



## **Stand Strong Coalition**

Stand Strong Coalition was founded in August 2014 by concerned parents Jamie Epstein and Debbie Stern. It is a non-profit, community-based coalition dedicated to preventing underage drinking and drug use for the youth in our community. The coalition is comprised of members representing all sectors of the community including youth, parents, local businesses, law enforcement, health care professionals, local government and school officials, faith-based organizations, and civic groups, youth-serving organizations and other agencies involved in reducing substance abuse. Our coalition serves youth in District 125 - Adlai E. Stevenson High School and surrounding sender school areas, including the communities of Lincolnshire, Long Grove, Prairie View and portions of Buffalo Grove, Deerfield, Mundelein, Hawthorn Woods, Vernon Hills, Lake Forest, Indian Creek, Wheeling, Lake Zurich, Riverwoods, Kildeer, Palatine, and Mettawa. In September 2015, Stand Strong Coalition was one of 697 groups selected by the Office of National Drug Control Policy to receive a portion of the \$86 million in Drug-Free Communities (DFC) Support Program grants. In December 2020, Stand Strong Coalition was one of 733 groups selected to receive the DFC grant for an additional five years.

Stand Strong Coalition is volunteer-driven with community members serving on one of five committees:

- Alcohol
- Marijuana
- Prescription Drugs
- Marketing
- Evaluation

**ALCOHOL COMMITTEE - Committee Chair: Tami Gopal, Stevenson Parent**

- Provide consistent and ongoing messaging targeted to parents about teen alcohol use, social host laws, best practices, and parental communication skills through message placement on websites, e-mails and marquees of community partners, on removable signage in high school drive-up areas during dances, in local newspapers, at local movie theater, as well as on Stand Strong's own social media platforms.
- Promote parent education seminars/classes in conjunction with coalition partner, Link Together
- Partner with local businesses to host alternative events for teens
- Participate in state-led social host campaign targeted to community adults. With the help of local police departments and teen volunteers place campaign materials in local liquor stores.
- Recognize businesses that pass compliance checks and participate in social norms campaign
- Align local social host ordinances to the model ordinance and increase penalties

- Facilitate modifications in the bylaws of local homeowners' associations ensuring social hosting is mentioned and enforced

#### MARIJUANA COMMITTEE - Committee Chair: Dr. Susan Sirota, President of PediaTrust

- Provide consistent and ongoing messaging targeted to parents about teen marijuana use, myths about medical marijuana and parental communication skills through message placement on websites, e-mails and marquees of community partners, in local newspapers, at local movie theater, as well as on Stand Strong's own social media platforms
- Place signage and brochures at local medical marijuana dispensaries marketing "Buyers/Keepers" rule targeted at buyers reminding them that it is illegal to sell or give away their marijuana
- Assess the physical design of the community, especially as it relates to medical marijuana dispensaries
- Promote local model ordinance for medical marijuana dispensaries. Ensure fines for breaking ordinance are appropriate for our community.
- Monitor medical marijuana dispensaries as they are approved in our area to ensure signage and labeling is in compliance with state and any local ordinances

#### PRESCRIPTION DRUG COMMITTEE - Committee Co-Chairs: Amy Goggin (Stevenson Parent) and Amy Voss (Stevenson Alumni Parent)

- Utilize Stand Strong's media avenues, as well as those of community partners, to promote use and location of prescription drug drop boxes, such as school websites, marquees, park district websites
- Partner with local pharmacies to place a map of nearby prescription drug drop boxes at pharmacy pick-up and pay points.
- Partner with local realtors on educating buyers to lock up prescription drugs during open house events and possibly providing buyers with lock boxes
- Promote the Lake County Opioid Initiative's "Text a Tip" that allows adults and youth to make an anonymous phone call regarding concerns about the mental health and physical well-being of someone else or the caller
- Promote the ongoing collection sites in our community
- Promote /give away prescription drug lock boxes
- Partner with local pharmacies to discuss the feasibility of modifying procedure/policy at pharmacies to one that requires an attachment of a brochure to the medicine about the dangers of prescription drugs getting into the wrong hands and how to properly store and dispose of medicine.
- Discuss feasibility with local hospitals, doctors and dentist offices and hospitals about possibility of adding information about the risk of prescription drug use to a patient's "after-care" summary

EVALUATION COMMITTEE - Committee Chair: Margaret Polovchak, Director of Prevention at OMNI

- Collect data about parents' beliefs and attitudes about teen alcohol use, as well as determining best messaging options
- Conduct focus groups of teens and parents about myths and messaging about marijuana so that we can create better anti-marijuana messaging
- Develop and coordinate community-wide surveys

MARKETING COMMITTEE - Committee Chair: Charla Waxman, Lake Behavioral Therapy

- Develop and implement a comprehensive and strategic marketing plan for the recruitment of coalition members, including print, person-to-person and social media messaging
- Host two annual events targeted to parents – One in the fall (“Not My Kid?!”) for all high school parents and one in the spring for parents of incoming freshman students