



SUBSTANCE EDUCATION AND AWARENESS FUND ANNUAL REPORT 2020



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Cover photo: Boulder County Community Services

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MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSING AND HUMAN SERVICES DIRECTOR

2020 may have been one of the most difficult years in our young people's lives. Faced with so many new challenges from the pandemic, youth are experiencing unprecedented levels of isolation, fear and loss. By spring 2021, emergency room visits for youth mental health crises had increased by 90%, according to Children's Hospital Colorado. This alarming rate, plus a significant increase in youth suicide attempts, prompted the institution to declare a "pediatric mental health state of emergency." Local health data shows that total emergency room visits for suicide attempts increased by 71% in 2020 compared to 2019. In the face of such disruption and trauma, coping mechanisms such as substance use and abuse can become more prevalent. Local data also indicates an increase in opioid and alcohol overdoses in 2020 compared to 2019.

Despite the undeniable impact of COVID-19 on youth, families, schools and nonprofit organizations, Substance Education and Awareness (SEA) Fund partners were able to use creative strategies and innovative approaches to keep youth and other community members engaged in substance use prevention programs. While virtual gatherings and other COVID-19 adjustments posed logistical challenges, some SEA funded organizations experienced an increase in participation with the switch to online programs.

2020 highlighted the importance of collaboration among agencies focused on substance use prevention. The SEA Fund not only provides grants, but also opportunities for our grantees to participate in professional substance use prevention trainings, develop skills in program management and evaluation and leverage partnerships for greater community impacts. The past four years of programming support and capacity-building through the SEA Fund helped position these programs to sustain and adapt their work during COVID-19, to continue to meet the changing needs of the community.

With these challenges come opportunities to expand and improve the SEA Fund for even better service to our nonprofit partners and community members. The city and our partners at Boulder County Community Services will continue to do just that, so our youth, their families and other community members have the substance use prevention information, tools, skills and support necessary for healthy living.

I hope you will join me in appreciation for the work of our nonprofit partners reflected in this report.

KURT FIRNHABER
Housing and Human Services Director



The Substance Education Awareness (SEA) Fund equips agencies to deliver program services that can have a long lasting, positive impact on the lives of youth in our community.



SUBSTANCE EDUCATION AND AWARENESS FUND AT A GLANCE

On Nov. 5, 2013, City of Boulder voters approved Ordinance 7916, which authorized the city to impose an excise tax of up to 10% and a sales and use tax of up to 10% on recreational marijuana sales to offset some of the indirect costs of recreational marijuana. In June 2016, the City of Boulder launched the Substance Education and Awareness (SEA) Fund, which utilizes a portion of this tax revenue for community programs that align with the Recreational Marijuana Tax legislative intent, for “comprehensive substance abuse programs including, without limitation, prevention, treatment, education, responsible use, intervention, and monitoring, with an emphasis on youth.”

Since 2016, the city’s Housing and Human Services Department (HHS) has contracted with Boulder County Community Services (BCCS) to help manage SEA grants, provide technical assistance and implement an evaluation framework. HHS has also contracted with the OMNI Institute for their expertise in substance use prevention evaluation and data collection processes.

City staff and BCCS, with engagement from nonprofit community partners, collaboratively selected programs for a five-year SEA funding cycle that began in 2017. From 2017-2019 grantees, city and BCCS staff and OMNI Institute developed and finalized shared goals, indicators and a unique data collection process to measure success. The four SEA Fund goals are:

1. Widespread community distribution and awareness of information and programs developed;
2. Shift community perceptions of risk associated with substance use, including the impact of drugs, alcohol, recreational marijuana, and abuse of prescription medications on children and youth;
3. Prevent/reduce youth abuse of alcohol and recreational drugs including marijuana; and
4. Reduce accidental ingestion of marijuana and other drugs.

In 2020 the city manager approved adding two new programs to the SEA Fund family, to address the increase in vaping among youth, and use of addictive opioids for treatment of chronic pain.

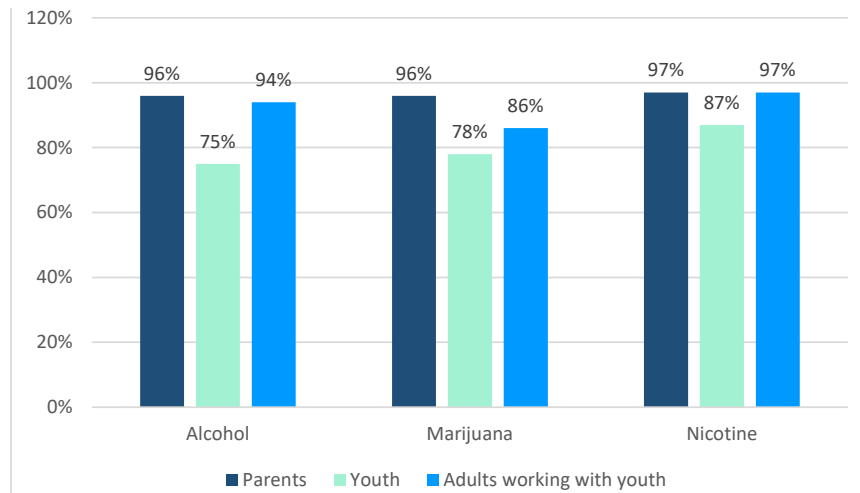
Each year, the SEA Fund not only offers grant funding for selected programs, but also technical assistance and partnership support for all grantees. These services include quarterly meetings for networking, updates on substance use research and program evaluation; skill shares and training on SEA Fund data collection and program management; and opportunities for professional development, such as certification in the Substance Abuse Prevention Skills Training.

The SEA Fund provides funding for substance use prevention programs, and an environment for shared learning, partnership and support across programs.

In this way, SEA Fund grantees can meaningfully incorporate, expand and elevate their work in substance use and abuse prevention; consistently apply proven principles and best practices; increase youth-based and youth-led strategies; and leverage partnerships for greater community wide impacts. This in turn can lead increase expertise in implementation of science and research standards, prevention competency and program sustainability.

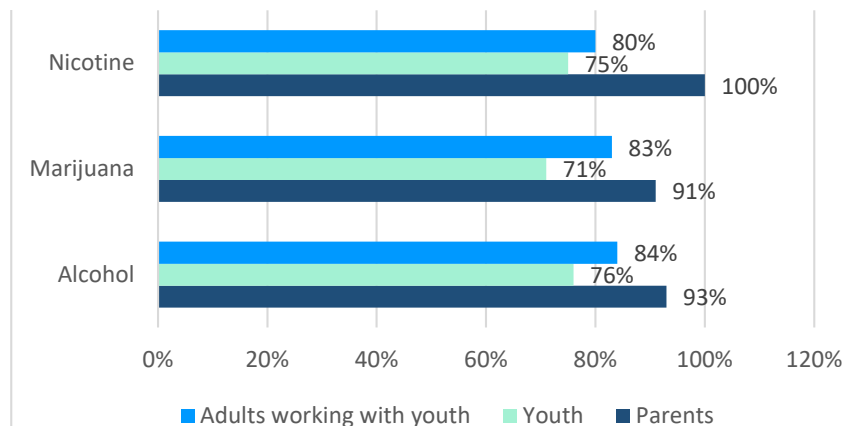
2020 SEA FUND DATA: PERCENTAGE OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS WHO PERCEIVE MODERATE- TO GREAT-RISK FOR SUBSTANCE USE

Fig. 1



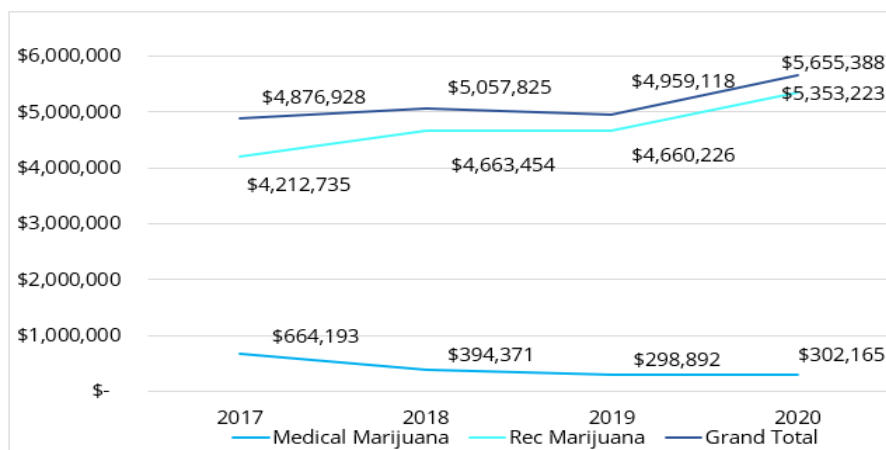
2020 SEA FUND DATA: PERCENTAGE OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS WHO AGREE THAT TRUSTED ADULTS INFLUENCE SUBSTANCE USE

Fig. 2



CITY OF BOULDER RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA TAX REVENUE: 2017-2020

Fig. 3



SUBSTANCE EDUCATION AND AWARENESS FUND STRATEGY

SEA Fund activities are modeled after evidence-based strategies set by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration's Center for Substance Abuse Prevention. Research from this and other mental and behavioral health agencies indicates two of the most important factors in youth substance use prevention are 1) perceiving alcohol and drugs as risky and therefore, better to avoid; and 2) engaging with a trusted, supportive adult for help with problems that might otherwise turn them toward alcohol or drugs. Thus, SEA Fund activities are designed to increase perceptions of the risk of substance use and support the building of healthy, trusting relationships between adults and youth. SEA Fund also supports opportunities for young people to participate in healthy, positive, and constructive activities that exclude substance use; and those that aim to change written and unwritten community standards, codes, and attitudes surrounding substance use.

“

SEA Fund has provided a structure and the resources for Boulder Valley School District to bring forth substance use prevention programs consistently, with data-driven decision making, and collaboration amongst community organizations.

- SEA Fund Grantee

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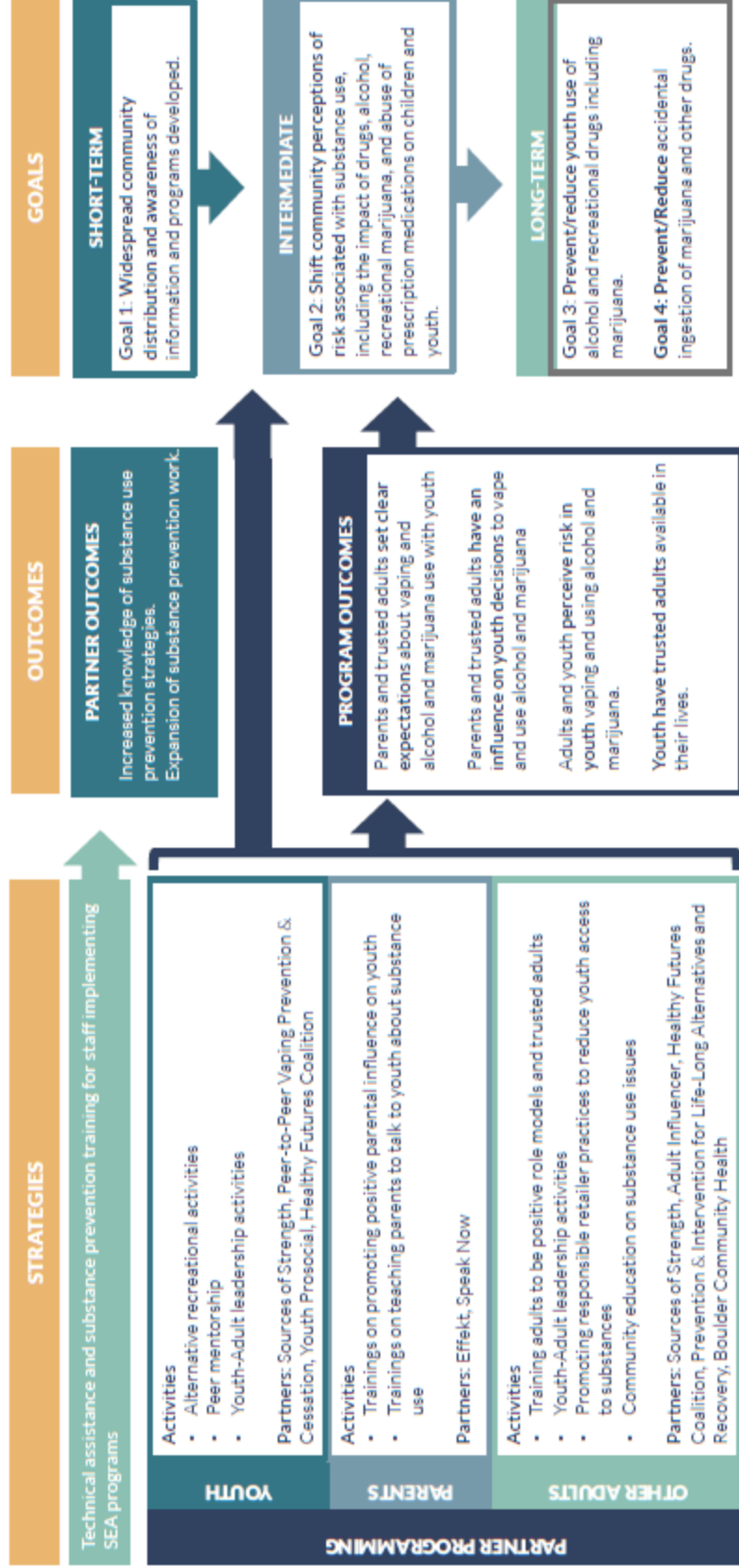
In 2020, with support from Boulder County Community Services (BCCS) and consultants at the OMNI Institute, SEA Fund grantees were able to fully implement an evaluation strategy in order track progress toward the four SEA goals. SEA Fund grantee partners collect data on these and other factors to measure the success of their programs. Because the data we collect about substance use prevention programs is similar to that used by the Healthy Kids Colorado Survey, we can compare the positive impacts from SEA Fund-supported programs to statewide results. Below are some of the indicators measured in 2020 that show progress toward the SEA long term goal to reduce rates of youth substance use:

- At least 75% of parents, youth, and adults who work with youth report a perception of at least “moderate risk” for youth who consume alcohol daily.
- At least 78% of parents, youth, and adults who work with youth reported a perception of at least moderate risk for youth who marijuana regularly.
- At least 87% of parents, youth, and adults who work with youth report a perception of at least moderate risk for youth who vape every day.
- 86% of youth reported having a trusted adult they could go to with a serious problem.
- 98% of adults who work with youth report having the resources necessary to be a trusted adult.

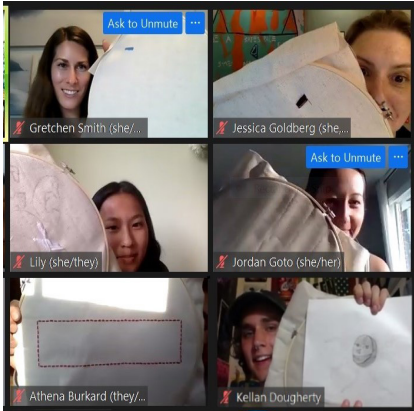
It is encouraging to see that regardless of the substance or population, at minimum, three quarters of those surveyed, associate youth substance use with more than “some risk.”

Some data specifically highlights the way in which SEA Fund activities work to reduce health disparities related to race and ethnicity. For example, a random sample of Boulder Valley School District (BVSD) parents, which intentionally included more Latino families to ensure accurate data collection, demonstrated a shift in community perceptions related to substance use. Compared to 2018 data, in 2020 there was an increase in the percentage of Latino parents who perceived great influence of their student's decision not to use substances across the board, suggesting parents are becoming more empowered to talk to their children about this issue and the dangers of substance use early on (11% increase of perception for alcohol; 12% increase for tobacco; 9% increase for marijuana).

SEA Fund Logic Model



SUBSTANCE EDUCATION AND AWARENESS FUND PROGRAM ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES



Social media served as a tool to engage youth in having deeper connections with each other and themselves.

(Photo: Boulder County Public Health)

BOULDER COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH: COMMUNITY SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION, HEALTHY FUTURES COALITION

Boulder County Public Health's Healthy Futures Coalition engages 20 members from local nonprofit agencies that serve youth, schools, local government, volunteer organizations, religious groups and healthcare organizations, largely from the City of Boulder. The Healthy Futures Coalition and the Healthy Futures Youth Coalition meet monthly to create more effective substance prevention strategies that highlight and honor the strengths of young people. Boulder County Public Health provided training opportunities to increase the capacity for prevention professionals to offer services informed by young people's lived experiences.

- Healthy Futures Youth Coalition developed and started the Who We Are During COVID youth-to-youth resiliency-building campaign that utilized artwork, poetry, and technology to increase connection and helped maintain a social network during the pandemic.
- Most members of the coalition and the youth coalition agreed that through Coalition activities, they have the skills needed to be a trusted adult in young people's lives.

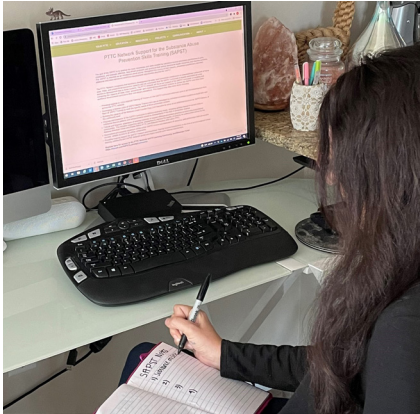


Through TEPP, youth are empowered to make healthy choices as an alternative to vaping.

BOULDER COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH: TOBACCO EDUCATION & PREVENTION PARTNERSHIP (TEPP)

Research from the Centers for Disease Control in 2018 showed that Colorado youth were vaping at higher rates when compared to other regions, and Boulder specific data showed 27% of Boulder High Schoolers vape, elevating this issue to a top prevention priority. The TEPP is initiating a program launching a social marketing campaign and website designed to change the knowledge, beliefs and behaviors related to use of electronic vapor products. The long-term goals are focused on reducing the number of youth currently using vapor products, and the number of youth who will ever try vapor products.

- Developed a tobacco and vaping cessation resource document that will be widely distributed to youth serving organizations and schools.
- Hosted focus groups with City of Boulder youth to guide the development of the campaign, with an emphasis on including young people who identify as LGBTQ+. Data shows that LGBTQ+ youth are at an increased risk of vaping, possibly due to lack of supportive social and institutional systems.



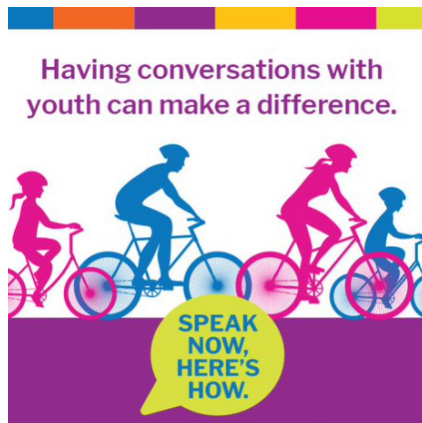
Building stronger collaborations with, and increasing professional development for community agencies ensures the program strengthens and succeeds.

(Photo: Boulder County Community Services)

BOULDER COUNTY COMMUNITY SERVICES: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION SKILLS TRAINING

BCCS provides technical support for SEA partners, assists with project coordination, reinforces consistent messaging across community partners, facilitates opportunities for collaboration and offers capacity training opportunities for SEA partners. BCCS also ensures at least one member from all SEA Fund partner organizations attends a Substance Abuse Prevention Skills Training offered through the Colorado Office of Behavioral Health.

- 80% of SEA Fund partners agree that the technical assistance received through the SEA Fund has improved their ability to evaluate the impact of programs, and 75% “strongly agree” that the SEA Fund has increased their knowledge of substance use prevention strategies.
- The BCCS SEA Fund program manager and the Healthy Futures Coalition facilitator both became licensed as a Certified Prevention Specialist II. This certification helps expand substance use prevention leadership capacity in our community.



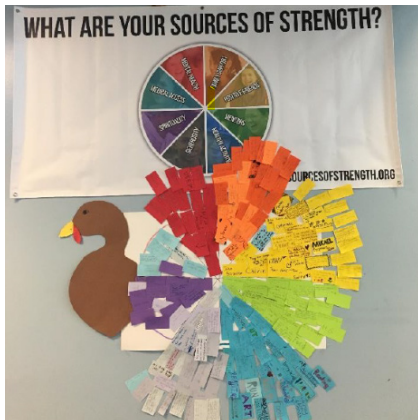
Having conversations with youth can make a difference.

Co-branded content was advertised through social media platforms and other advertising platforms across the Boulder community.

BOULDER COUNTY COMMUNITY SERVICES: SPEAK NOW/HABLE AHORA

Speak Now was a substance use prevention media education campaign developed by the State of Colorado that has been integrated into the shared messaging of the SEA Fund collective impact approach. The campaign was designed to engage parents and caregivers and provide evidence-based information and resources to create awareness and interest in talking with their children about the risks of alcohol and other drugs.

- BCCS provided Speak Now/Hable Ahora informational tables at local parent school-night and symposium events, reaching more than 300 individuals. Over 90% of participants served, said that Speak Now ‘completely’ explained how to start conversations with youth and why they are important. All participants said the information presented would change their approach to having a conversation with their child about substance use.
- In addition, John Snow Inc.’s evaluation of the Speak Now campaign was completed in 2020. Google Analytics showed levels of engagement with the Speak Now/Hable Ahora site were higher than the industry average for health and wellness sites. During one campaign, there was an increase from 1.1 sessions per day before the media flight began to 17.4 sessions per day during the media flight; an impressive 1,481.8% increase.



Students created a school wide campaign to identify their personal sources of strength and build a stronger community. (Photo: Boulder Valley School District)

BOULDER VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT (BVSD): SOURCES OF STRENGTH

The Sources of Strength (SOS) program is an evidence-based program designed to increase help-seeking behaviors and promote connections between peers and caring adults. SOS uses peer leaders to enhance protective factors and leverages the power of peer social networks to change unhealthy norms and culture, ultimately preventing suicide, bullying and substance use. The target population of the SOS is middle school youth attending five City of Boulder Middle schools: Casey, Centennial, Manhattan, Platt and Southern Hills. Sources of Strength strives for equity by intentionally nominating students from all grades, social groups, racial and ethnic backgrounds. Nominations are made by teachers, staff and students.

- After program participation 90.9% of youth reported having a trusted adult.
- 100% of surveyed “adults working with youth” report that alcohol use and marijuana use pose a “great risk” to students if used regularly, and report having “some influence” over the decisions of youth to use alcohol or marijuana.
- Students reported overwhelmingly “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” when asked if parents set clear expectations around substance use. Specifically, 92% report clear expectations around alcohol use, and 96% report clear expectations around marijuana use.
- Students who participate in the SOS and completed the evaluation said things like, “Keeping a gratitude journal that I started for SOS and now is just a regular thing”, “Learning about mental health and how everyone gets impacted by it and doing what we can to help.”

BOULDER VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT (BVSD): EFFEKT PROGRAM

“EFFEKT” is an evidence-based program that seeks to prevent adolescent substance use by giving parents the knowledge and skills to set clear expectations and attitudes towards young people’s use of substances. The program is delivered through a parent meeting held at the school at the beginning of each semester, followed by a reinforcing letter that is sent home to all parents. The EFFEKT curriculum encourages parents to maintain restrictive attitudes toward youth substance use and encourage the reinforcement of parents’ strong influence over their children’s attitudes and behaviors. The program’s target population is parents and caregivers of youth aged 11 to 14, attending two different middle schools in the City of Boulder.



EFFEKT helps adults communicate more effectively with young people about decisions involving substance use.

- This January, BVSD served and reached a total of 1,230 individuals. Widespread advertising caught the attention of a Denver reporter who attended a presentation to learn more about substance use prevention, with the hopes of creating a story to air on the radio.
- Program evaluation data collected during the first half of the year has shown that parents are receiving the information needed to understand their influence on their child’s decision to use substances, and there is a perception in the community of high risk with substance use after an EFFEKT presentation.



Any adult can become a mentor to positively impact our young community in a profound and intentional manner.

YMCA: INFLUENCER PROGRAM

The YMCA Influencer Program is designed to educate adults who work and interact with youth on how to become an "ask-able" or "safe" person to talk with. The program trains adults on how to effectively communicate and interact with youth to have a positive impact on their lives. Specifically, the training focuses on topics including substance use, bullying and parental disputes and teaches adults to comfortably manage conversations with youth. The target population for the program is YMCA staff members and individuals in the community who regularly interact with young people.

- Nearly 100 YMCA staff have completed an Influencer training. This training reviews the YMCA's role in substance prevention with youth program leaders.
- Following the Influencer training, YMCA staff have reported feeling more comfortable talking to youth about substance use, and increased confidence in building connections with youth. The training has helped staff understand their role as a trusted adult. Staff see themselves as a protective factor for children at the YMCA and apply what they learn in their work each day. This includes positive reinforcement techniques, behavior management and how to provide social-emotional learning opportunities.
- Staff members are increasingly speaking up about their specific role as an influencer. One influencer shared that "before typing this, I thought I'd look up the definition of 'influence' and I found... it means to have an effect on the character, development or behavior of someone or something... Yes, I am an influencer. A positive influencer, an influencer for the good of people and my community. I am an influencer because I believe in transformational leadership."



Engagement carepackages were sent to students' homes during school closures due to the pandemic, to promote family connectedness. (Photo: YMCA of Northern Colorado)

YMCA: PROSOCIAL PROGRAM

The Prosocial Program was created to provide teens with a space for healthy activities as well as the development of leadership skills with adult mentors. The program includes Teen Night Out which gives teens a safe environment in which they can grow and thrive. Through the program, teens are also encouraged to volunteer for Days of Service, giving teens the chance to become leaders and experience the inspiring feeling of helping others. The target population is youth aged 11-17.

- Prior to COVID-19, the YMCA hosted a Teen Night Out at Warrior Challenge Arena in Broomfield. During the event, the program leader shared a meaningful interaction; "One of the participants, who had been previously very shy and reserved in front of others, competed in this challenge and was able to win. Watching that person smile and strut away after the victory inspired that person, me, and all the other teens."
- The COVID-19 pandemic caused the Prosocial programming to come to a halt. YMCA put together holiday gift bags containing treats, social learning materials like teen-focused cookbooks and flyers with information on support systems for families during these challenging times. As a result of these bags, teens were able to re-engage with the YMCA in a new way and learn about how to access and use resources in the community.



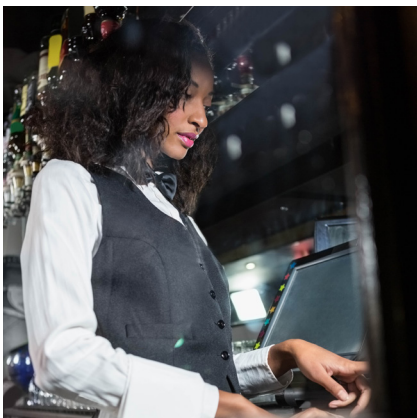
Adults practiced their skills around self-regulation to be able to share with the young people and other community members with whom they have influence.

(Photo: Boulder Community Health PILLAR)

BOULDER COMMUNITY HEALTH: PREVENTION & INTERVENTION FOR LIFE LONG ALTERNATIVES AND RECOVERY (PILLAR)

The Boulder Community Health education program is part of a larger program within the hospital called PILLAR. Within PILLAR, the SEA Fund provides resources for a community education series, intended to increase the community's understanding of strategies to prevent substance misuse, specifically opioid use, and polysubstance use. Boulder Community Health hosts monthly education classes taking place at the hospital, and other locations around the county. It is estimated that approximately 550 individuals will be served by these classes, targeting medical providers, parents, community members, health professionals and others.

- As of June 2020, the PILLAR program reached over 1200 participants and over 75% of respondents report increased knowledge as a result of topics presented in the Educational Lecture Series.
- In April, PILLAR began hosting an online session called Virtual Recovery Stories, a weekly offering in which a person in recovery tells their story to an audience of viewers and then answers questions related to their experience.
- Since offering educational events online, PILLAR has reached nearly 2,500 views of the Adverse Childhood Events lecture, Virtual Recovery Stories, and Opioid Epidemic panel. The live stream of these events was very successful and will be the medium in which all educational lectures will be delivered in 2021.



Through RAR, restaurant and retail workers are trained in skills to help ensure customer safety and regulatory compliance regarding substance use.

PARTNERS MENTORING YOUTH: RESPONSIBLE ASSOCIATION OF RETAILERS

The Responsible Association of Retailers (RAR) Boulder County Chapter is an evidence-based responsible vendor program aimed at limiting youth access to age restricted substances. There is a Boulder RAR chapter for alcohol retailers, and Partners Mentoring Youth is in the process of developing a Boulder chapter for cannabis retailers. RAR members attend monthly meetings and receive responsible vendor trainings at a free or reduced cost. Trainings cover topics including ID compliance checks, fake ID training and other responsible sale and service tools to prevent over service and ensure patron safety. RAR members subscribe to a code of ethics on responsible sales and services practices that prevent youth from purchasing products underage.

- The RAR chapter increased its membership by 10% in 2020, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.
- RAR held the first meeting for the cannabis chapter in September 2020.
- RAR adapted ID compliance checks to meet new needs related to the COVID-19 pandemic. RAR staff adjusted well to the virtual environment and instituted a once monthly TiPS Training & TenderWise training online.

SUBSTANCE EDUCATION AND AWARENESS FUND LIST OF GRANTEES

Agency	Amount	Agency	Amount
Boulder County Community Services	\$53,218	Boulder Valley School District	\$60,950
Boulder Community Health	\$50,000	Partners Mentoring Youth	\$40,782
Boulder County Public Health, TEPP	\$150,000	YMCA of Northern Colorado	\$38,050
Boulder County Public Health, CSAP	\$12,000	TOTAL	\$405,000



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<https://bouldercolorado.gov/services/substance-education-and-awareness>

(303) 441-1928