

October 26, 2012

Aelish Nealon
Project Director
Hoosick Area Partnership for Parents & Youth
115 Church Street
Hoosick Falls, NY 1209

RE: Site Visit Report (Grant No. SP10813)

Dear Aelish,

On behalf of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP), I want to thank you for the opportunity to meet with you, other coalition members, the Hoosick Area Partnership for Parents & Youth staff, and community members as part of the Drug Free Communities (DFC) Support Program site visit on August 07, 2012.

As discussed, SAMHSA/CSAP supports the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), Executive Office of the President in administering the DFC program. Site visits are an important strategy in assisting more than 700 DFC grantees nationwide. Specifically, the purpose of my site visit was to:

- Learn about your community and its needs.
- Learn about your coalition and its efforts.
- Explore ways CSAP can support the work of your coalition in achieving its objectives.
- Identify innovative strategies, policies, and practices that can be shared nationwide.
- Confirm compliance with the DFC program requirements.

This letter serves as a follow-up to the discussions and information gathered during my site visit and is an official site visit report for the grant. The information in this report is meant to help you strengthen and further build coalition capacity.

Findings, required actions, and recommendations presented in this report are offered to assist the Hoosick Area Partnership for Parents & Youth (HAYC3) in achieving its goals and objectives.

The Site Visit Summary Table on the following page provides a quick overview of areas for which you will find recommendations in this report.

**Hoosick Falls Partnership for Parents & Youth Coalition
 Site Visit Summary Table**

| Administrative Requirements (related to grant Terms & Conditions) | Requirement Met | Concern Regarding Requirement (Required Actions Noted) | Recommendations Noted |
|--|------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| DFC Funds support a coalition | X | | X |
| Includes representatives from 12 sectors (reflects geographic area served) | X | | X |
| Addresses DFC goals | X | | X |
| Collects required 4 core data measures (every 2 years) | X | | X |
| Submits progress reports as required | X | | |
| Developed appropriate continuation application | X | | |
| Develop sustainability plan | X | | X |
| Targets multiple drugs | X | | |

| Project Management Requirements | Requirement Met | Concern Regarding Requirement (Requirement Actions Noted) | Recommendations Noted |
|--|------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| Assessment | X | | |
| Capacity | X | | |

| | | | |
|---------------------|---|--|---|
| Cultural Competence | X | | X |
| Planning | X | | |
| Implementation | X | | |
| Evaluation | X | | X |
| Sustainability | X | | X |

The remainder of this report details findings and recommendations organized by the SPF areas of assessment, capacity, cultural competence, strategic planning, implementation, evaluation, and sustainability noted in the table above. A section on general grant administration is also included.

Site Visit Findings

ADMINISTRATION

Findings:

During the site visit, I attended a coalition meeting which was well represented. Several issues, next steps, and updates were discussed. Coalition members appear to be fully engaged in the DFC efforts. The program director, Aelish Nealon, who has day-to-day responsibility for project implementation, brings experience to the job and is very knowledgeable about the history and culture of the Hoosick Falls community and Rensselaer County area. Many members of the 12 sectors were represented at the coalition meeting, including religious, school and law enforcement sectors and two very talented coalition youth members who are actively involved in the coalition.

Coalition staff included an experienced Program Director, Project Coordinator, Coalition Chairperson, and Coordinator of Operations & Regional Activities. The Project Director, Aelish Nealon, provides daily oversight of the grant and coordinates with partnership and project activities. The Coordinator coordinates project services and activities, which includes training, community coordination and monitoring of grant funds. Community and Regional Liaisons work with the sectors in programming and education of strategies. Additionally, the liaisons represent the partnership and coalitions on local, county, state, and federal committees.

HAYC3 appears to have a good balance of paid staff and coalition participation and involvement. The sector members guide the efforts of the coalition while staff provides support as needed. During the coalition's one year break they took to the opportunity to restructure their

organization to develop HAYC3. Through this partnership the coalition is able to increase and sustain its efforts. The coalition receives strong support from key stakeholders in its community including elected officials, key community leaders, the school board, and law enforcement. Additionally, the HAYC3 coalition has established relationships with neighboring villages.

Recommendation:

- Continue seeking alternative funding opportunities to support efforts of the coalition and continue the out of box thinking that works with your unique rural community.

ASSESSMENT

Findings:

The coalition collects an adequate array of assessment data. HAYC3 uses multiple sources of assessment data including the Bach Harrison Survey. Coalition members have an understanding of the demographics, culture, statutes, and regulations that govern their community and state. The coalition has documentation of how they determine substance use prevention and prevention needs. The HAYC3 has a continuous pulse on the Hoosick Falls community and its surrounding area by conducting environmental scans, surveys, social indicators, community forums, and regular meetings with judicial officers and elected officials.

Many of the coalition’s strategies are developed based on their ongoing environmental scans and assessments. The coalition uses comprehensive strategies in their action plan to address the varying needs of the Hoosick Falls community. HAYC3 have developed a comprehensive action plan with a balance combination of education, information dissemination, and more advance environmental strategies, such as modifying/changing policies and physical design changes. Their first compliance check resulted in a 60% failure rate; the subsequent compliance check resulted in a 10% failure rate.

Recommendations:

- Continue to collect and analyze a variety of needs assessment data. Examine trends in this data for inclusion in case statements (discussed further in this report under Sustainability).
- Assessment data should continue to be compiled prior to each annual coalition planning session to determine the following year’s action plan, including community specific strategies based on the readiness or uniqueness of each community.
- Continue to encourage coalition members to develop relationships with organizations and be responsible for obtaining assessment information from them. The cost of obtaining information may fall to individual organizations and they need see the value of investing in data collection.

CAPACITY

Findings:

The HAYC3 Coalition was created in response to the needs of the Hoosick Falls Community. The Hoosick community is a village of Rensselaer County New York with a population of less than 5,000. The HAYC3 coalition has representation from all 12 sectors. The HAYC3 coalition holds regular meetings. The coalition is sensitive to the needs of the community, so they make every effort to tailor the meeting times and locations to enable participation of the parents, youth, and community members. The members appear to be highly motivated and dedicated to the coalition and its efforts.

It is apparent that the work in the coalition is community driven. The staff's role is clearly to assist and support the efforts of the coalition. This is evident by the dedication of the coalition members and community support to meeting the DFC goals and objectives.

Recommendations:

- Continue to expand coalition membership and strive to ensure that work is distributed among the diverse members.
- Continue training opportunities including seeking external technical assistance and training.

CULTURE COMPETENCE

Findings:

The HAYC3 catchment area of the Hoosick Falls was once a thriving lucrative community which once was the largest farm equipment manufacturer. Since the closing of the manufacturers the community has experienced an economic downturn. Despite this economic downturn the community remains supportive and connected to HAYC3 and its efforts. It is important to the HAYC3 to meet the diverse needs of its community as well as address the issues unique to its community. The HAYC3 coalition has a diverse coalition representation which reflects the community.

Recommendations:

- Continue to track changes in the community and its climate and work to recruit coalition members that will enhance the efforts of the coalition and represent all aspects of the Hoosick Falls community.
- Ensure that diverse community groups are invited to and are involved in yearly planning sessions since the ability to influence the coalition's plans and budget may encourage participation.

PLANNING

Findings:

The Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) is utilized by the HAYC3 coalition in the development and evaluation of the coalition's action plan. The action plan was further developed during their attendance at CADCA conferences and receiving coaching. The coalition focuses on alcohol, marijuana, and prescription drugs, over the counter drugs, synthetic drugs, and bath salts. The law enforcement sector reports the emergence of heroin because it is expensive to use. In an effort to increase youth involvement, the coalition is in the process of developing student driven programs. The coalition has schedule a time in July to meet with the students to get ideas. The coalition would also like to bring in the students to look at current advertisements for their input. The HAYC3 coalition strategies are a good balance of education, policy, and physical design changes.

EVALUATION

Findings:

The HAYC3 coalition has collected the required core measures data via a variety of surveys, including the New York State Youth Development Survey. The coalition analyzes the meeting minutes and highlights action steps and outcomes of each meeting. The coalition continues to look at what needs to done and evaluated. The coalition continually conducts a community needs and readiness assessment.

Recommendation:

- Whenever possible collect pre, post, and longitudinal data to enable program improvement.

SUSTAINABILITY

Findings:

The coalition continues to seek alternative funding as well as to maintain their established in-kind funding in order to sustain their efforts. The coalition has a solid and realistic sustainability plan. Their efforts include multiple and diverse successful fundraisers, community festivals, and citizen/business contributions. HAYC3 has a comprehensive sustainability plan that is realistic and effective.

Recommendation: None at this time.

In summary, this site visit found your coalition providing a good example of a successful Year 7 DFC grantee entering into year 8. Strengths include a high degree of community collaboration and the implementation of comprehensive strategies to ensure community-level change. An example of this population-level change is the implementation of alcohol-free community events that historically included alcohol in order to raise revenue.

The HAYC3 coalition is doing a good job with mobilizing the community to address community norms around underage drinking, marijuana, and prescription drug use. The level of the community involvement was seen in the well attended coalition meeting and the Mayor taking time out of busy schedule to attend part of the meeting.

Although, HAYC3 had a break in funding after their 5th year, it appears that the coalition became a stronger and more effective coalition. HAYC3 has many accomplishments and has made significant changes in the community. One recent notable accomplishment is the acquisition of the local Armory in order to expand its efforts.

It was a pleasure to learn more about the work and progress of the HAYC3 coalition and meet with some of the dedicated staff and volunteers.

Thank you again for your hospitality. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at angela.richardson@samhas.hhs.gov or 240-276-1182.

Sincerely yours,

Angela Richardson

LCDR Angela Richardson, Public Health Advisor, LGSW
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

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Cc: Nadine DeJesus, SAMHSA Grants Specialist
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