



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, Behavioral Health 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.



MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR



Have you ever had the privilege to hang out with a group of people who are positive in the midst of a challenge? I have. Every month I get to work with the APAC team as chair! We share our hopes, concerns, and challenges as members who are working to reduce alcohol use among minors. In Austin, we are faced with a challenge. We want our youth to realize that instead of drinking and smoking, youth could be doing more enjoyable, interesting and productive activities. Our APAC team even creates positive community norms messages that utilize results from a survey taken by our 7-12 grade students. In addition to these messages, we partner and develop positive activities. Margaret Mead once said, "Never doubt that small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." This is what APAC

is working to do—changing Austin into a place where youth can thrive making healthy decisions to rocket them toward their dreams. It is my privilege to serve on this coalition as chair!

-Mary Holtorf

MESSAGE FROM OUR COORDINATOR



SFY2 of the grant was a HUGE success for our coalition and community! We established an action plan as a part of roadmap for the future which will help guide our prevention strategies for the coming years. Much to our surprise was the overwhelming success of the Simply TALK campaign. Our conversation starters were all distributed to community parents in under two months. Many more requests for the conversation starters triggered a reorder of 1000 more to continue the conversation. Our group also had a goal to spread the positive to Austin civic/community groups which was fulfilled by presentations being given to nine (9). Our coalition also increased our participation in the number of community and school events. Lastly but certainly not least was our successful PCN (Positive

Community Norm) message campaign. Several messages appeared on local billboards, posters and promotional items throughout the year.

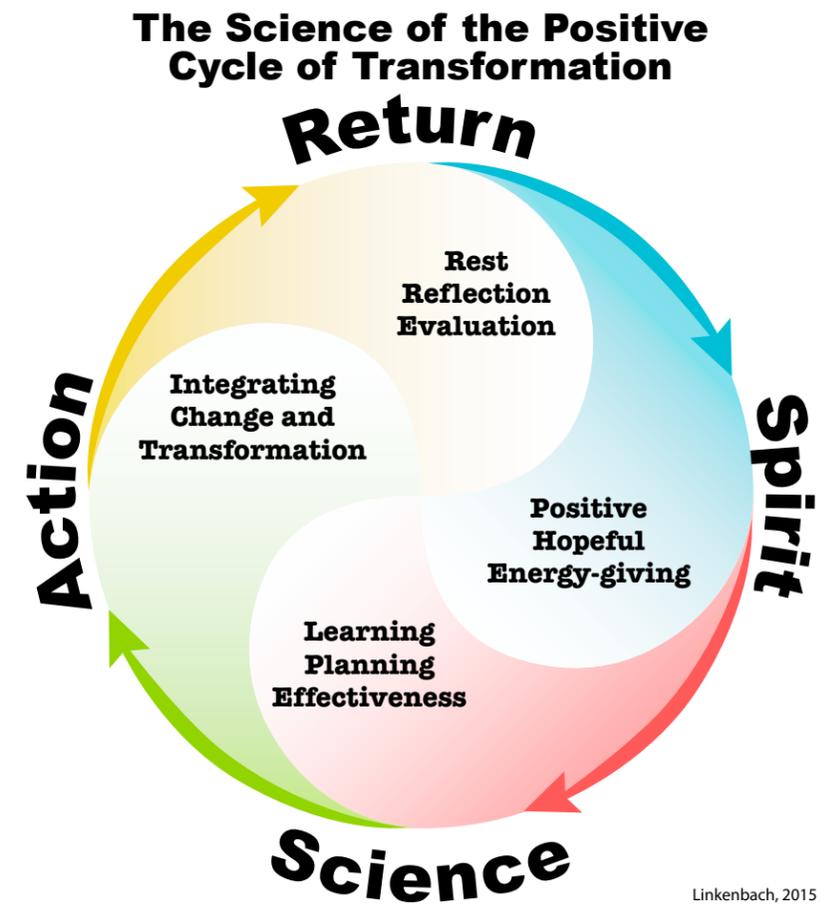
-Bill Spitzer

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 and 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.

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.



Linkenbach, 2015





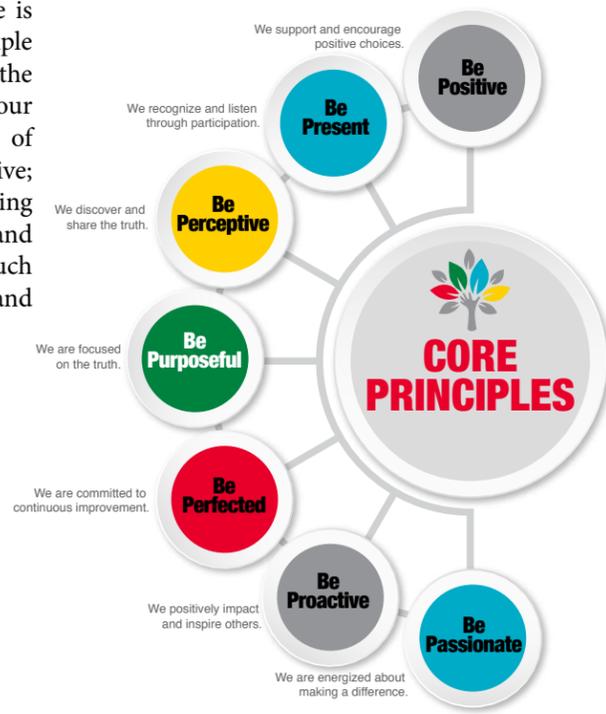
STRATEGIC PLAN WITH CORE PRINCIPLES IN MIND

The major task for the coalition was to create a roadmap for the next 4 years. We formed a subcommittee of coalition that was made up of about 10 members that were also parents of students. The group met over several months and looked at areas of hope and concern that were identified by coalition. The group discussed the portion of our strategic plan that focused on enhancing parent/community member conversations with students. Simply TALK was born! The new campaign would include: billboards, a series of four (4) postcards with conversation tips and conversation starters (list of over 80 questions that would spark conversations between students and adults). These conversation starters took two different forms; one had a ring of business card size pages with a single question on each while the other was in the form of playing cards. Both were a huge success as over 1000 sets were distributed within a couple of months. The billboard campaign featured two different versions of parents engaging in conversations. Lastly the postcard campaign was sent to over 1800 households over the winter break, during parent survey, prom and graduation.

The science of the positive is founded upon seven principle states of being. Being is the core essence of who we are—our 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.

OUR SEVEN CORE PRINCIPLES

The science of the positive is founded upon seven principle states of being. Being is the core essence of who we are—our 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.



OUR PREVENTION STRATEGY

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.

Our prevention strategy that we implemented this past year was based on the 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. Our message campaign focused on correcting various misperceptions about the behaviors and attitudes of youth and adults regarding underage drinking. Our Simply TALK messages provided the opportunity for adults to open a dialog with students as well as spark conversations on the topic of drinking alcohol underage.

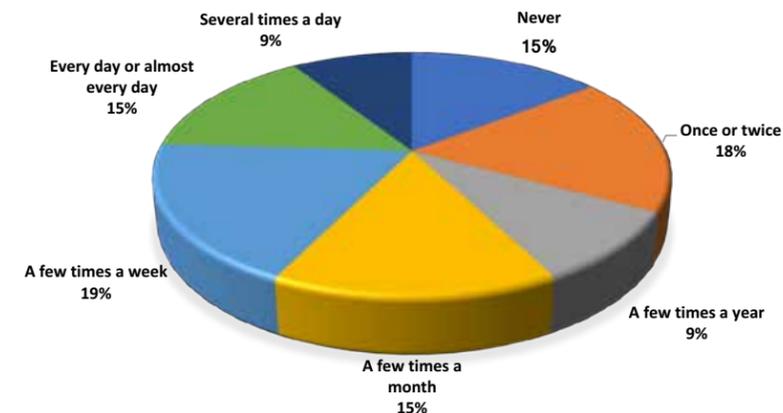
PCN researchers have found that misperceptions held by our youth and by our communities actually lead to more negative behavior. If we think “everyone is doing it” we are more likely to do it because we want to be like everyone else. That’s why our PCN campaign is so important!

An awareness survey was given to 1373 students in grades 7-12 which indicated that 57% of the students had seen or heard PCN messages in the school or community. Nine percent of the students responded that they had seen messages on a daily basis. MOST students responded that they saw the messages on posters or other materials at school while nearly 50% saw the messages on community billboards.

STRATEGIES

Simply Talk | Youth Leadership | PCN Messaging
5th Quarter Activities | Responsible Beverage Server Training

HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU SEEN OR HEARD A TRUTH IS MESSAGE IN YOUR SCHOOL OR COMMUNITY?



72% of HS students in Austin would rather **NOT** drink alcohol when hanging out with friends.
-PCN 2017



FREEDOM FEST PARADE/FAMILY DAY AT THE POOL

We partnered with our friends at MowerReFreshed during HarvestFest 2017. HarvestFest is an annual event with a focus on health and family. The event features a number of activities and displays centered around those themes. Although the weather may not have been the best, Janet Anderson who coordinated the activity, said people were interested in our work of focusing on the positive.

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

Coalition member Sarah Lysne, Administrative assistant Janet Anderson and Bill Spitzer attended the very successful National Night Out that was held Aug. 1st. The event had many partners and featured Austin Public Safety displays as well as a few other community organizations. This was our first event that we used the new tent! It worked out perfectly and many community members young and old visited the tent to learn more about our work. We had two people that were excited to learn more and have been invited to attend our next coalition meeting. Many people enjoyed playing the H-Box.

HARVEST FEST

We partnered with our friends at MowerReFreshed at the HarvestFest 2017. Although the weather may not have been the best, Janet Anderson who coordinated the activity, said people were interested in our work.

HOMECOMING

Homecoming was a HUGE success for our efforts. Each student was given a “touchdown” towel, in other words a bandana with our PCN message on it. We also distributed about 250 extras at the homecoming game and people were asking for more! A big hit. Thanks to the coalition members that were able to help out during the “Battle of Connects” game held during AHS homecoming week. Lastly, ELLIS and AHS STAND members walked in the homecoming parade. Sadly, it was without our wrapped bus. The bus suffered a fire that same day and was a total loss. We submitted the loss to the bus insurance company but being a third party, I doubt we will recover the loss. APAC also provided H-Box games for the Pacelli homecoming activities. Next year we will look at how we can increase our involvement with the Pacelli homecoming events.

Community Assessment

Our coalition in cooperation with The Montana Institute conducted a Positive Community Norms Parent survey. Questions included on the survey asked parents about their rules, conversations, and perceptions they had about youth alcohol use. 305 parents responded to the survey which will help guide our local efforts to keep students in our community healthy and help guide them to make positive choices. The survey was anonymous and their participation was voluntary. The results of the survey were released in late May and will be used to create PCN messages directed towards parents next year. In addition to the parent survey, over 25 community interviews were conducted to gather data about perceived behaviors and attitudes.

“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

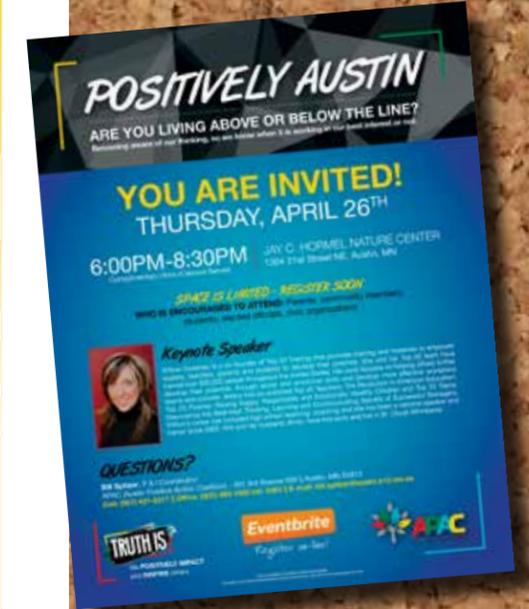
Positively AUSTIN

Our second annual townhall event was once again a HUGE success! Thanks to the many coalition members who helped with this major project. Over 100 people attended the evening event at the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center. Willow Sweeney was a success and her topic discussion about how we can “stay above the line” fit perfectly into our work highlighting the positive. Nearly Ninety-five percent of the people responding in the post survey said that Sweeney met their expectations and they valued their time spent at the event. The post-survey also revealed that almost 100% of the attendees had a better understanding of the work of the coalition and were excited to support our efforts!

Positively Austin Awards:

- Chris Lukes
- Debra Schmitt
- Jim Ypparila

Recipients also received the “Key to the City” award from the City of Austin.





ELLIS HAUNTED HOUSE

The ELLIS 1st annual haunted house was very well attended. The two-day event was supported by our coalition and STAND group. STAND members distributed “glow sticks” that featured a PCN message to all those who attended the event. This marks our 2nd STAND co-sponsored event at ELLIS.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

22 students and all five of the student advisors attended the 2nd annual Youth Leadership Academy in Baxter, MN. Students had many workshop and networking opportunities at the conference. The keynote speaker shared many helpful tips with an overall message that sometimes in life we just have to “deal with it!”

PAINT THE RINK PINK

Our coalition provided 500 PINK stress pucks for the Austin Bruins game on Saturday, Feb. 10. The pucks were used for the chuck-a-puck game during the second intermission. Someone tossed one into the FREE pizza for a year container. Bruins gave the pucks away after the game and are interested in collaborating with other promotions next year, including recognizing students/adults during intermission for work on coalition.

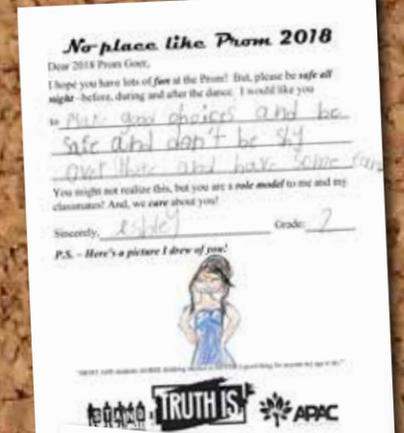
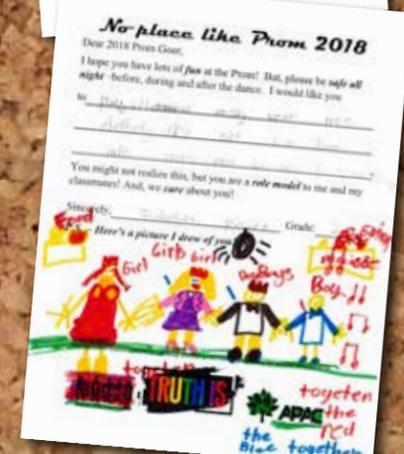
STAND

Our student groups continue to work on projects at Ellis, Pacelli and the High School. The main focus for this year was the PhotoVoice project in which several students from each school toured Austin for areas of Hope and Concern. Several areas were identified and will become the mission for the groups in the coming years. Students will make presentations to local groups and organizations sharing their HOPE and CONCERN. Students also helped with other activities in their respective schools.



2018 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. 426 letters were written by 2nd and 3rd graders from all 4 elementary schools (that also included a positive community norm message) and given to each student participating in grand march. 206 students also participated in the After Prom event that was co-sponsored by APAC.



98% of MS students in Austin don't drink alcohol monthly.
-PCN 2017



MOST Austin High School students AGREE that parents should talk with them about NOT drinking alcohol. -PCN 2017



SIMPLY TALK

We held a subcommittee meeting made up of about 10 coalition members that were also parents. The group discussed the portion of our strategic plan that focused on enhancing parent/community member conversations with students. Simply TALK was born! The new campaign includes: billboards, a series of postcards with conversation tips and conversation starter mini booklets.

Simply TALK is in full swing. The billboards are up and four rounds of Parent postcards have been sent. The postcards were addressed by residents at St. Marks Lutheran Home. According to their activities coordinator they truly enjoyed helping and want to continue to help our coalition in this way!

We took delivery of both types of conversation starters, playing cards and the standard style. Pacelli conferences were our first “official” distribution of the cards. We also distributed the conversation starters at Ellis and AHS conferences. Parents were really excited to have a start to a conversation with their students instead of getting the same answers School was “fine” and “we didn’t do ‘nothing’ in school today.” We received GREAT press for the starters on KAAL TV. Video Link: <https://tinyurl.com/ydbtbbyb> Looking for ideas for future distribution sites/events.

Over 7600 postcards have been distributed and 1000+ conversation starters.

HYPE NIGHT

The Ellis Middle School STAND group continued to lead the way with organizing the second annual HYPE Night open to all middle school students free of charge. HYPE Night hosted several different activities that students could experience and this year the event was expanded to nearly 3 hours. Many events from last year were brought back by popular demand and some new ones were added. The events that returned included: a dance, an inflatable bungee basketball, henna body painting, arts/crafts area and a gaming room. New events featured: Inflatable obstacle course, provided by the National Guard, karaoke and box hockey. Two Hundred Seventy-seven 7th and 8th grade students attended which was down from last year. The event was staffed by coalition members, school staff and volunteers. Plans are underway for next year with a possible expansion of time.

REDUCTION OF YOUTH ACCESS

APAC continued its partnership with the Austin Police Department in co-hosting free Responsible Beverage Server Training (RBST) classes. Training were held in late June 2017 and May 2018 that were open to individuals from local bars and restaurants. Over 60 participated these trainings. It is our goal to have two RBST classes each year to provide support to our local businesses and organizations that serve alcoholic beverages. Servers who attend are taught which IDs are acceptable, how to recognize a fake ID and signs of intoxication.

EDUCATION

The Austin School District implemented the Project Northland Curriculum, which uses grade-specific tasks to reach young people when they are most likely to try alcohol.

6th Grade: Student Participating: 400

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: Student Participating: 313

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.

8th Grade: Student Participating: 337

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.

9th Grade: Student Participating: 318

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.

GOALS FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR

- Continue implementing/updating Strategic Plan Action Plan.
- Continue to develop and implement the “TRUTH IS” PCN media campaign using billboards and posters at ALL schools.
- Continue presence at area events (Taste of Nations, HarvestFest, National Night Out, FreedomFest & Homecoming parades).
- Develop a strategy to work with establishments serving alcohol develop a plan to prevent youth access.
- Continue to work with law enforcement to prevent youth access to alcohol by co-hosting 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.
- Develop a strategy to work with establishments serving alcohol to prevent youth access.





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

Always the last Wednesday of each month. Times alternate between 7am and Noon. Please check our website or contact coordinator for details.

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

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)

Grant hosted by Parenting Resource Center

Funded by Minnesota Department of Human Services, Behavioral Health Division