

June 2023

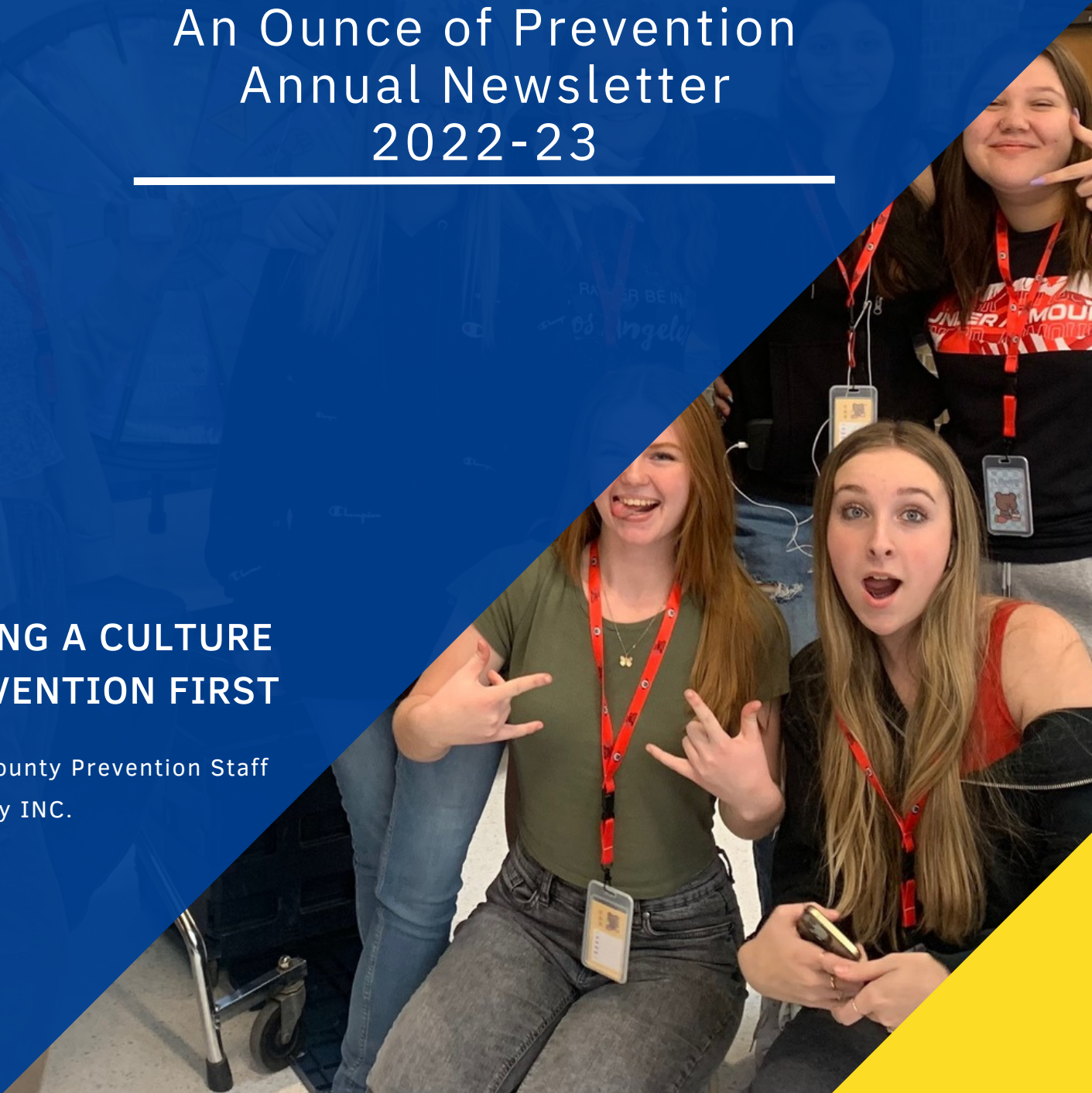
# CASA-TRINITY INC. TIOGA COUNTY PREVENTION

An Ounce of Prevention  
Annual Newsletter  
2022-23

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**CREATING A CULTURE  
OF PREVENTION FIRST**

By: Tioga County Prevention Staff  
CASA-Trinity INC.



## OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

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As the school year draws to a close, we would like to take a moment to reflect on the milestones and achievements we have accomplished together. This year has been a full of new experiences and connections. As we look back on this past year, we cannot help but feel a sense of pride and accomplishment, and we are excited to share with you some of the highlights of our year.

My favorite memory is hosting our Youth Summit at Waverly Middle School and seeing 40 students from all over Tioga County working together and talking about common concerns they share and brainstorming what they can do to address them.

In this newsletter, you will see a little about our team's hard work, the growth of our services, and the relationships we have built with our school partners. Our goal is to showcase the value we bring to the community and the impact we have made.

We hope that this newsletter will inspire you to be a part of our work and continue to support us in the years to come. Thank you to all of our school partners and supporters who have made this year a success. We could not have achieved what we did without your trust and collaboration.

Thank you for being a part of our story, and we look forward to continuing to help make Tioga County schools and students the best they can be.

Sincerely,  
Christina Olevano  
Prevention Services Supervisor  
CASA-Trinity Inc.



## SCHOOL CONTRACTED PREVENTION SERVICES

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**By Christina Olevano**

As we wrap up this year, we are thrilled to have completed our first year with school-based prevention specialists contracted in Spencer Van- Etten and Waverly School Districts. The schools were able to partner with CASA-Trinity and GST BOCES to have a full-time prevention staff as a new school support person. We are excited to be able to continue to provide this service throughout the summer and next year!

The new contracts are a testament to the hard work and dedication of our team. We are proud of the expertise, evidence-based programming, and creativity we bring to the table. We are confident that this is just the start of exciting new opportunities and growth. We are grateful for our prevention staff and school partners.

**We know that together we can achieve great things.**

# ABBY'S RECAP SCHOOL BASED PREVENTION SPECIALIST, SPENCER VAN-ETTEN

## By Abby Watson

When I accepted the role of Prevention Specialist in the Spencer-Van Etten School district in September 2022, I had no idea what an amazing journey this school year would be. One of my first projects was getting the Middle School to celebrate Red Ribbon Week. I planned a schoolwide Spirit Week and was blown away by the encouragement and participation I received from both students and staff. I instantly felt welcomed and supported and knew this district was the perfect fit for me.

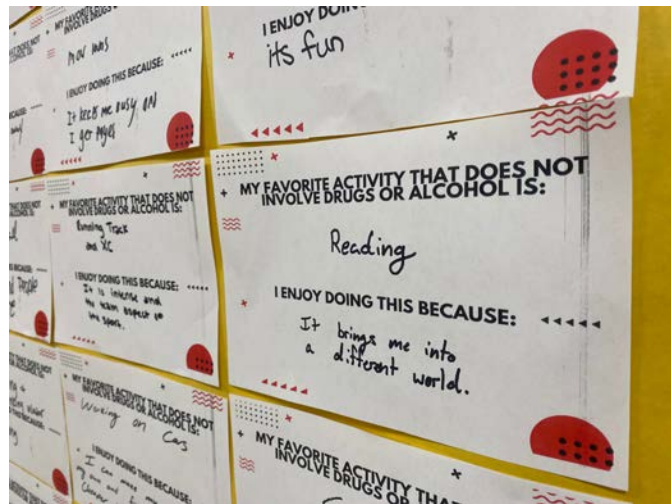
Next, it was time for me to begin implementing curriculum into the schools. I was able to teach Social Perspectives curriculum to all of the 5th graders as well as the Too Good for Drugs curriculum to all of the 7th graders. It was really powerful to see students make personal connections to the material and to each other in the classroom.

Another way that I was able to connect with students was by facilitating 2 SSET (Supporting Students Exposed to Trauma) groups with the support of the counseling staff at the Middle School. Holding these groups has been one of the highlights of my time in this district. Building trusting relationships with the students and working closely with the counselors has taught me so much. As a team, we have witnessed the students in these groups make such progress inside and outside of the group setting.

In addition to holding groups, I have been able to work with individual students who are struggling or at risk for struggling with substance misuse. My goal was to offer kids support in a safe and non-judgmental way, and I really believe I achieved that.

I feel so lucky to be surrounded by so many wonderful staff and students every day I come to work. I hope I can carry everything I learned this year into the next school year and continue to learn and grow as a prevention educator.

Have a safe and relaxing summer. See you in the Fall!!



# About Our Contracted Programs and Services

CASA-Trinity uses a variety of strategies, programs, and interventions in school, family, and community settings to increase protective factors and decrease risk factors for youth. Using evidence based social emotional learning and prevention curriculum, environmental strategies, Strategic Prevention Framework and other approaches to address student, school, family, and community needs. The goal is to provide an analysis of needs, develop a tailored implementation plan, coordinate available services, mobilize and/or build capacity to address needs. and evaluate outcomes to measure the impact of implemented programs, policies, and procedures. The below chart of potential services is an overview of options from our general implementation and program offerings. With a contract, each school district has the opportunity to tailor the role of the Prevention Support Specialist as needed as long as it meets the objectives and is within the scope of the contract.

<b>Assessment</b>	
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Target Audience</b>
Needs Assessment Surveys	Youth: Grades 6-12, at least every 2 years
Youth Focus groups Discussion of community and school connectedness	Youth: yearly in Spring, grades 7-12
Parent/Adult Surveys	Parents/Adult: done yearly
School Faculty Surveys	School staff: done yearly
<b>Capacity Building</b>	
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Target Audience</b>
Involvement with community coalition to address risk and protective factors for substance misuse, bullying, violence and other negative outcomes in the school/community	Adults, youth, school, community members
Collaborate with teachers, school support staff, students, and families to help align resources and opportunities in the areas of need, enhancing protective factors and decreasing risk factors	Staff, Adults, School Administration
Assist in connecting students and families to other county resources and positive pro social activities/events	Community Adults, Parents, Caregivers
<b>Planning</b>	
Review data and create a strategic action plan with activities that address specific risk and protective factors unique to the needs of the school/community	All
Create an implementation plan with timelines for each strategy/program/initiative	All
<b>Implementation</b>	
<b>Strategy : Provide Information, Build Skills, support positive social norms for Youth</b>	
Too Good for Drugs available for grades 3-12	Youth
Social Perspectives available for grade k-12	Youth
Second Step K-3	Youth
Life Skills Training	Youth
Teen Intervene Brief Early Intervention- ages 13-18	Youth
Opioid prevention education High School	Youth
Substance Specific Presentations: Alcohol, Marijuana, Vaping, Rx Drugs	Youth
Advise for environmental strategies and social norm activities, collaborating with youth clubs for middle and high school students	Youth
Monthly themes around prevention, health and wellness curated and focused on through environmental strategies	Youth
Mindfulness Classroom Presentations – All grades	Youth
Athletic Team Drug and Alcohol Education Program	Youth
Lunch and Learn Activities- Interactive games, tasks, challenges with an educational message	Youth
Include students in planning and hosting annual Youth Leadership Summit	Youth
Provide community outreach to students during July and August through Teen Space programming, Youth coalition, and various other community offerings (summer camps, athletics, Global Leadership Now event, etc.)	Youth Community

JOSH CONGDON

**SCHOOL BASED PREVENTION  
SPECIALIST  
WAVERLY SCHOOL DISTRICT**



by Josh Congdon

Hello all!

In the past school year, I served as a Prevention Specialist at CASA-Trinity for the second year and as a full-time Prevention Specialist at Waverly School District for the first time. I spent the year supporting staff and students on a more personal level, allowing me to build relationships with individuals and within the school community. Throughout the year, I taught Too Good for Drugs curriculum to 8th Grade students, and Too Good Social Perspectives curriculum to 4th, 5th, and 6th Grade students. Students at all grade levels were engaged and participated actively in the curriculum.

I also worked closely with individual students who had experimented with substances, helping them make healthier choices for the future through the Teen Intervene Program. Additionally, I was a part of the Attendance Team at Waverly Middle School, where I met with students who had chronic attendance issues and worked on goals to attend school more frequently.

I was also involved in a few other activities, including Lunch and Learn events, Boys Circle group meetings, and 5th Grade lunch bunch, where we focused on social skills development.

I want to thank all the students and staff at Waverly for accepting me. I had an amazing year and am eager to return next year!

"Being interviewed for the school newspaper made me feel welcomed into the school community - Once A Wolverine, Always a Wolverine!"

# NICOLE GARRITANO PREVENTION SPECIALIST COALITION COORDINATOR

## By Nicole Garritano

Greetings, everyone! I hope this message finds you well! I am extremely thankful for the opportunity to teach and collaborate with such incredible individuals in the Newark Valley and Candor Central School Districts this past year. It was a truly remarkable experience for me, and I genuinely hope that the feeling was mutual!

I implemented several programs throughout the school year, including Too Good For Drugs, Teen Intervene, and Support for Students Exposed to Trauma (SSET) Groups. I am delighted that I was selected alongside one other prevention specialist to introduce the Too Good for Drugs program to 10th Graders at Candor Central High School. It was especially thrilling since it was the first time Candor Central High School had implemented this program in any of their classrooms. I am grateful for the chance to have been entrusted with this responsibility and am thrilled at the success of our efforts.

In addition to teaching Too Good for Drugs to 10th Graders, I also taught 7th and 8th Graders at Newark Valley School District. It was a pleasure getting to know all the students and building a strong connection with them.

One of the most rewarding aspects of my role was witnessing the growth of the students. I took immense joy in observing their enthusiasm during activities and witnessing their pride in their knowledge of the curriculum. Some of them even had the chance to teach their peers certain activities or parts of the lessons. It was truly inspiring to see them apply the skills they had learned from the Too Good for Drugs Curriculum in practical ways.

I want to extend my heartfelt appreciation to all the teachers and administrators in every school building. I was warmly welcomed throughout the year, and I want to express my gratitude for your collaboration in working with these exceptional students and with me!

As the summer approaches, I wish each and every one of you a fantastic break, and I eagerly look forward to reconnecting with all of you in the 2023-2024 school year.



GRACE MERRILL

**PREVENTION SPECIALIST  
COALITION COORDINATOR**



**by Grace Merrill**

Hi everyone! Thanks so much for having me in your classrooms this year. This is my second school year working with the school districts and I continue to be inspired by the students I teach. I had the honor of serving the Newark Valley School District this school year, implementing the Too Good For Drugs program as well as Teen Intervene. It was a pleasure getting to know the students and staff at Newark Valley Middle School.

I taught Too Good for Drugs & Social Perspectives to 4th-7th grade. I found the students were eager to learn, engaged, and curious about the curriculum.

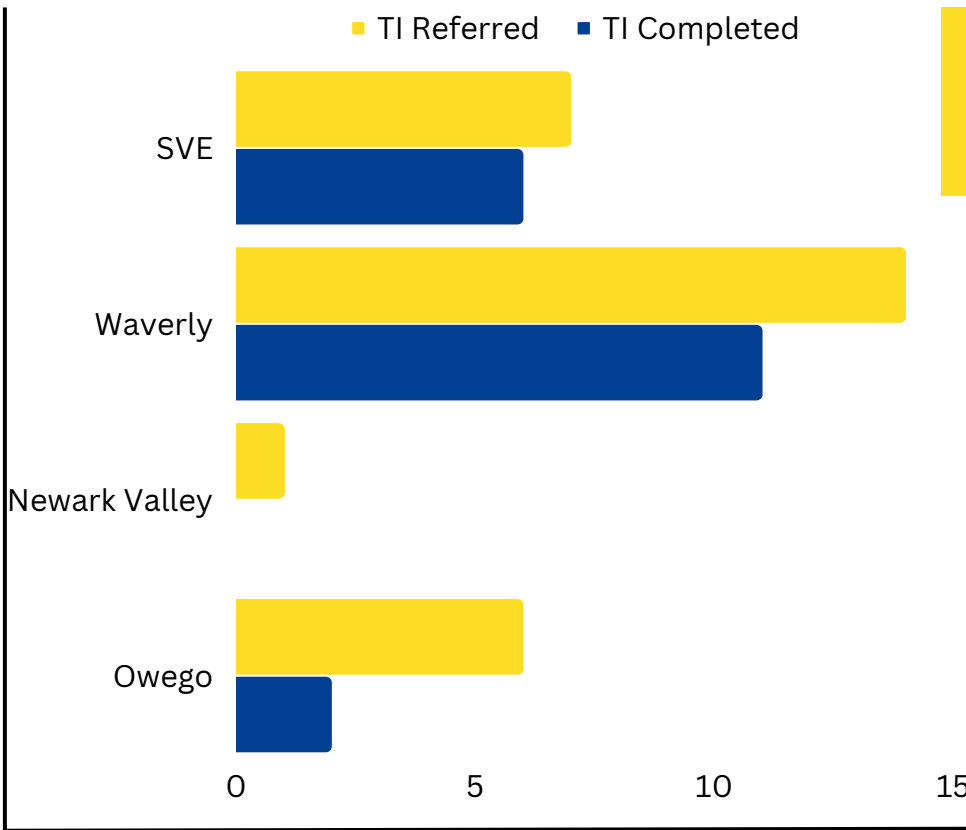
My favorite teaching moment this year was playing learning games with the students. I met individually with high school students, helping guide them to make better decisions about using substances. I was able to conduct lunch & learns in Newark Valley School District & Owego-Apalachin School District on a variety of themes, from alcohol awareness to mental health.

It was a joy working with all the teachers and administrators in both buildings. I felt fully supported throughout the year and wanted to thank all of you for your collaboration in working with these great students!

This is my last school year working with CASA and I will miss teaching the students and watching them grow!



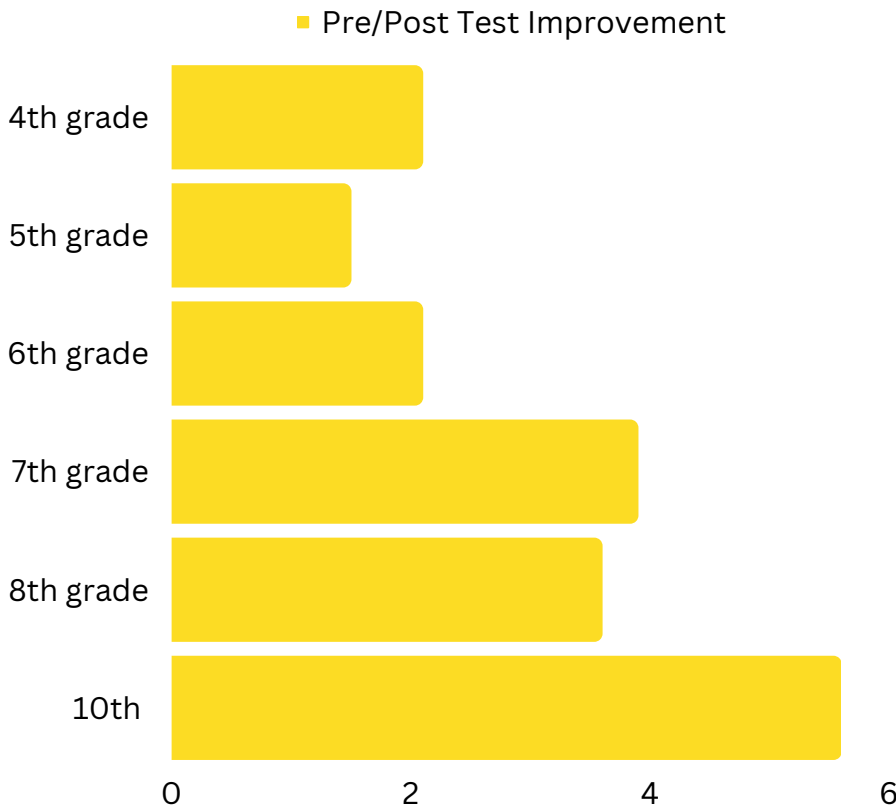
# By The Numbers



## Teen Intervene Referrals and Completions

Shown here are the schools who referred students for Teen Intervene Early Intervention services during the 2022-2023 school year. Referrals were received as a result of student violation of substance free school zone policy. This year vaping was the number 1 reported substance use violation in all schools who referred students to us.

The schools where our prevention specialist was contracted full time completed referrals at an average of 82%. Other schools' completion rate averaged 28% and 2 districts did not refer any students this year.



## Evidence Based Prevention Curriculum Delivered

This school year we were proud to expand our evidence-based classroom education. Our Social Perspectives SEL and Too Good for Drugs curriculum were delivered by Tioga's amazing prevention team.

While we have worked with Newark Valley Grades 4-8 and Waverly 4-6 and 8th for years, we were happy to add Candor 10th grade and Spencer 5th and 7th grade to our list of classrooms we served this year. The graph indicates the average improvement score in each grade based on pre and post test scores.



# Other Prevention Strategies

In addition to our early intervention and classroom education, CASA-Trinity Prevention and Tioga Advocacy, Support, and Prevention (ASAP) Coalition could be found in many different school buildings using prevention strategies to support Tioga County schools and students.

We provided extra support with our Support for Students Exposed to Trauma (SSET) and Girls Circle/Boys Foundation groups. Our coalition team worked with school SADD clubs and health teachers to implement educational lunch and learn events, we provided staff development training in PAX Tools at SVE, as well as a bonus restorative yoga class for teachers taught by our very own Christina Olevano!

Our coalition staff worked closely with Tobacco free Broome-Tioga to develop a prevention presentation geared toward school administration to discuss the issue of vaping in schools. This was presented at Broome-Tioga BOCES meetings with superintendents and assistant superintendents present. The hopes are that Tioga schools will be open to more support, partnerships, and planning with prevention programs next year.

One of our biggest student events this year was bringing back our Youth Lead Out Loud event. We thank Waverly for hosting the event in November and thank you to all the other school that participated by busing over students for a day of learning, discussing, laughing, and planning. We are looking forward to continuing to hold this event each fall. Who will be our next host school? If your school is interested let me know!



# LOOKING AHEAD 2023-24



We are happy to have renewed our school contract positions with Waverly and Spencer Van-Etten for next year! Is a full-time prevention specialist right for your district? YES! Our staff can support your school community in so many positive ways. Reach out to find out how we tailor to the unique needs of each district AND make it affordable through a Community School Coser agreement.



## TIME FOR CLYDE SURVEYS AGAIN!

This fall 2023 we will be collecting student survey data again as part of the Drug Free Communities grant. Tioga schools are asked to survey students in 8,10,12 grade to assess current beliefs and behaviors. The best part is Tioga ASAP Coalition covers the cost, assists with administration, and provides summary report to each district.

Next year we will have new programs and a new referral process for schools referring youth to teen Intervene, In Depth, Not On Tobacco, Support for Students Exposed to Trauma (SSET). More information will be sent in September.

## PREVENTION REFERRALS



## YOUTH LEADERSHIP AND COALITION OPPORTUNITIES

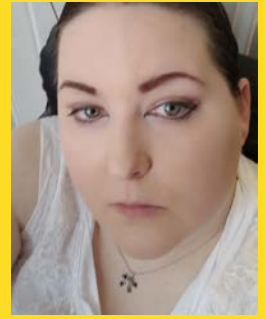
This year in addition to hosting our youth summit in November, we have worked hard to re-engage students in our youth coalition. Next year we hope to expand the opportunity for youth to develop leadership skills and act as agents of change in our communities by helping them lead school and community based prevention efforts and peer education.

## TRAINING, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUPPORT

Casa-Trinity Prevention Services can provide staff trainings on many topics from current substance use trends to trauma informed practices. We can even assist with workplace wellness needs throughout Team Awareness trainings. We can offer support on policy development around substance misuse, restorative justice practices, Community Resilience Model, and DEI efforts.

Contact Prevention Services Supervisor, Christina Olevano, to schedule trainings or to discuss support services at: [colevano@casa-trinity.org](mailto:colevano@casa-trinity.org) or 607-223-4066





## Trending Topics

By: Michelle Williams

volunteer contributor and coalition member

As you know, one of the most important tasks in Prevention is to look at local data and try to identify needs within our communities. Overall, substance misuse is declining. We are, however, seeing more students vaping. Please remember that vaping is only legal for individuals 18 and over.

Students are looking forward to parties and time to hang out with their friends. We ask that you help keep our kids safe. Make sure that alcohol, cannabis and prescription medications are safely secured and inaccessible to minors. CASA-Trinity offers cabinet and prescription lockboxes. Please feel free to contact us to make arrangements for these items, free of charge.

We are also seeing an increase in mental health concerns and diagnoses among adolescents. Have regular check-ins with your friends, family and loved ones to make sure that they are not struggling with their mental health or suicidal thoughts. Consider having family time without screentime. Unplug from the electronics and reconnect with your loved ones. If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis, suicidal thoughts or thoughts of self-harm please reach out.

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is available 24/7 and 365 days a year. You can call, chat or text with someone who can help.

## Check out a little more information about some of our most effective and popular strategies.

**Teen Intervene-** is a brief early intervention program for 12- to 19-year-old individuals who display the early stages of alcohol or other substance use involvement. Teen Intervene has been effective in reducing frequency of alcohol and cannabis use and increasing the percentage of young people abstaining from both.

**Too Good for Drugs-** promotes social skill development and resiliency to promote learning, readiness and social emotional competency in teens. Students learn and practice setting reachable goals, making responsible decisions, and refuse peer pressure and influence through independent, paired, and cooperative learning activities and games that reinforce:

- Positive Social Norms, Peer Bonding, Social Skill Development, Social Awareness, and Self-Awareness

**Social Perspectives-** Character Education is the core of this program. Providing students with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes they need for positive social development and supportive relationships. Providing opportunities for pro-social involvement by establishing positive norms including healthy beliefs and clear standards, promoting bonding to pro-social peers, increasing personal/social skills

**Youth and Community Coalition Building-** Our Youth Coalition is an extension of the Tioga County ASAP Coalition. The goal of this group is to provide peer to peer education to the youth throughout their school/community/county on the adverse effects of substance misuse, wellness, and provide an opportunity for prosocial involvement among teens.

**INDEPTH-** Intervention for Nicotine Dependence: Education, Prevention, Tobacco and Health (INDEPTH) is a new, convenient alternative to suspension or citation that helps schools and communities address the teen vaping problem in a more supportive way. Instead of solely focusing on punitive measures,

**Not On Tobacco-** Teen Cessation Program- N-O-T is taught by a trained and certified adult in ten, 50-minute sessions. Participants will talk about the importance of physical activity, nutrition, enhancing their sense of self-control, and improving life skills such as stress management, decision making, coping and interpersonal skills.

# Have A Safe Summer!

## Contact Us:

Tioga Prevention Office 607-223-4066

Christina Olevano, Prevention Services Supervisor  
colevano@casa-trinity.org

Tioga ASAP Coalition- tiogacountyasap@gmail.com

Nicole Garritano- Coalition Coordinator  
ngarritano@casa-trinity.org

## Learn More:

Tioga ASAP Coalition- [www.tiogaasap.org](http://www.tiogaasap.org)

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CASA-Trinity, Inc.

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