beating up another person, stealing, destroying property

Family and Relationships

Table 11: Family Composition and Parental Communication

Table 12: Perceptions of Family and Others Caring

parents, other relatives, friends, teachers, religious leaders , other adults care

Table 13: Family Substance Abuse

alcohol, drug use

School

Table 2: Feelings about School, School Plans, Truancy and Unsupervised Time

Table 4: Perceptions of School Environment

friendly, teachers interested in you as person, teachers show respect, use of alcohol or drugs a problem at this school

Activities

Table 8B: Use of Time

TV, video games, phone or text, online activities, hanging out

Table 9A: Enrichment Activities

fine arts, club or community sports teams, school sports teams, community clubs

Table 10: Reasons for Participation in Activities

why participate, why not participate

Risk Factors

Table 13: Family Substance Abuse

Table 14A-B: Physical and Sexual Violence

Minnesota Student Survey Results--2010

District 31 Bemidji Middle School and Bemidji High School

Table 25: Summary of Substance Abuse
Alcohol and/or other drug use in the past year (excluding tobacco)

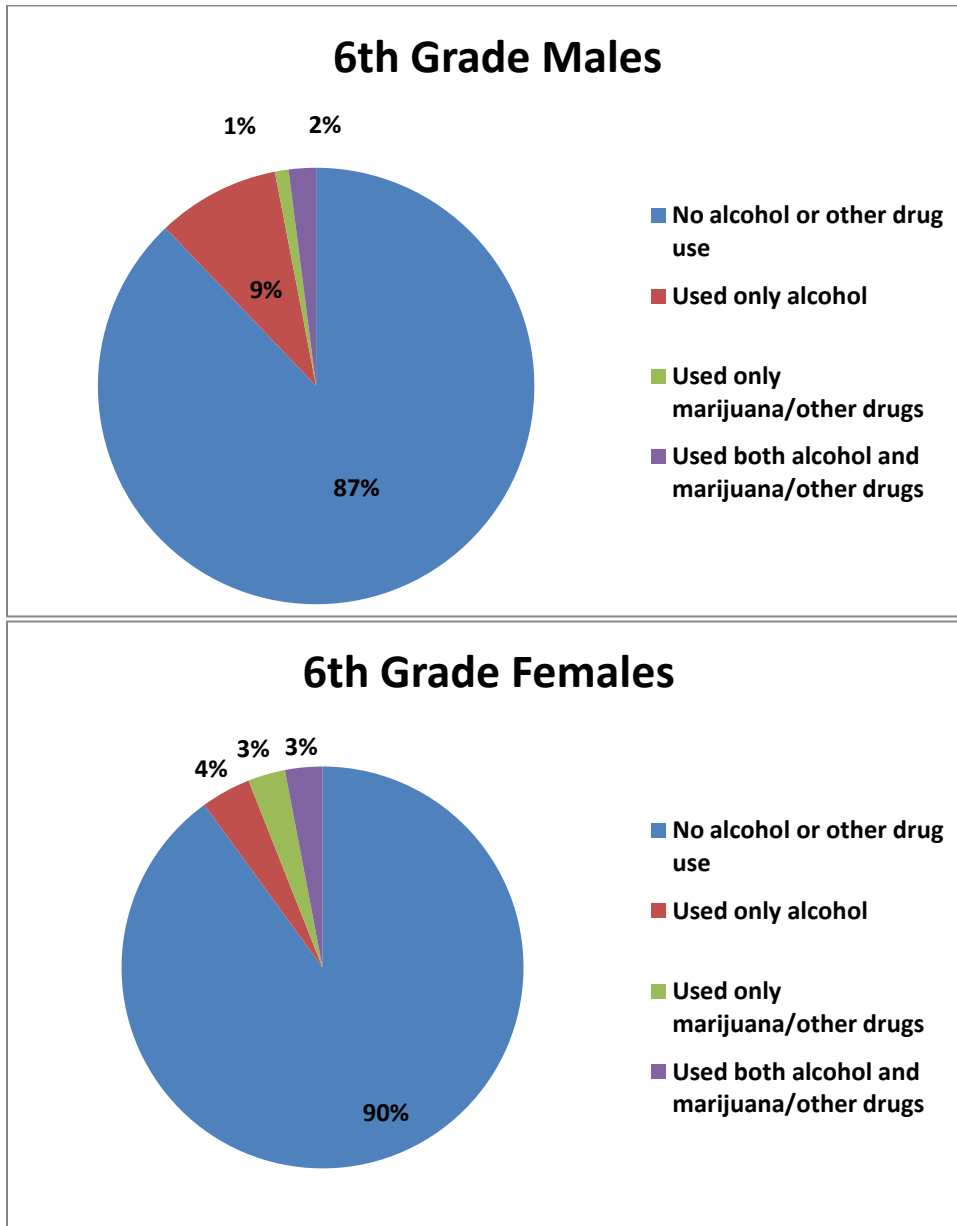


Table 25: Summary of Substance Abuse
Alcohol and/or other drug use in the past year (excluding tobacco)

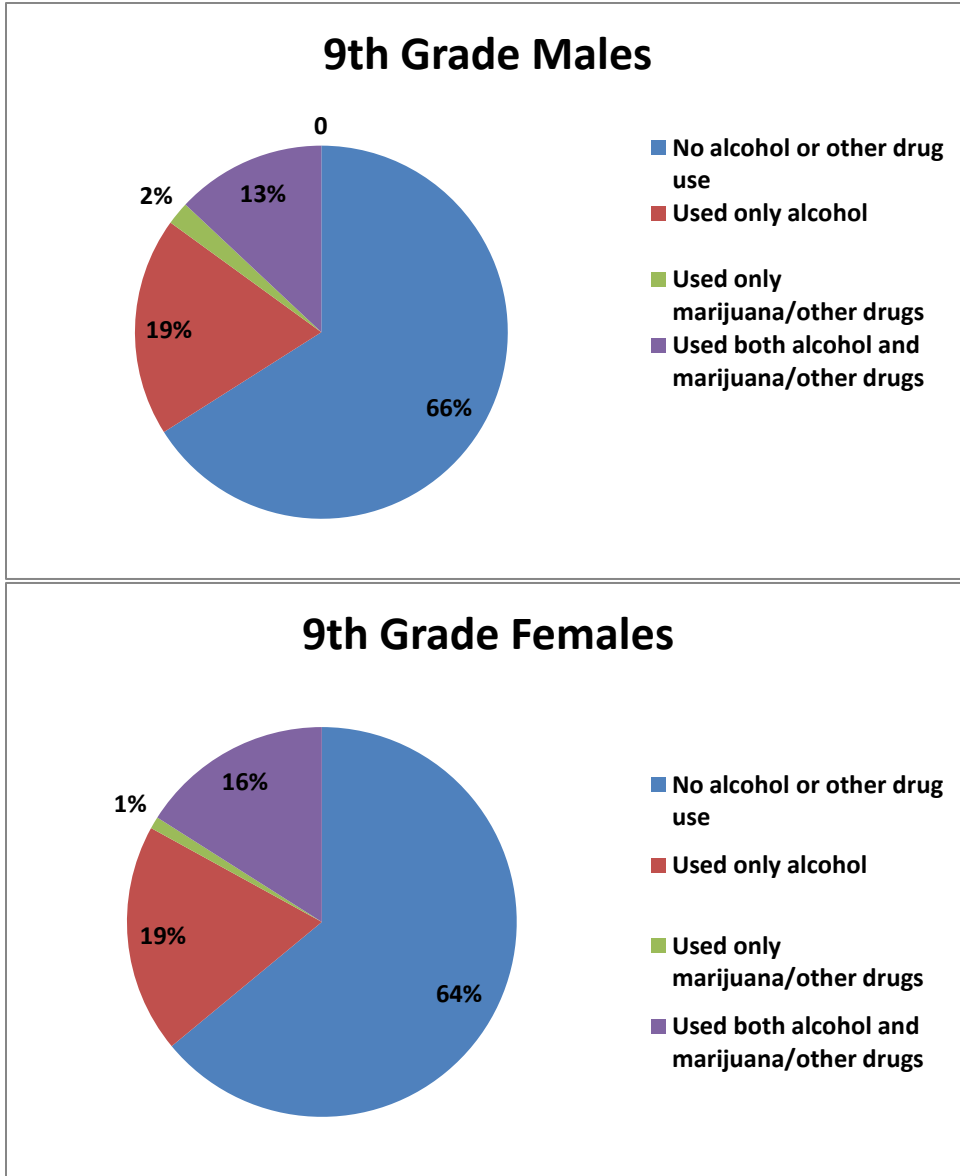
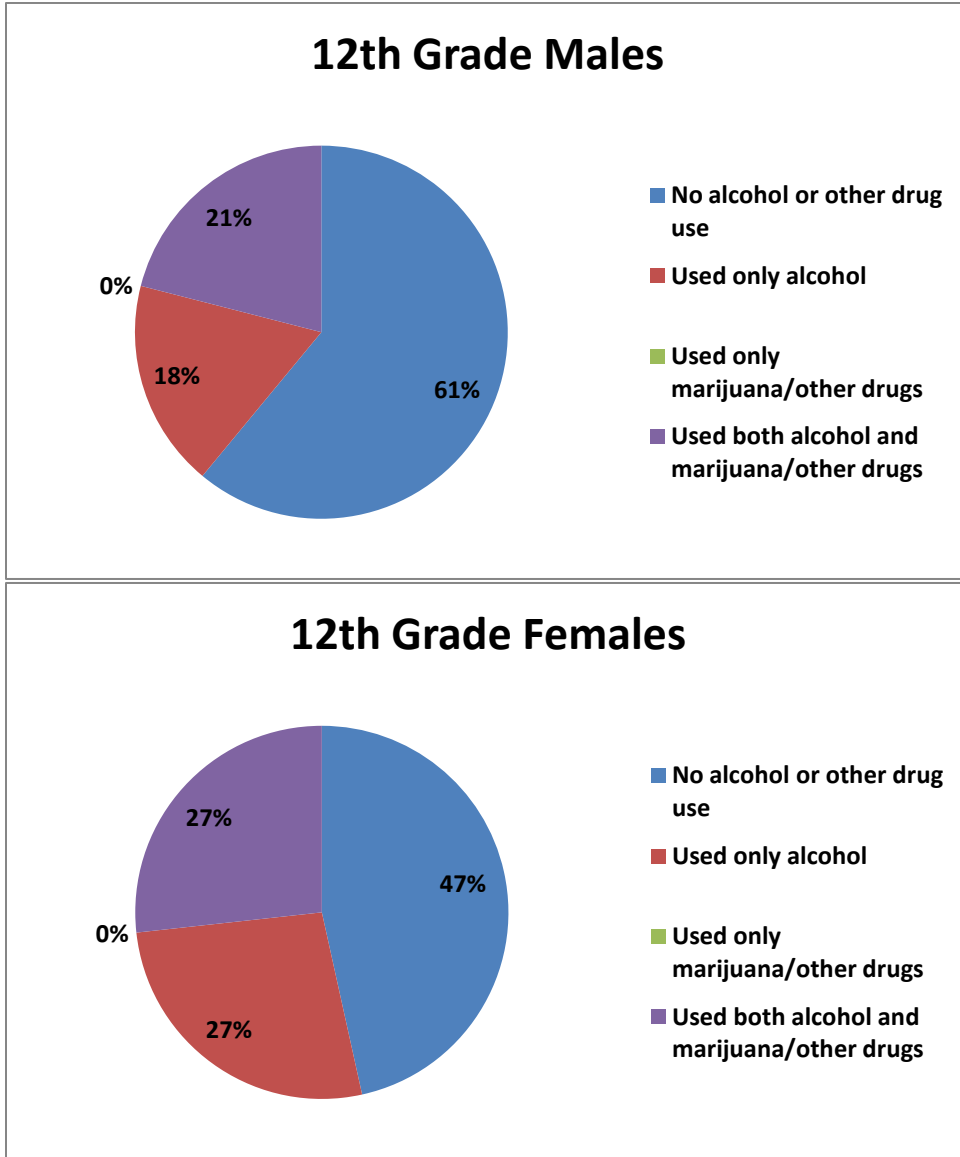


Table 25: Summary of Substance Abuse
Alcohol and/or other drug use in the past year (excluding tobacco)



Olweus Program Survey Results -- Bemidji Middle School

Bullying is a very challenging issue that the school district, teachers and community partners are addressing using several strategies. BMS has been “ahead of the curve” on this issue. The *Olweus Bullying Prevention Program* is a whole-school program aimed at preventing or reducing bullying throughout a school setting. **Bemidji Middle School adopted this program in 2004** and has surveyed its students annually using the Olweus Questionnaire. Over the past seven years significant improvements have been made.

Students who have been bullied 2 to 3 times a month or more

2010* 19%

2011 16%

Students who have bullied other students 2-3 times a month or more

2010 9%

2011 8%

Students who feel sorry for another student who is being bullied

2010 80%

2011 83%

Students who think they could possibly join in bullying a student whom they do not like

2010 20%

2011 19%

Students who believe that teachers or other adults “often” or “almost always” try to put a stop to it when a student is being bullied at school

2010 40%

2011 45%

Students who believe that other students “often” or “almost always” try to put a stop to it when a student is being bullied at school

2010 13%

2011 17%

Students who have “none” or only “one good friend” in their classes

2010 6%

2011 7%

Students who dislike school

2010 14%

2011 14%

*Some changes in survey methods make data comparison before 2008 somewhat less valid.