



# ANNUAL REPORT

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

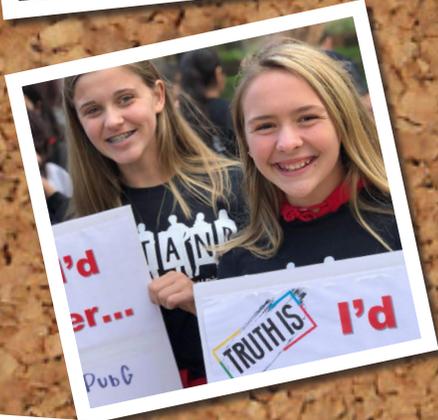


**Austin Positive Action Coalition**

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



Our mighty coalition is rolling right along. This past year has been plum full of energy, action, and positive results. Just when you thought we couldn't get more positive we welcomed the addition of Danielle Nesvold as APAC's Community Relations Specialist. Danielle and Bill have continued to guide our coalition with energy and intent. This dynamic duo has worked nicely together to continue to move our coalition forward and for this we are extremely grateful.

We continue to build momentum and take notice of the positive choices our students make every day. The middle and high school students at Pacelli and Austin are fully engaged and energized. These kids get it! The students continue to amaze with their energy and willingness to participate in APAC events. Recently we had a number of our youth participate in "Sticker SHOCK." This event involved having the students put stickers and bottle hangers on alcoholic beverages in some of our local liquor stores. Our message on the stickers was to thank the adults for not providing alcohol to minors.

Not to be outdone by our youth, our adult coalition members have been representing APAC in force. A prime example of this force was our showing of nine Austin APAC coalition members at the Positive Community Norms Conference at Ruttger's in Deerwood, MN this past April. Representation from this number of folks is impressive. Furthermore, your remarkable attendance and participation at our monthly APAC meetings is heartwarming and I truly appreciate your commitment.

"What's next you ask?" The BIG NEXT!

As we transition from a tough winter (most Minnesota winters are not like 2019), into our sultry summer months...or weeks, APAC is poised for our BIG NEXT! This initiative will be a summer long scavenger hunt involving students finding our poster messages scattered strategically around Austin. The kids are to take a "selfie" with the APAC poster message and upload it onto social media to be eligible for a trainload of prizes and an eventual grand prize or grand prizes.

After we enjoy the lazy hazy day(s) of summer, we will chug the APAC train right into our yearly Positively Austin event. This event will take place on the evening of October 10th in the Ruby Rupner Center at the Hormel Nature Center. Look for more to come regarding this event but please mark your calendars.

Thank you for an outstanding year. Your APACiness (yep, it's a word Mary Holtorf) is appreciated.

**-Steve King**

## MESSAGE FROM OUR COORDINATOR



I can't believe that we are already halfway through the Positive Community Norms grant! We have certainly accomplished a lot and I believe that we are making progress. Looking at the positive is certainly a change in mindset because we typically focus on the problem which usually is attempting to correct "bad behavior". Who knew if you focused on positive behaviors it would impact the negative choices people make. Our Simply TALK campaign continues to be a success with over 2000 conversation starters distributed in Austin. It is amazing how a simple conversation can become an effective prevention strategy! APAC continues to take part in school and community events to help change the perception about underage drinking. Our STAND student groups are becoming more established in the school and many of the students have shown an interest in doing community service projects. One such project called Sticker SHOCK!, was very successful and drew a lot of media attention. Local businesses joined the effort by

allowing students to post reminders on their product of the importance of NOT providing alcohol to minors. We look forward to another successful year but all of our success is the result of a supportive community and many dedicated people who believe in our young people.

**-Bill Spitzer**

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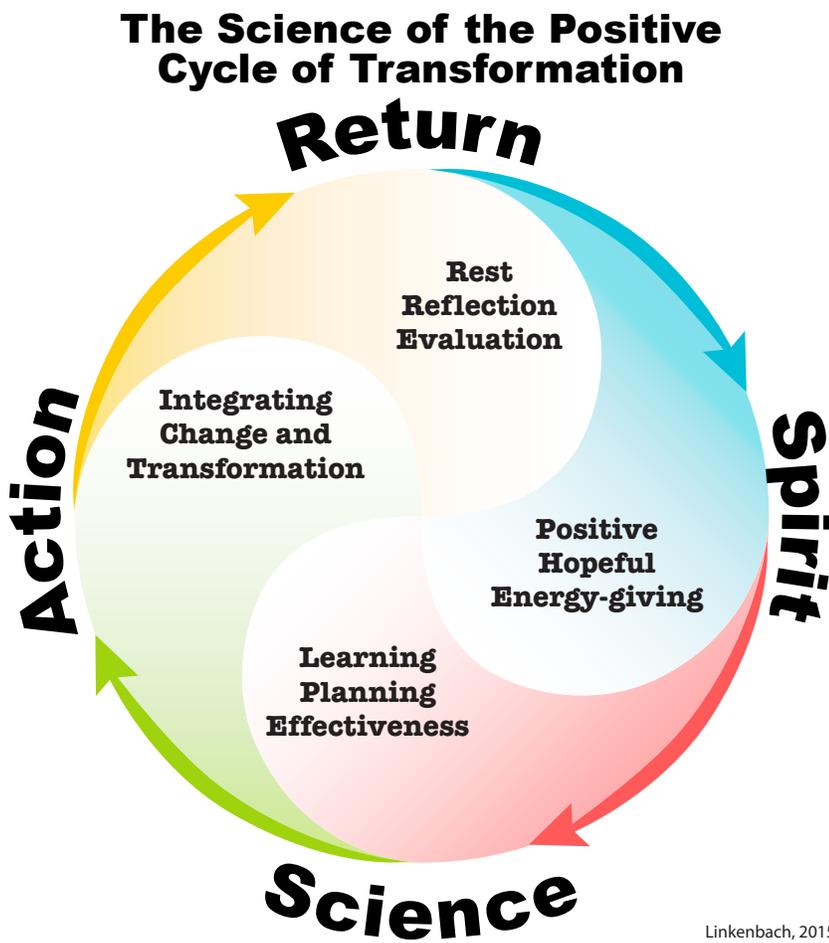
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# WHAT IS THE SCIENCE OF THE POSITIVE?

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 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

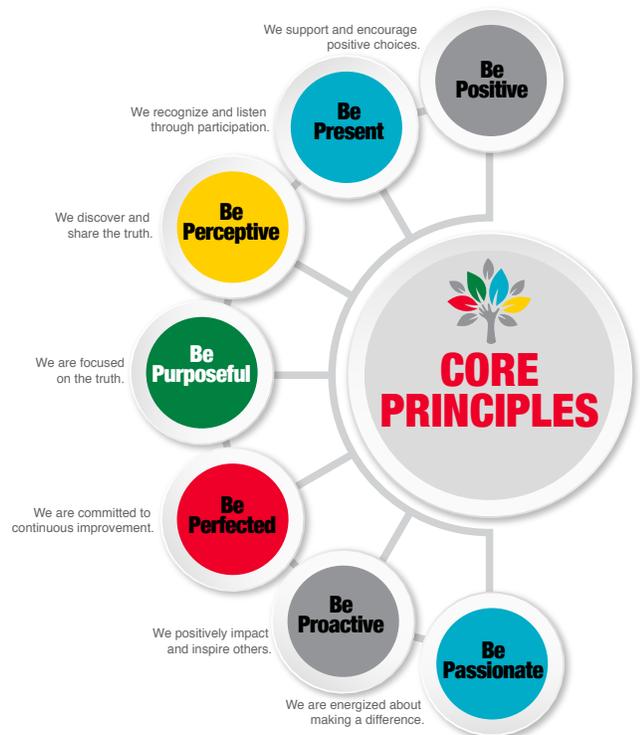


## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

So, what's next? That was the question we asked our members this year and our answer, how about we look to focusing on a BIG Next each year? This year our BIG Next was looking to the future of our group. Knowing that this is a 5-year grant and it would be disappointing to see all our hard work end in 2021 when our grant expires, APAC decided to start looking at creating a sustainability plan for the future. Several members of APAC devoted many hours into creating a plan that would ensure our efforts continued after the grant. Many questions still remain unanswered but our plan for the future mapped out key action steps our group will take before the state funding runs out. Even though most would think that the financial piece should be the focal point, our group acknowledges that social capital is also just as important. Building and maintaining our strong core group of community members as well as strengthening our student groups were also important components to the plan. We are very confident that our mission will continue long after the State funding runs out because our mission is to promote healthy and positive lifestyles within our communities.

## 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.



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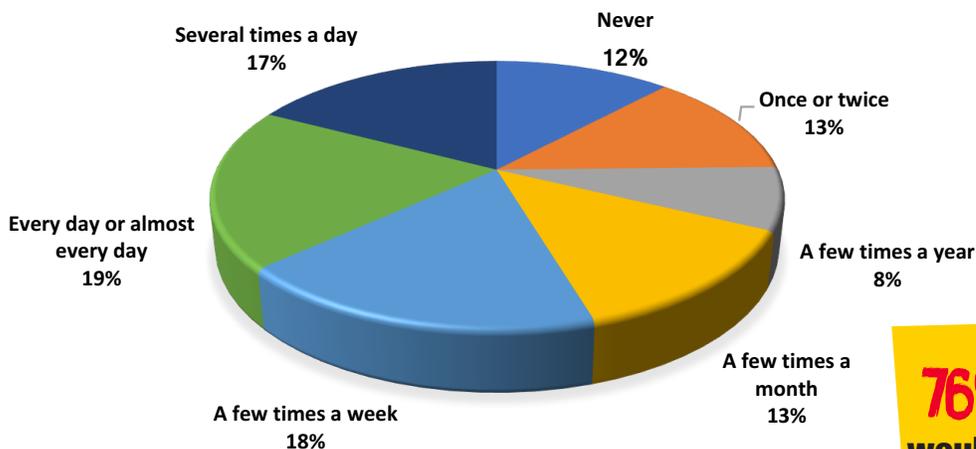
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# OUR PREVENTION STRATEGY

Our coalition and student groups continue to use the POSITIVE COMMUNITY NORMS (PCN) prevention framework as a method to reduce substance abuse in our community. What is the PCN strategy? The strategy is essentially four stages—Spirit, Science, Action, and Return. Those stages make up the transformational process of the Science of the Positive. As we have already seen, these stages work together to create a synergistic cycle of positive transformation. The PCN framework campaign is based on a social norms theory and 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. This is one of the highly visible components of our campaign which includes the many billboards and posters displayed around Austin. Our message campaign focused on correcting various misperceptions about the behaviors and attitudes of youth and adults regarding underage drinking as well as marijuana use. Our Simply TALK messages continue to provide 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!

In 2019, our students took the second of three PCN student surveys. Many of those results will be shared with students and community members over the next two years. One piece of the data included was how often students had seen or heard one of our PCN messages? 88% of those middle/high school students surveyed stated they had seen or heard a PCN message at least once or twice in the past year and 36% said they saw them daily! That was up from 57% of students who reported on an awareness survey given last year asking that same question. MOST students responded that they saw the messages on posters or other materials at school while over 80% saw the messages on community billboards, up from 50% last year.

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



**76%** of MS/HS students in Austin would rather **NOT** drink alcohol when hanging out with friends.  
-PCN 2019



## PARTNERING WITH SHIP: JUULING (VAPING)

APAC and Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) partnered on an effort to help educate community members and school staff about JUULing. JUULing was the term given to the increased use of electronic cigarette devices that has seen a substantial increasing in the past few years. The presentation was given by SHIP coordinator Chris Weis and Bill Spitzer at many different venues including: fall sports orientation, ELLIS and IJ Holton staff in service and a Mower ReFreshed Lunch n' Learn. Hundreds of parents and community members attended these information sessions that pointed out that nicotine was not the only substance being used in these vaping devices, marijuana has also been used. We are hopeful to expand this education to students as part of our PCN message strategy in SFY4.



## NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

This was our second year at National Night Out that was held at Bandshell Park. Well over 200 people attended this event and our H-Box hockey games were busy all night long. We also had several adults stop by the table for conversation starters and information about APAC.

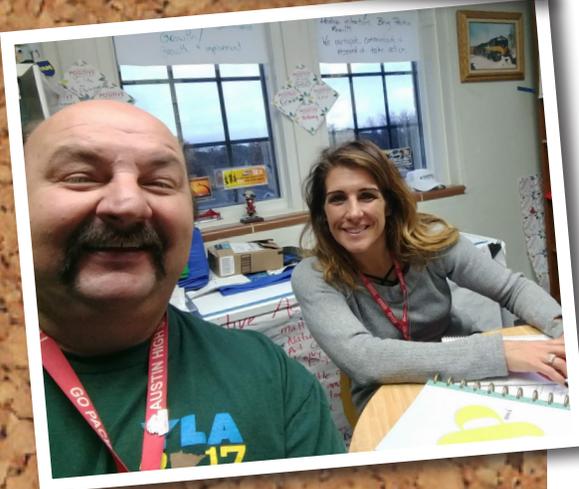


## MOWER COUNTY FAIR

The fair gave us the opportunity to use some of our NEW “5th quarter” equipment, like the 15+ foot dart board. The game was so successful that we had visits from the Fair President and Vice President asking if we could remain set up for the rest of the fair. Our location, FairSquare, was very good for exposure and we did hand out a few conversation starters to adults. We also utilized the H-Box games and the tent.

## HARVESTFEST

Our coalition and STAND members participated in our 2nd annual Harvestfest event. Several STAND students from Ellis Middle School helped to provide positive healthy alternative activities to those who attended the event. We utilized the H-Box hockey games.



## NEW ASSISTANT/PCN CONFERENCE

We hired a new grant assistant, Danielle Nesvold. Danielle has several ties to the Austin community and is involved in many other activities. She has a passion for the community and is looking forward to serving our mission. Twelve coalition members, including Danielle, attended our two PCN conferences held in the fall of 2018 and the spring of 2019 at Rutgers Conference Center in Deerwood, MN. Coalition members continued to learn more about our strategies and had a chance to review the 2019 data from our recent student survey.

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## YLA (YOUTH LEADERSHIP ACADEMY)

Twenty-eight students (12-AHS, 10-Ellis and 6-Pacelli) ventured to Baxter, MN in mid-October for a two-day leadership conference. The conference welcomed over 125 students from across the State of Minnesota to listen to Bill Cordes. Mr. Cordes has keynoted programs for conferences, conventions, schools, and universities nationwide. His work includes, "School Unity Project" a program designed to empower students and teachers to create a better school culture through positive personal and peer interaction. Bill combined humor, energy, enthusiasm, and wisdom to create an engaging experience that promotes "better ways to live our days" while promoting YOGOWYPI (You Only Get Out What You Put In). Students also took part in many breakout sessions to create plans to engage students when they returned to Austin.

## PROGRAM SHARING

SHIP coordinator, Chris Weis, and APAC coordinator, Bill Spitzer, attended the October, 2018 Program Sharing Conference in St. Cloud. APAC had a chance to highlight our trailer as part of the exhibition that was setup as part of the conference. Attendees hung a nickname on our trailer, ACOW (Austin Coalition On Wheels), meaning we can easily bring our entire message to any part of our community. The annual conference is attended by prevention specialists from across the State of Minnesota. It was a great way to share our work.

## ACOW (AUSTIN COALITION ON WHEELS) IN ACTION

The ACOW ventured out into the Austin community many times this year including a journey to Lyle to provide positive activities for Lyle-Pacelli Prom. Students enjoyed the games and even asked us to stay longer than scheduled. The trailer is a great tool to spread our message to others. The AHS football team and the Robotic Club used the trailer to transport equipment to their events throughout the State, spreading our positive to other communities. The AHS shop students installed shelves and load rails to help create a SAFE trailer.

## ELLIS HAUNTED HOUSE

Ellis Middle School in partnership with our STAND group hosted the second annual haunted house on Friday, Oct. 26 and Saturday, Oct 27. Our new grant assistant, Danielle, helped at the event that was open to all ELLIS students and their friends as well as family. Our coalition distributed glow sticks with a PCN message about marijuana use and that MOST MS students have NOT used it in the last 30 days. 800 students/community members participated in the event.

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## WE HAVE A NEW BUS WRAP!

In the middle of October our new bus wrap with several PCN messages was applied to another Rochester City Lines bus that will haul Mayo Clinic employees each day between Austin and the Rochester Mayo campus. The bus was ready just in time for our trip to the Youth Leadership Academy. We were certainly the talk of the conference with many questions of how we accomplished this and how they could do the same in their communities. The message will remain on the bus for one year and will be available for three Austin community events.



## RBST (RESPONSIBLE BEVERAGE SERVER TRAINING)

Our first training was held for SFY3 in partnership with the Austin Police Department. The training was made available to all establishments and organizations in Austin that serve alcoholic beverages. 46 participated in the training. 89% of the attendees were attending the training for the first time with 79% attending voluntarily without being required by their employer. MOST had been working in the alcohol industry for three years or less. 88% of those who attended feel that servers should attend a class like this annually. 100% agreed or strongly agreed that this training should be required for all servers! A similar RBST was held in the spring which had an additional 21 servers attend the training. The 21 attendees reportedly improved their knowledge by nearly 58% with new strategies in preventing the service of underage customers. These front-line employees learned about; alcohol policies and laws, as well as consequences and liabilities for failing to comply with these laws. Attendees also learned helpful information about the proper use of identification cards and empower them to handle situations when individuals are over consuming.



## COALITION MEMBERSHIP

APAC continues to try to attract members to our mission. In December, we held our first evening social for members and guests of the coalition. Even though we had a small turnout, we had two guests that were introduced to our work. The social was a great way to talk about our work in a relaxed setting. We created storyboards which turned out to be a great way to "showcase" our work. Our goal in late 2019 during SFY4 is to meet with each coalition member to increase the recruitment of new as well as increase the diversity on the coalition.



## AHS PACKER SPIRIT COMBINES WITH PCN

Austin High School is attempting to create a more vibrant environment for learning and show school spirit at the same time. After meeting with the new building and grounds director and Principal Malo, we came up with a couple ideas that would help spread our message as well as generate school spirit. Four new cafeteria signs as well as six new water filling station signs were installed at the high school. Plans are being explored on how more signs with PCN messages can be combined to create more "spirit".



**90%** of MS/HS students in Austin don't drink alcohol monthly.

-PCN 2019



## HYPE NIGHT

STAND partnered with Ellis Middle School to host our third annual HYPE night. The popular, student led, event will feature a few new activities this year, including: Gladiator battles and foot darts! This ALL school event continues to be offered without a cost to students and supported by local sponsors, including APAC. These positive activities have a goal to provide students with healthy alternatives instead of becoming involved with substance abuse. 258 attended this year's event!



## STICKER SHOCK

APAC, local liquor stores and the Austin Police Department collaborated on a program called Sticker SHOCK. It increases the awareness of the importance that only people over 21 are allowed to purchase and consume alcoholic beverages. Eleven students and two police officers applied awareness stickers on 2000 alcohol containers at three participating liquor stores. Sticker SHOCK is a community awareness campaign designed to educate adults who might purchase alcohol and illegally provide it to minors. The project unites youth, business owners, parents, and law enforcement in a partnership striving for a common goal: to reduce underage drinking.



## STAND - AHS

Our STAND group at AHS was struggling this year. Advisors – Jake Nelson and Justin Heskett reorganized the meeting structure and changed the meeting time to the school lunch periods. The change required more advisor time as there are three lunch periods but the payback was outstanding! Meeting attendance went from an average of four per meeting to thirteen. In only two months after the change, students participated in four community service projects including a new one called, Sticker SHOCK! Our Ellis and Pacelli STAND groups continue to achieve goals related to our mission of providing positive and healthy alternatives for young people.

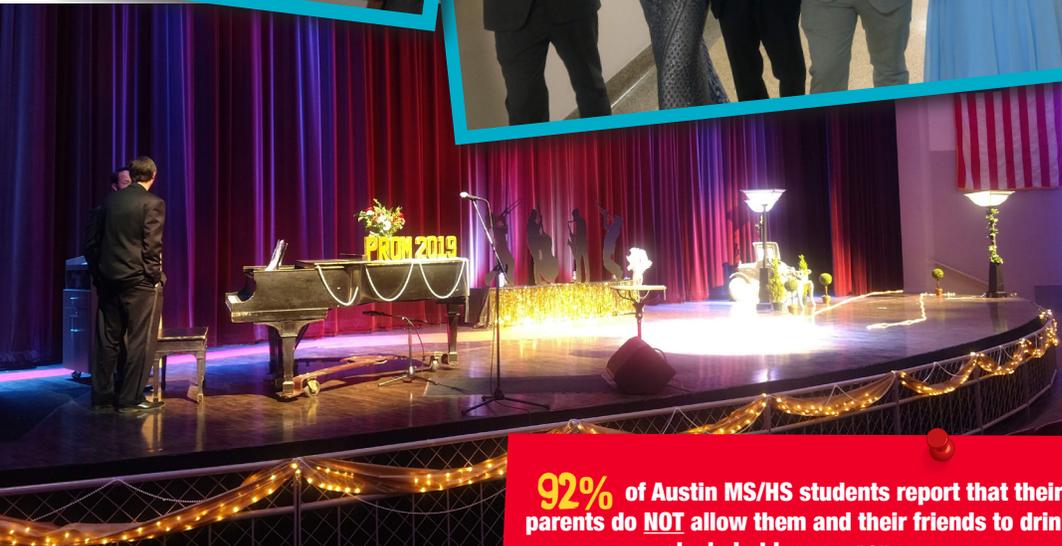


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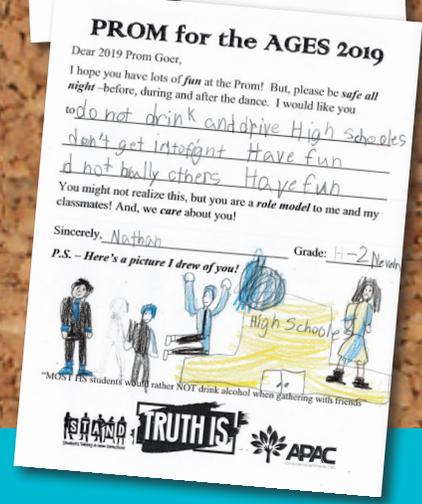
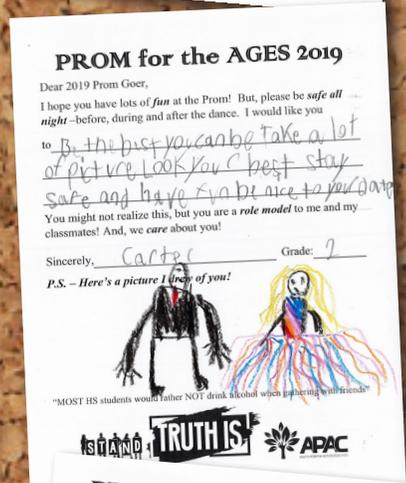
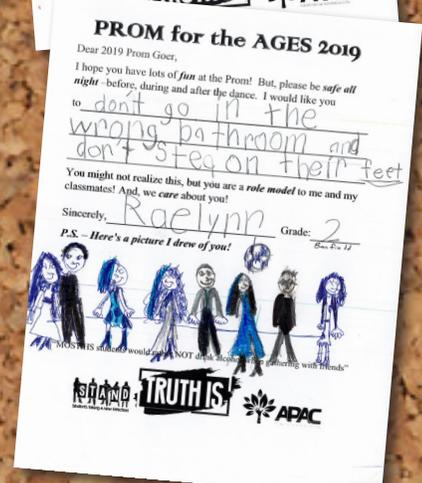
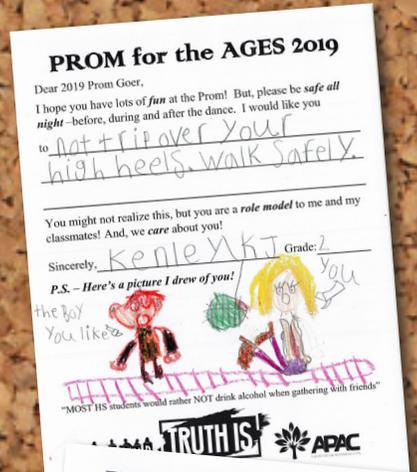
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# 2019 PROM

Austin second grade students sent 474 personal messages. One to each of the students attending prom at Austin High School. This is the third year that elementary students had a chance to write letters to each of the promgoers. Letters are distributed after the grand march by members of APAC. Pacelli elementary students also participated in the campaign, writing messages to the Pacelli promgoers. Pacelli student letters were used as placemats during the prom dinner. These messages reminded students to be safe, be respectful, and responsible. In addition to a message, some students even drew pictures for their new high school friends. AHS Post prom had 276 attendees and was also sponsored by APAC.



**92%** of Austin MS/HS students report that their parents do **NOT** allow them and their friends to drink alcohol at home. -PCN 2019





**JOIN US!**

**SHARING THE POSITIVE**

**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: 2019 Positive Community Norms (PCN) Survey, n=1670 Grades 7-12, Austin Public School (APS) Pacelli Catholic Schools (PCS)

Source: 2018PCN Parent Survey, n=305, APS, PCS Parents 7-12th graders

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