



# BROOKFIELD CARES

Promoting social and emotional wellness in our community.

brookfield-cares.org

## Brookfield Cares Annual Report: 2015

### Background

The purpose of this report is to inform the public about Brookfield Cares and its efforts to address at-risk behaviors. Our focus has been and remains the health and welfare of the community as a whole.

In September 2014 Brookfield Cares was awarded a 501 c 3 status by the IRS. This will enable us to solicit funds to allow us to expand the work that is being done in the community.

### Mission and Purpose:

Our mission is clear:

*Brookfield Cares is a community based organization dedicated to promoting awareness and education by focusing on the impact of substance abuse, depression, suicide, and other public health concerns.*

We continue to work to reach the entire community on issues that have an impact on our daily lives including addiction, drug and alcohol use, suicide prevention, and mental health issues. In this regard we make an attempt to work with all elements of the community through their representation on the coalition. We have structured a variety of programs to capture individual group attention. The more the community can be informed, the more healthy our community will be.

## Events/Programs

Brookfield Cares had a successful, event-filled year with notable successes.

- At Freshman Orientation we provided crucial information to the parents and incoming freshman at Brookfield High School.
- Brookfield Cares funded speakers during Red Ribbon week at Whisconier Middle School. The speakers focused on risky behaviors and how to overcome them. This program reached students in grades 5 through 8.
- In October of 2014 Brookfield Cares sponsored Students Dare to Speak — a presentation by three former Brookfield High School students where they discussed their fight to overcome addiction. Each was a successful student and each one had their own unique story as to how they became addicts. All three are clean and sober at this time. Their presentations made a great impact on the 500 attendees. Subsequently several people inquired about rehab services. The topic was timely given the sudden death from an over dose by a very popular Brookfield High School graduate that was known to all three speakers.
- In October Brookfield Cares donated to and participated in an annual suicide walk.
- Anita Barney, Brookfield Librarian, announced a special section had been created in the Library for Brookfield Cares to house literature on topics that support our mission.
- As a follow up to the seminar in October, Brookfield Cares sponsored a similar seminar showing a film, *Anonymous People* and a panel consisting of parents whose children had overdosed from heroin. Approximately 125 people attended this in the cafeteria at Whisconier Middle School. This supported our continuing effort to de-stigmatize addiction and all issues associated with it. Strong feedback from both seminars caused Brookfield Cares to move forward with creating a Hope and Support group for parents.

- The Hope and Support Group was created as a sanctuary for those dealing with addicted loved ones — a safe venue for people to talk and get support. Meetings are held weekly on Mondays at the Senior Center. The meetings are facilitated by experienced clinicians. The Brookfield Education Foundation provided a grant of \$5,200 to help fund the cost of the clinicians. Attendance has been strong.
- Brookfield Cares student representatives assisted the National Honor Society in sponsoring the 5K We Care race, raising \$1,100.
- Brookfield Cares co-sponsored a seminar for nurses and administrators that educated them on how to identify students that were impaired. The seminar was initiated through the Brookfield High School SRO (School Resource Officer) and the DRE (Drug Recognition Expert) from the Bethel Police Department.
- Brookfield Cares donated \$500 to the after graduation party at the High School that provides a safe, drug- and alcohol-free overnight celebration for graduates.

### **Search Institute Surveys**

Since 2009, we have administered 3 surveys to students in grades 8–12. The surveys are designed to provide quantifiable input that help us:

- Focus on strengths, supports, and skills that young people need to succeed and overcome challenges.
- Measure intangible qualities that really matter for youth development and education.
- Provide easy-to-understand, actionable information results that can help engage others in your work and increase your impact in the lives of young people.
- Bring young people’s own perspectives and experiences to your planning.

Brookfield Cares in conjunction with the Schools will be administering its 4<sup>th</sup> Search Institute survey on Risky Behaviors. This event will take place in November and the results will be made known to the public.

One of the most striking findings is the early age that drug and alcohol use begins in some of our youth. Survey results show that our children are beginning experiment with these substances as early as age 11. As students get older, the percentage exhibiting at-risk behaviors increases:

- 53% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders report using alcohol within the last 30 days.
- 32% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders report getting drunk within the last 2 weeks.
- 31% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders report using marijuana in the last 30 days (an increase from 23% in 2011).
- 21% of all students responding said they rode in a car where the driver had been drinking in the last 12 months.
- 5% have sniffed or inhaled substances to get high in the last 30 days.

The surveys also reveal information about mental health related behaviors:

- 14% have engaged in eating disordered behavior
- 21% report being frequently depressed and/or has attempted suicide

There is a wealth of data that the surveys provide, including what our youth feels positive about as well as what they think is negative. Brookfield Cares continues to work determine what we can do as a community to increase the positive assets of our children, while minimizing the negative.