



# ANNUAL REPORT

THE GOAL OF THE CAMPAIGN  
IS TO GROW THE GOODNESS  
THAT ALREADY EXISTS IN OUR  
COMMUNITY.

Austin Positive Action Coalition

Grant hosted by Parenting Resource Center  
Funded by Minnesota Department of Human Services, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division



# OUR MISSION

Our mission is to promote healthy and positive lifestyles within our communities. The primary goal is to foster a safe and resilient environment for our youth by changing perceptions about ATOD (Alcohol, Tobacco & Other Drugs) and aligning prevention resources.



## IN THE BEGINNING



### Meet our Coordinator, Bill Spitzer!

<b>Born:</b>	Rochester, Minnesota
<b>Degree:</b>	Law Enforcement, Rochester Community College
<b>Past Experience:</b>	Mayor, Coordinator Whitewater County Coalition, St. Charles Police Department & Winona County Sheriff's Office
<b>Important to Bill:</b>	Building Coalitions & Adult and Youth Safety Programs
<b>Personally:</b>	Married with two children and one grandson
<b>Hobbies:</b>	Fishing, photography and riding in his convertible

## ESTABLISHING OUR BRAND

Our first order of business was to name our coalition. Twelve members of our coalition gathered to brainstorm coalition and campaign names. We did trademark checks, pilot tested and gathered comments. Based on our findings, simple changes were made and we had our new coalition and campaign name.

**Our new coalition name: Austin Positive Action Coalition "APAC"**

**Our new campaign name: TRUTH IS**



## Austin Positive Action Coalition

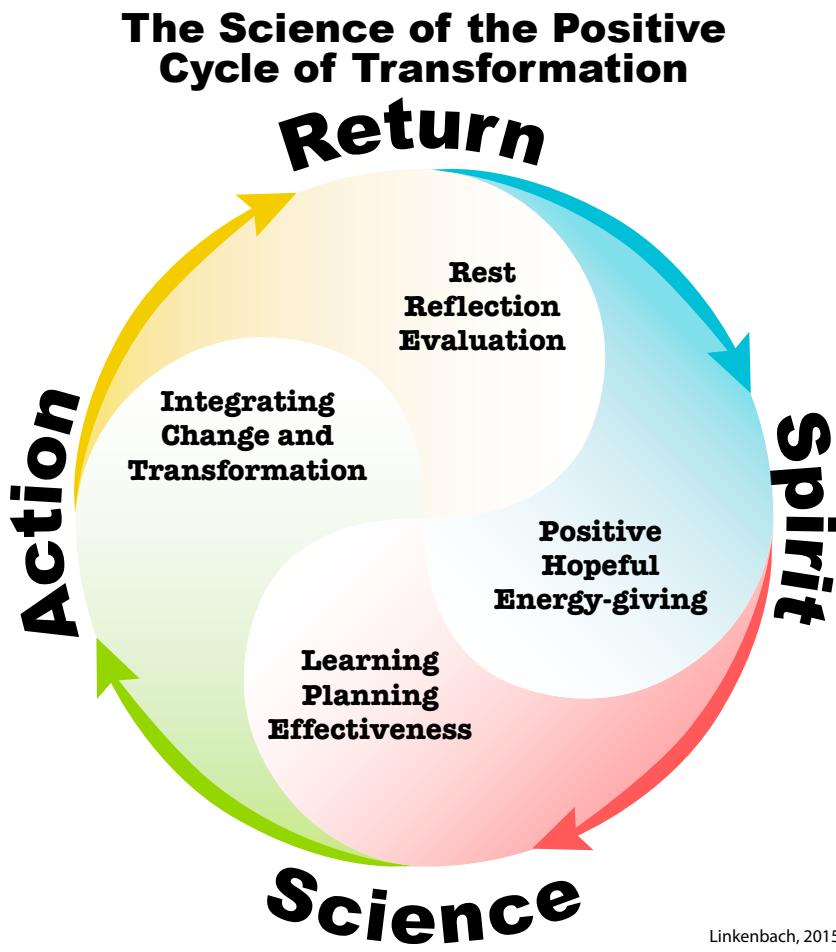
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# WHAT IS THE SCIENCE OF THE POSITIVE?

The Science of the Positive is the study of the ways in which positive factors impact culture and experience. It is based on the central assumption that the positive is real and is worth growing, and its aim is to systematize the identification, measurement and growth of the positive—in ourselves, our families, our workplaces  our communities.

We are often distracted from the work of nurturing the positive by the difficulties we face and the problems we need to solve. The Science of the Positive reverses this problem-centered frame, and focuses on reinforcing the healthy, positive, protective factors that already exist in each community. When we look at the world through this positive, hopeful lens, it has a profound impact on the questions we ask, the data we collect, and the strategies we use to address challenges and transform our lives.



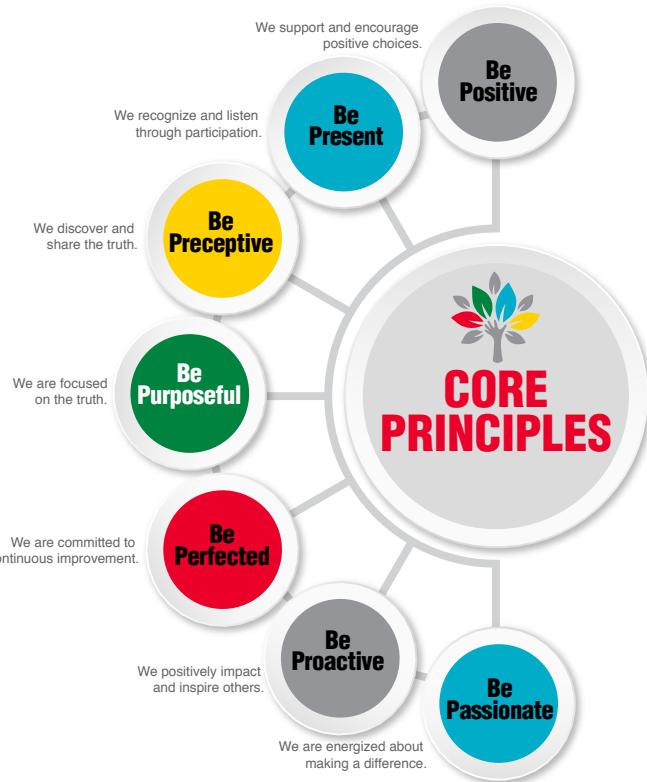
Linkenbach, 2015



# SPIRIT-SCIENCE-ACTION-RETURN CORE PRINCIPLES

The science of the positive is founded upon seven principle states of being. Being is the core essence of who we are  natural state. The essence of our being is good and positive; we spend our lifetimes coming to understand the truth and accepting that we are so much more than we think and perceive. The coalition spent an entire meeting defining what each of these core principles mean to the community of Austin. These core principles will serve as our foundation as well as our roadmap to the activities we become involved with as a coalition.

Four essential stages— Spirit, Science, Action, and Return  make up the transformational process of the Science of the Positive. These stages, when fully engaged, work together to create a synergistic cycle of positive transformation. We call it the Science of the Positive because, like science itself, it is a system for discovery and innovation, involving a rigorous process that works across entire cultures. This process calls for amplifying the positive dimensions in every community and culture to address the suffering, pain and harm that are very real in our lives. One of its principal outcomes is to reduce that suffering in our families, in our communities, and in ourselves. Sixteen members of our coalition were able to attend the first of many conferences that discussed this science in depth.



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# OUR PREVENTION STRATEGY

We will use a POSITIVE COMMUNITY NORMS (PCN) prevention framework campaign based on a social norms theory. This PCN framework utilizes several different strategies that are woven together and integrated based on the Science of the Positive. One of these strategies is a community-based positive community norms message campaign. The messaging will focus on correcting various misperceptions about the behaviors and attitudes of youth and adults regarding underage drinking. Messages will also provide the opportunity to open dialog as well as spark conversations on the topic drinking alcohol underage.

PCN researchers have found that misperceptions held by our youth and by our communities actually lead to more negative behavior. If we think “everyone is doing it” we are more likely to do it because we want to be like everyone else. That’s why our PCN campaign is so important! It lets our young people know that by NOT drinking alcohol, they ARE like MOST of their friends! The first Positive Community Norms (PCN) survey was completed in March 2017. The high school had nearly a 75% response rate, the 9th and 10th grade had a better rate of completion compared with Jr and Sr students. However, the district-wide goal was 85% and we finished with an 83% completion rate for grades 7-12. This survey will provide us with a solid base of data to create these positive community norm messages.

## STRATEGIES

- 1 Reduction of Youth Access**
- 2 Youth Leadership**
- 3 Community Assessment**
- 4 Community Messaging using PCN**
- 5 Education**



**92% of middle school students  
of Austin would rather hangout with  
friends than drink alcohol.**

-PCN 2017



## 1 Reduction of Youth Access

Twenty-six individuals from local bars and restaurants participated in our first joint training between APAC and the Austin Police Department.

The free Responsible Beverage Server Training (RBST) focused on local businesses who sell and serve alcohol. Servers who attend are taught which IDs are acceptable, how to recognize a fake ID and signs of intoxication. APAC and APD are currently planning to host additional trainings to educate the off-sale clerks and seasonal servers for Austin special events held during the summer.



## 2 Youth Leadership

Students Taking a New Direction (STAND) was created for students in grades 7-12 at the Austin High School and Pacelli High School. Monthly meetings teach youth how to make healthy choices, encourage their peers, and work for a positive school as well as community transformation. Nearly 100 students have shown interest in joining STAND. Eighteen students from ELLIS Middle School, Pacelli and the Austin High School attended our first Youth Leadership Academy (YLA) in March.

### STAND has participated in:

- YLA
- Creating messages to include in advertisements
- Pilot testing for advertisements, posters, and billboards
- Planning for multiple events
- Learning about Positive Community Norms, perceptions vs. misperceptions



### Austin Positive Action Coalition

## 2017 PROM

Prom was a special time for students and it was also an opportunity to allow 2nd and 3rd grade students to share how much their high school counterparts mean to them. Several elementary students from Banfield and Neveln shared their thoughts that also included a positive community norm message. Each one of the 411 prom-goers received a letter from an elementary student. Nearly 250 students also participated in the After Prom event that was co-sponsored by APAC. Many coalition members spent several hours after the Prom at Echo Lanes in Austin. It was a night filled with bowling, games, pizza and prizes donated by REACH.

Pacelli had 41 students attend Prom and 43 students attended After Prom. All students attending Prom plus chaperones received letters from 2nd/3rd graders.



**8 OUT OF 10 HS students  
in Austin said they had NOT drank  
alcohol in last 30 days** -pcn2017

### Alice in Wonderland 2017

Dear 2017 Prom Goer,  
I hope you have lots of fun at the Prom! But, please be safe all night—before, during and after the dance. I would like you to have a lot of fun but be nice and kind. Do not fight or argue. Do not drink alcohol but do dance. You might not realize this, but you are a role model to me and my classmates! And, we care about you!

Sincerely, Michael Goffit Grade: 3

P.S. — Here's a picture I drew of you!



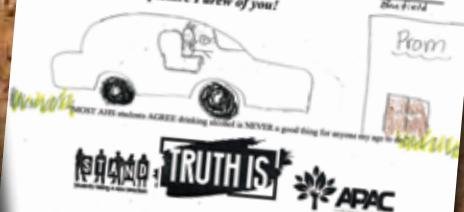
### Footloose 2017

Dear 2017 Prom Goer,  
I hope you have lots of fun at the Prom! But, please be safe all night—before, during and after the dance. I would like you to do not text while you are driving, be careful on your way.

You might not realize this, but you are a role model to me and my classmates! And, we care about you!

Sincerely, Taylor Grade: 2

P.S. — Here's a picture I drew of you!



### Footloose 2017

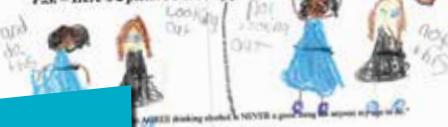
Dear 2017 Prom Goer,  
I hope you have lots of fun at the Prom! But, please be safe all night—before, during and after the dance. I would like you to

to Watch out for dangerous situations and have fun at prom

You might not realize this, but you are a role model to me and my classmates! And, we care about you!

Sincerely, Lydia Maruya Grade: 2

P.S. — Here's a picture I drew of you!



## STUDENT EVENTS

The Ellis Middle School STAND group lead the way with organizing the first alcohol-free student event. It was also the first time in school history that they hosted a totally FREE event for students. The event was called HYPE Night and had several different activities that students could experience. The events included: a dance, an inflatable bungee run, henna body painting, feature movie and a gaming room. Three hundred seventy-nine 7th and 8th grade students attended the 2-hour event. The event was staffed by coalition members, school staff and volunteers. Plans are in the works to make this an annual event because of the huge success.



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### 3 Community Assessment

Coalition members gathered annual local data about underage drinking from 63 community members, specifically representatives of the fourteen different sectors within the community. The data highlights differences in the perceived behaviors and attitudes in the community and the way students and adults actually behave and think.

### 4 Community Messaging using PCN

“TRUTH IS” is a Positive Community Norms messaging campaign that focuses on correcting the misperceptions in the community that were made apparent in the surveys. The MN Student surveys showed that most students are making healthy choices, believe parents should set clear rules and expectations and support efforts to prevent underage drinking. “TRUTH IS” passes this information along to the community.

The “TRUTH IS” campaign has:

- Posted billboards locally
- Hosted student events
- Provided coalition brochures and promotional items at events
- Hung posters in the schools and around the community
- Provided facts about PCN via social media



First Successful Event!  
Positively Austin with  
Dr. Jeffrey Linkenbach,  
a research scientist.





**MOST AHS students AGREE**  
**drinking alcohol is NEVER a good**  
**thing for anyone my age to do.**

-MSS 2016



## 5 Education

Next school year, APAC and the Austin School District will be implementing the Project Northland Curriculum, which uses grade-specific tasks to reach young people when they are most likely to try alcohol.

### 6th Grade

Slick Tracy is a four-week program that provides a way for students and parents to discuss alcohol-related issues. Comic strips and interactive activities make this curriculum fun and engaging. The program ends with individual research projects that are presented at a poster fair to parents and community members.

### 7th Grade

Amazing Alternatives is an eight-session curriculum that utilizes peer-led activities such as group discussion, class games, role plays, and peer-made audio tapes to delay the onset of alcohol use. Students are taught skills to identify and resist pressure to use alcohol, encourage alcohol-free alternatives, and change the acceptability of alcohol use.



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## **8th Grade**

During this eight-session program called Powerlines, students work in small groups to reinforce the messages learned during Slick Tracy and Amazing Alternatives and to learn about the groups, both professional and political, in their communities that influence the alcohol use of adolescents. Students work on projects that encourage them to be positive influences in their communities, schools, peer groups, and with younger students and siblings.



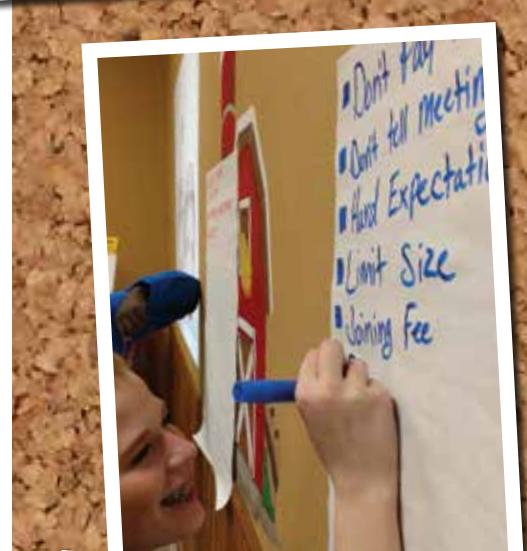
## **High School**

Class Action shows students the social and legal consequences of teenage alcohol use. Students are divided into groups and each group is given a hypothetical civil case to prepare and present. Cases include Drinking and Driving on Trial, Binge-drinking on Trial, and Drinking and Violence on Trial. The goal of Class Action is to change the social norms surrounding alcohol use.



## **Other Activities**

- APAC held monthly meetings to discuss resources and strategies for preventing alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use in Austin
- Coalition staff attended multiple training sessions
- Conducted a student survey to understand students' perceptions of alcohol and drug use, as well as the actual behaviors of students regarding alcohol and drug use



## **Goals for the Upcoming Year**

- Increase APAC's presence within Austin by sharing our mission and successes with area organizations and businesses
- Have a presence at area events (Mower County Fair, FreedomFest & Homecoming parades)
- Continue to develop and implement the "TRUTH IS" media campaign
-  will form new billboard and newspaper advertisements as well as posters to hang in the high school
- Continue to work with law enforcement to prevent youth access to alcohol
- Continue to offer RBST (Responsible Beverage Server Training) to local businesses and organizations
- Continue to expand STAND in order to cultivate positive role models, change students' perceptions, and reach more youth with the "TRUTH IS" campaign



**MOST** Austin High School students **AGREE** that parents and other adults **SHOULD** clearly communicate about the importance of **NOT** using alcohol. - MSS 2016



# JOIN US!

HOW TO GET INVOLVED IN  
THIS IMPORTANT PROJECT

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE  
PART OF OUR COALITION?

**What you can do as a volunteer:**

- Attend monthly committee meetings
- Receive e-updates from APAC
- Volunteer at events

## APAC MEETINGS

7 a.m. on the last Wednesday of each month at  
the Austin High School conference room

If you want to work together to improve the lives  
of Austin's young people, please contact me, Bill  
Spitzer, P & I Coordinator of the Austin Positive  
Action Coalition.

### Contact Bill Spitzer

P & I Coordinator  
(507) 421-2317 Cell  
(507) 460-1800 ext. 0361  
[bill.spitzer@austin.k12.mn.us](mailto:bill.spitzer@austin.k12.mn.us)

Source: 2017 Positive Community Norms (PCN) Survey, n=1643 Grades 7-12,  
Austin Public School (APS) Pacelli Catholic Schools (PCS)

Source: 2016 Minnesota Student Survey, n=475 Grades 9 & 11, Austin High  
School (AHS)

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