



About RCASA

Our **vision** is a safe, vibrant, and healthy Reading in which all members-young to old-engage in making healthy decisions and actively work together to ensure that today's resources shape tomorrow's strengths. Our **mission** is to promote a healthy community environment so that everyone who lives or works in Reading can enjoy an optimum quality of life. To address our problem that a significant



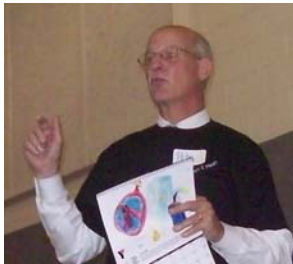
number of youth in Reading, MA use alcohol, drugs, and tobacco; RCASA focuses on seven community change **strategies** to reduce substance abuse (see below for strategies).

- Providing Information
- Enhancing Skills
- Providing Support
- Enhancing Access to Healthy Opportunities/Reducing Barriers
- Changing Consequences (Incentives/Disincentives)
- Physical Design
- Modifying/Changing Policies

When did RCASA receive funding?

Grant funds were secured in 2007 to support RCASA following 2 years of community organizing. Thank you to all of the residents and colleagues that contributed to the earlier work of Substance Abuse Prevention Advisory Council (SAPAC) which supported the development of the Reading Coalition Against Substance Abuse (RCASA). Your guidance formed the community coalition we have today.

Where are we headed?



There have been many strides to reduce risky behaviors amongst Reading teenagers including a strong commitment from involved parents, dynamic educators, student support professionals, school leaders, committed coaches, faith leaders, afterschool professionals, healthcare workers, and other caring adults. According to Peter Hechenbleikner, RCASA Board Member, *“Progress is being made but as a community we have much more to do. We have many of the pieces in place, including a dedicated and diverse RCASA Board, and highly qualified staff. Additional recognition by the broader community of youth substance abuse issues will be a key to further success.”*

Meet the Staff

Ms. Erica L. McNamara serves as the Director of RCASA. Mrs. Connie DeBenedetto currently serves as the part-time Outreach Coordinator of RCASA. The RCASA offices are located at the Reading Police Department, 15 Union St, 2nd floor, Reading, MA 01867 and at the Reading Memorial High School, 62 Oakland Rd, Reading, MA 01867.