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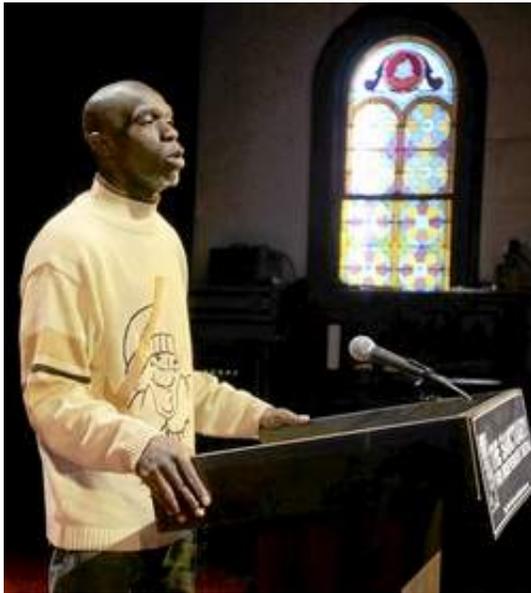
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## Troy Drug Free Coalition receives \$150K federal grant

### \$150,000: Troy Drug Free Coalition announces federal help

By Andrew Beam, Troy/The Record

Thursday, November 21, 2013



TROY >> Members of the Troy Drug Free Coalition issued a call for community action on Wednesday as it announced it had received \$150,000 to prevent youth substance abuse.

During a press conference at the Sanctuary for Independent Media, the coalition announced the grant from the Office of National Drug Control Policy in an effort to curb alcohol and drug use by youth.

The grant will also go towards efforts to increase community involvement between government agencies, law enforcement, churches and advocate groups.

Davia Collington, prevention specialist for the county's Department of Mental Health and coordinator of the coalition, said its purpose is to get people to help in the community and "step out of your comfort zone," in combating substance use among kids.

"It provides a space for kids to be proud they are drug free," Collington said. "My heart just goes out for these young people."

The star of the event was Shania Jackson, a 17-year-old Troy High School student and member of the school's youth summit, who boasted her pride of being drug free and tried to correct a stigma about youth in the community.

"It may seem silly, but it's important to demonstrate most kids in the community are not drinking or smoking," Jackson said. "And we're very proud of it."

Mayor Lou Rosamilia praised the group, as he said many of the youths do need the leadership and courage to not turn to substance use.

"We all know the youth is our future," Rosamilia said. "It's very important for us to play that role in giving them the right direction."

Police Commissioner Anthony Magnetto said he felt it was important for the police department to be involved in the coalition, as he said it is members of the community who play an important role in fighting

youth drug use.

“It reduces crime and improves the quality of life,” Margetto said. “That’s why the coalition has our full support.”

Funds will be received by Hoosick Area Partnership for Parents and Youth and disbursed to the coalition over two years in \$75,000 increments.

Aelish Nealon, coordinator for Hoosick Falls, said she was proud in helping the coalition and said she looked forward to providing her support, as her organization with mentor the Troy Drug Free Community Coalition.

Collington made some calls of action to the community, as she said the grant requires the coalition to create community level change that is culturally competent and sustainable. This would include some focus groups with various different sectors of the community, which the coalition is working with Russell Sage College to organize.

Collington invited community members to come to the meeting on Dec. 2, at 6:30 p.m. at the County Office Building at 1600 Seventh Ave. on the Fifth Floor in conference room A.

“We need the community to be involved,” Collington said. “We’re looking for people to step up.”

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