

Chippewa Valley coalition recognized by state

By Nicole Tuttle for The Macomb Daily



A group representing the Chippewa Valley Coalition for Youth and Families went to Lansing on Nov. 12 to accept an award from the Michigan Prevention Association.

The Chippewa Valley Coalition for Youth and Families received recognition from a state substance abuse prevention group on Nov. 12 in Lansing.

The coalition was notified of the award from the Michigan Prevention Association in October, according to Chippewa Valley Coalition for Youth and Families Executive Director Dr. Charlene McGunn.

"It was very nice going to their annual conference in Lansing," McGunn said.

The Michigan Prevention Association is a statewide education and advocacy organization that promotes the prevention of substance abuse, mental illness, physical illness and related issues. It is a voluntary membership organization and includes prevention professionals, volunteers and community groups in its membership, said MPA Awards Committee Chairperson Dana Gire.

"Each year, as part of its 'Burning Issues in Prevention' conference, an outstanding individual, organization and legislator are recognized for their special contributions to prevention," Gire said. "The Chippewa Valley Coalition for Youth and Families was chosen this year as the Prevention Organization of the Year because of its leadership in developing prevention programs and sharing their materials with other coalitions in Macomb County and across the state. Of notable importance are their efforts to highlight the harm of marijuana use by young people.

Their program is entitled 'Mobilizing Michigan: Protecting Our Kids from Marijuana.' At a time when pro-marijuana advocates are trying to make the drug more available, the Chippewa Valley program helps parents and communities address the harm to young people when communities make marijuana more accessible and acceptable."

The Mobilizing Michigan prevention program was developed by the coalition and the Macomb County Office of Substance Abuse.

The Mobilizing Michigan campaign and toolkit includes media and social media materials of many different types. It is available at cvcoalition.org.

The coalition developed the Mobilizing Michigan program more than two years ago, and the program has gone nationwide, according to McGunn. McGunn said that the coalition has made presentations at two national conferences about Mobilizing Michigan.

"What people are very interested in is the strategies and the messaging," McGunn said.

"With any campaign, those are the important things... How do you get across your message? How do you cut through the confusion about marijuana to make clear the research based information? That is what we are providing information about."

Mobilizing Michigan is currently undergoing an update, McGunn said.

The coalition is planning several new campaigns in a variety of areas, including a Girl Scout event in January 2015 called "Girls Making Awesome Decisions" and foraging more connections with parents of elementary school children, according to McGunn.

"We are increasingly looking at connecting with the parents of elementary school children," McGunn said.

"We are looking at a parenting conference. We are also going to be surveying parents across grade levels. We are looking at connections with the University of Detroit Mercy to bring in leadership students from their leadership program. College students would provide leadership training to coalition teen council members at Dakota and Chippewa Valley."