NCADD
NATIONAL COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG DEPENDENCE, INC.

Affiliate Spotlight: LEAF, NCADD's Otsego County, NY Affiliate Has Made Evidence-Based Environmental Prevention An Art.

As an affiliate of NCADD in rural, upstate New York, LEAF made the decision to integrate into the growing arts and activities calendar of the region in order to change policy and impact community norms.

In the past, major community events and festivals have had alcohol sales, alcohol sponsorships or both. Arrests, violence, underage consumption and property destruction have often been associated with such events. Such outcomes are costly to the community, to the individuals and to their families. They are also costly to local businesses and to the healthcare system.

Evidence clearly shows that a change in local policies related to large venue events can and does positively impact the community and reduce the problems associated with alcohol use.

Being pro-active with festivals and concerts, as a prevention strategy, became a part of LEAF's work scope.

LEAF joined with a community coalition, First Night Oneonta, which has a mission of "family-friendly, alcohol-free celebrations of the arts." This particular coalition originally focused solely on New Year's Eve events. As the *Labor Day Balloon and Music Festival*community, under the Mayor's lead, began to move toward an economic development plan to create a rural "arts hub," First Night Oneonta expanded their mission to include festivals and events throughout the year.

Over the last several years, LEAF and First Night have joined to assume responsibility for three major community festivals as well as other small celebrations. The larger events include First Night on New Year's Eve, Oneonta's Hometown Fourth on the 4th of July and the annual Labor Day Hot Air Balloons and Music Festival.

The coalition took responsibility with the caveat that there would be no alcohol sales or alcohol

sponsorship at these events' venues.

Now, over 50,000 people have participated in lively and fun alcohol free festivities without recording any alcohol related arrests, violence, injury or proper damage. This is a significant improvement for the community.

Local police and rescue have come to enjoy working these events with us and are pleased to enforce the alcohol-free policies. The City Council has put their appreciation in the public record and has pledged their on-going support. Community members have begun to talk about the positive difference they see at festivals, concerts and activities. Members of the press and other media have begun to take notice.

These events have proven to be a win-wins all around.

Environmental Prevention can sometimes be a difficult "sell" to communities and to community leaders. However, LEAF and First Night have been able to capitalize on "alcohol free, family friendly celebrations" while engaging in sound, evidence based prevention. Now, as a matter of policy, these events will remain alcohol free. A standard has been set, and a new norm is established. A two-college "party town" has a new face to show to guests and residents alike.

To watch The LEAF Affiliate TUFF eNUFF 2013 video please click here.

LEAF, established in 1982, is the Otsego County, NY Affiliate of NCADD. Otsego County is in the Leatherstocking Region in the northern Catskills of upstate New York. Currently LEAF provides school based services in 8 school systems, community based environmental prevention to Otsego's 60,000 residents, and mandated education to Drinking Driver and Underage AOD offenders.

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