

# Connections

The Parent E-Newsletter of New Outlook Teen Center



November 2008

## New Outlook Teen Center (NOTC)

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## Academic Success, Substance Use and Afterschool Programs

Did you know that many studies have found a link between academic success and substance abuse? Youth who have greater academic success — meaning that they get good grades and feel connected to their school — are at lower risk for starting to use substances like alcohol, tobacco and other drugs; while youth who have difficulty with school, academically or because they feel disconnected, are at higher risk for using substances. One recent study of 1,897 eighth graders found that cigarette use, alcohol use and marijuana use was higher among eighth graders who had lower academic achievement, higher rates of school misbehavior and lower levels of school bonding than their peers.\*

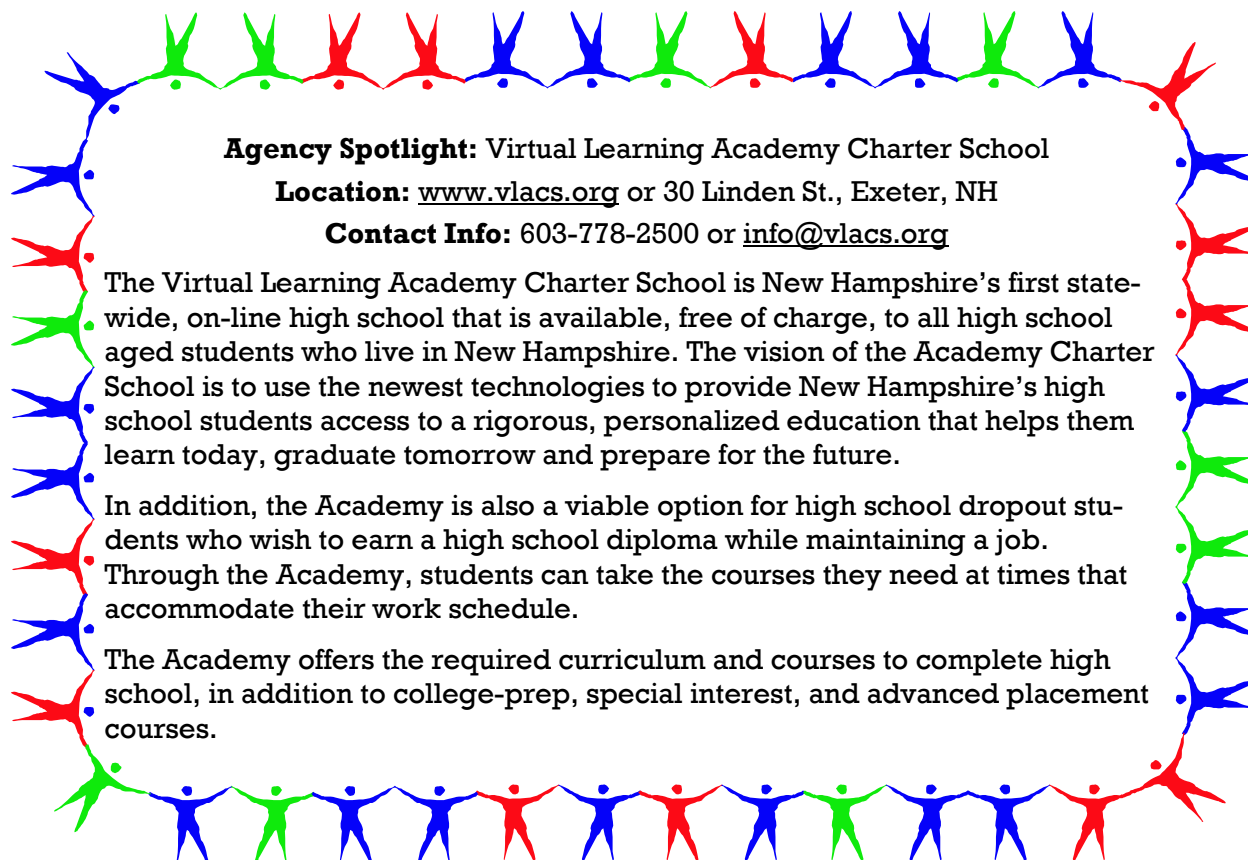
After school programs like the one offered by New Outlook Teen Center can have a significant impact on the academic success of participants. Students participating in after school programs across the country have demonstrated higher levels of proficiency in all subject areas than those who do not attend after school programs. The longer a youth participates in after school programming, the greater impact their participation has on their academic success. Moreover, students who are at higher risk for problems in school showed the greatest gains.† Sending your child to an after school program where they can receive academic support and make friends can help them have greater success in school — and less of a chance of starting to use alcohol, drugs and tobacco.

\*Bryant, A.L., Schulenberg, J.E., O'Malley, P.M., Bachman, J.G., Johnston, L.D. (2003). How academic achievement, attitudes, and behaviors relate to the course of substance use during adolescence: A 6-year, multiwave national longitudinal study. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 13(3), 361-397.

†Afterschool Alliance. (September 2006). Evaluations backgrounder: A summary of formal evaluations of the academic impact of afterschool programs. Available from [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).

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***New Outlook has a new Homework Help Program Coordinator! Lynn Tatarczuk is a long-time New Outlook volunteer, and will be working with participants in need tutors, school supplies, and support in their homework endeavors. For more information about our Homework Help program, please email Lynn at [homework@newoutlookteencenter.org](mailto:homework@newoutlookteencenter.org)***



**Agency Spotlight:** Virtual Learning Academy Charter School

**Location:** [www.vlacs.org](http://www.vlacs.org) or 30 Linden St., Exeter, NH

**Contact Info:** 603-778-2500 or [info@vlacs.org](mailto:info@vlacs.org)

The Virtual Learning Academy Charter School is New Hampshire's first state-wide, on-line high school that is available, free of charge, to all high school aged students who live in New Hampshire. The vision of the Academy Charter School is to use the newest technologies to provide New Hampshire's high school students access to a rigorous, personalized education that helps them learn today, graduate tomorrow and prepare for the future.

In addition, the Academy is also a viable option for high school dropout students who wish to earn a high school diploma while maintaining a job.

Through the Academy, students can take the courses they need at times that accommodate their work schedule.

The Academy offers the required curriculum and courses to complete high school, in addition to college-prep, special interest, and advanced placement courses.

**Interesting Links and Online Resources**

- < **“Reclaiming Futures Every Day”:** Reclaiming Futures, an organization dedicated to helping teenagers caught in the cycle of drugs, alcohol and crime, recently launched “Reclaiming Futures Every Day,” a professionally staffed blog that aims to keep people informed of the latest happenings in the area of juvenile justice and substance abuse treatment. To visit: [www.blog.reclaimingfutures.org](http://www.blog.reclaimingfutures.org)
- < **New Role for Pediatricians:** A new study by the Center for Adolescent Substance Abuse Research (CeASAR) at Boston's Children's Hospital found that parents welcome the opportunity for pediatricians to conduct alcohol screenings during their child's pediatric visits, and are also open to discussing drinking habits with pediatricians. To read a brief on the study: [www.childrenshospital.org/newsroom/Site1339/mainpage\\$1339P1sublevel473.html](http://www.childrenshospital.org/newsroom/Site1339/mainpage$1339P1sublevel473.html)
- < **Time to Text:** If your kids are so busy texting that you sometimes worry their fingers might fall off, this resource is for you! “Time to Text” provides important information about using texting as a way to talk to your kids about important issues, as well as a crucial “glossary” of common texting abbreviations. Check out this guide from TimetoTalk.org: [www.timetotalk.org/Downloads/TTT\\_time\\_to\\_text.pdf?tr=y&auid=4258191](http://www.timetotalk.org/Downloads/TTT_time_to_text.pdf?tr=y&auid=4258191)
- < **ADHD Treatment Linked to Substance Abuse Prevention:** New research suggests that effective treatment of ADHD (attention hyperactivity disorder) decreases the risk of teen girls becoming addicted to drugs or alcohol. A five-year Harvard Medical School study of 262 female participants ages 6-18 — half of whom had ADHD, and half of whom did not — determined that the use of stimulants (Ritalin, Adderall) to treat ADHD actually put the girls with ADHD at **lower** risk of using tobacco or drugs than the girls who did not have ADHD.

# Upcoming Events

- < Wednesday, December 10, 2008 and the second Wednesday of each month: **Living with Teens.** 6-7:30 pm. For parents of teens and preteens. This month's topic: Dreams of sugar plums and polite, helpful behavior around the holidays. 6-7:30pm at the Portsmouth Community Campus. Childcare available. To register or for more information: (603) 422-8208 (press 2) or [info@familiesfirstseacoast.org](mailto:info@familiesfirstseacoast.org). Sponsored by Families First Health and Support Center.
- < Wednesday, December 10, 2008: **Stop the Holiday Madness:** Create the holidays your family really wants -- less stressful, less expensive, more meaningful and more fun! Childcare available. 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Raymond Middle School. To register or for more information: (603) 422-8208 (press 2) or [info@familiesfirstseacoast.org](mailto:info@familiesfirstseacoast.org). Sponsored by Families First Health and Support Center.
- < Thursday, December 11, 2008: **Stop the Holiday Madness!** Same program as above, just a different day and location! 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Seabrook Community Center. Childcare available. To register or for more information: (603) 422-8208 (press 2) or [info@familiesfirstseacoast.org](mailto:info@familiesfirstseacoast.org). Sponsored by Families First Health and Support Center.
- < Thursday, December 11, 2008: **Helping Kids Handle Change.** Whether it is a big transition, like moving or a change in who is part of the family, or small transitions like changes in routines around the holidays, this program will provide parents with ideas to make it go more smoothly. 9:30-11am at the Portsmouth Community Campus. Childcare available. To register or for more information: (603) 422-8208 (press 2) or [info@familiesfirstseacoast.org](mailto:info@familiesfirstseacoast.org). Sponsored by Families First Health and Support Center.
- < Tuesday, December 16, 2008: Family Holiday Fun. Tips for parents on keeping the "happy" in holidays, plus holiday activities for parents and children to do together. 6-7:30pm at the Portsmouth Community Campus. To register or for more information: (603) 422-8208 (press 2) or [info@familiesfirstseacoast.org](mailto:info@familiesfirstseacoast.org). Sponsored by Families First Health and Support Center.
- < Tuesday, January 13, 2009: **How to Talk So Kids Will Listen Part 1.** A new joint venture between Families First Health and Support Center and New Outlook Teen Center! The program will run from 6:30-8pm at New Outlook Teen Center in Exeter. Look for more information coming soon!
- < Ongoing: **Making Change: A Substance Abuse Support Group for Young People.** Free and confidential. Every Thursday evening from 6-7pm at OdysseyNH Academy in Hampton. For more information: Barry T. at (603) 758-1550.
- < Ongoing: **Families Advocating for Substance Treatment, Education and Recovery (FASTER) Support Groups.** Are you concerned about your teen or young adult? Do you suspect your teen is using drugs and alcohol? You are not alone! Come to a parent support group and meet other parents experiencing the same issues! Drop-in meetings are free and confidential. Local meetings are held at the Portsmouth Community Campus Library on the first Thursday of every month from 6-7:30pm. For more information, call Abby Aldous at the Community Diversion Program at (603) 430-8570 x11. Childcare is available for \$5/family with 24 hours advance notice. To sign up for childcare please contact Families First at 422-8208.
- < Ongoing: **Inhalant Abuse On-Line Training for Adults.** A free and easy fifteen minute training for adults on the dangers, signs and symptoms of inhalant abuse, developed by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the New England Inhalant Abuse Prevention Coalition, and published by the Northeast Center for Healthy Communities. To take the training, go to [www.inhalantabusetraining.org](http://www.inhalantabusetraining.org).

## Some Great Resources from the Office of National Drug Control Policy

### DAILY MANTRAS FOR KEEPING YOUR TEEN DRUG-FREE

**I Will Talk to My Teen About Drugs:** Only a third of parents talk to their teens about the risks of using drugs and alcohol, despite research showing that kids are less likely to use if parents have these conversations.

**I Will Set Clear “No-Drug” Rules:** Telling your teen that drugs and alcohol are not allowed—and outlining the consequences for breaking the rules—are important steps to keeping your child drug-free.

**I Will Be More Involved:** Teens whose parents are involved in their lives are less likely to use illicit drugs or alcohol, or to be involved in other risky behaviors. Talk to other parents about their rules and level of involvement, too.

**I Will Ask the Right Questions:** Know what your children are doing when they are away from you, where they go and who their friends are. Know what they do on and offline. And monitor digital activities, too, such as Internet usage, text messaging and social networking sites.

**I Will Stay on Top of Emerging Drug Threats:** Keep up with what new drug trends teens might be into, such as using prescription drugs to get high. Track quantities of medications in your own home; dispose of old pills safely and properly, and ask others, such as family members, to do the same.

For more advice on keeping your teen drug-free, and to connect with other parents like you, visit [www.TheAntiDrug.com](http://www.TheAntiDrug.com).

### ACTION ITEMS FOR PARENTS OF TEENS

These tasks take you a step closer to bridging the generation gap with your teen. To learn more about how parents like you are connecting better with their teens, try these Action Items and report back at [www.TheAntiDrug.com/ParentChronicles](http://www.TheAntiDrug.com/ParentChronicles):

- Pick up your teen's mp3 player and go to the “Top 25 Most Played” section. Listen for references to alcohol, drugs or other risky behaviors. Then talk with your teen about what you heard.
- Visit social networking sites like MySpace.com, and browse the profiles of teens your child's age to see what they say, what their interests are and what they are doing online.
- Can you name your teen's favorite TV show? Watch it with him or her and discuss story lines.
- Go to a video sharing Web site and type in “smoking weed.” Watch some of the videos. Did you know that your teen might be exposed to these images?

**PARENTS.**  
THE ANTI-DRUG.



Proud Partner of the  
National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign

*The complete document and many others are available for download from New Outlook's website:  
[www.newoutlookteencenter.org](http://www.newoutlookteencenter.org), under Parent Resources.*