



CHARLOTTE COUNTY
YOUTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE
COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

2014

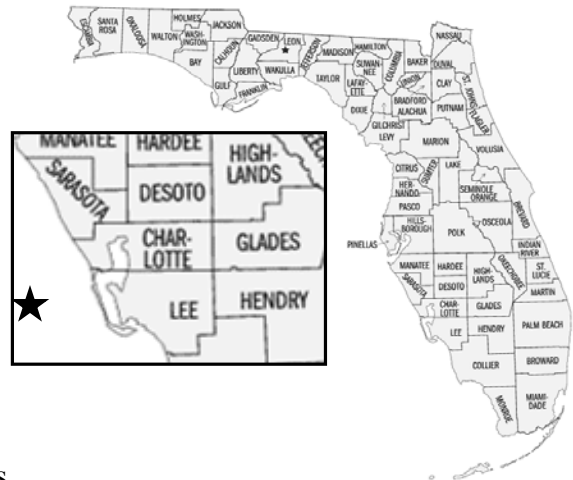
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Overview of Our Community

Located on the gulf coast of Florida, Charlotte County Florida is widely known as a retirement community, second oldest median age of 55.9 in both the state and nation.¹ The 2013 US Census estimate for Charlotte County is 164,736 up from the 159,978 estimate base in 2010 (Decennial Census). The 2010 Census estimate supports its note as a retirement community by the fact that only 12.3% (19,677 in 2010) of the county's residents are of school-age.² Though not a rural county, Charlotte County teens experience a rural-county upbringing, attending one of four middle schools and four high schools. Facilities available for recreation to students also mirror those of a rural setting, with large number public facilities and resources dedicated to the county's large retirement population. This large retirement population drives the county's demographics with a 90.7% Caucasian and no other ethnic group making up the majority of the remaining population.¹ The median household income is \$44,378 (down from 2013 estimate); \$8,668 below the National average.² The rate of all Charlotte County families who live below poverty level has also increased from previous estimates. The 2013 estimate is 12.6%²; this is reflective in 61.38% free and reduced lunch program rates within the student population.¹



Providing over 21% of local jobs, the largest employers in Charlotte County are education and health services. Next are retail trade, leisure and hospitality, followed by local government, demonstrating we are a service community. Nearly 100% of the top 50 non-governmental employers in the county use some form of shift-work, including nights, midnights and weekends, resulting in a large population of latchkey families.³

Charlotte County's primary claim to fame is the ground-zero location for Hurricane Charley in 2004. As a category five hurricane, Hurricane Charley devastated over 40% residential homes and over 50% of school facilities. Hurricane recovery, coupled with the 2006 housing market bust resulted in some of the highest unemployment and foreclosure rates in the state of Florida and an increase in family transiency. While diminishing as time passes, there is still residual impacts felt throughout the county. The 2013 annual unemployment rate of 7.2% was equal to the state's rate. The September 2014 rate was 6.2%, which is lower than the rate for the same month the previous year. However, it is up from the lowest rate to date for 2014 of 5.5% in April 2014. Further, the county rate is higher than the state (6.1%) and national (5.7%) rates. Sales of existing homes rose 23% in September 2014 from the same period in 2013; however, the median price was lower than 2013.

Despite these challenges, Charlotte County is a community of tremendous spirit. Longstanding leaders within the School District, County Government and Police force have led the county through some of its toughest times. The unincorporated Port Charlotte area was listed by CNN Money as one of the 25 best place to retire in 2009.⁵ Additionally, the City of Punta Gorda, sitting in the southern portion of the County, was ranked as one of the best healthiest places in the United States to retire by *Money* magazine in 2009. As well as designation by *Where to Retire* magazine for a top 2014 ranking.^{6,7} The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation recently ranked Charlotte County as the 28th healthiest county in Florida⁴. And, in December 2014, Punta Gorda was named one of the top ten best places to open a small business in the U.S. Adding to these distinctions, the Tampa Bay Rays' minor league team, the Stone Crabs, attracts new tourism and industry to the Charlotte County area. Additionally, tourism receives a boost from the presence of Allegiant Air flying out of Punta Gorda, with a recent 73% spike in passengers.³

References:

¹ 2013 Charlotte County Needs Assessment

² US Census Bureau

³ Charlotte County Economic Development Office

⁴ <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/florida/2013/rankings/outcomes/overall/by-rank>

⁵ http://money.cnn.com/galleries/2009/moneymag/0909/gallery.bpretire_top25.moneymag/

⁶ <https://www.google.com/#q=best+place+to+retire+punta+gorda>

⁷ <http://www.charlottecountyfl.gov/news/Pages/Punta-Gorda-Featured-in-Where-to-Retire-Magazine.aspx>

Youth Substance Abuse in Charlotte County

Collecting the Data

Drug Free Charlotte County (DFCC) is fortunate to have strong partners in the Charlotte County Public School System, Charlotte County Sheriff Office, Punta Gorda Police Department, Charlotte Behavioral Health Care, Charlotte County Medical Examiner, the Children's Services Council, and the Florida Departments of Health and Children and Families. These partners provide both data and opportunities for coalition members and staff to identify trends and assess our community's youth substance abuse issues. Coalition volunteers, including our youth leaders, conduct environmental retail scans and other collection activities that provide further data used in our assessment.

Teen Surveys in Partnership with the Schools:

- *Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey (FYSAS)*. This survey provides excellent trend data, having been collected every two years (at the county level) since 2000. DFCC and Charlotte County Public Schools work with the Florida Department of Health and Department of Children and Family to conduct this survey.
- *Teen Norms Survey (TeeNS)*. Designed and analyzed by Northern Illinois University, the TeeNS provides near real-time trend data as well as data on perception and teen norms. Charlotte County teens take this each year with results returned within six weeks, providing the advantage of knowing the data within the same year.
- *Florida Youth Tobacco Survey*. This survey is conducted every two years in combination with the Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey, with the same partners.
- *Developmental Assets Survey*. In 2013, the Children's Service Council received a grant from the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice to conduct the Search Institute's Developmental Assets Survey. There are plans to repeat the survey on a smaller scale in the next two years.

Historically, data results are similar between the FYSAS and TeeNS surveys, although, FYSAS data has indicated slightly higher rates of use for the same year in high school ages. The Developmental Assets Survey in 2013 provided similar data for youth substance use as the TeeNS of that same year. It must be acknowledged, however, there is a marked difference in the 2014 FYSAS data and the 2013 and 2014 Teen Norms Surveys. 2014 FYSAS data is much lower than TeeNS data, as will be evident in the trend report data.

Law Enforcement Data

Both the Charlotte County Sheriff Office and Punta Gorda Police Department provide data on crimes and violations either caused by, or related to, drug or alcohol use. Data may also be collected from the state databases provided by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.

Other Community Data

- *Retail Data.* Youth and coalition volunteers conduct scans of local retailers who sell alcohol or tobacco. These scans look for signage and product placement that can promote (or hinder) underage alcohol and tobacco use. Data is collected on the number of licensed alcohol and/or tobacco retailers in the community.
- *Medical Examiner Data.* Our medical examiner's office provides critical data regarding deaths and overdoses resulting from alcohol or drugs.
- *Other School Data.* Suspension and graduation rates provide data on community impacts often related to alcohol or drug use.
- *Local Substance Abuse Treatment Data.* The coalition receive data from Central Florida Behavioral Health Network, our managing entity, regarding drugs of choice at admission.

Youth Substance Use Data/Trends:

Despite once leading the state in underage drinking rates, Charlotte County continues to gain ground in prevention. In 2002, Charlotte County's Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey (FYSAS) rates were the state's highest with 54% of high school students reporting past 30-day alcohol use. Both the TeeNS and FYSAS show a continual and dramatic drop in underage alcohol use since 2000. According to a ranking of 2014 FYSAS data for past 30-day alcohol use by both middle school and high school teens, Charlotte County ranks 48th out of 67 counties, now just below the quartile of the lowest rates in the state. This is evidence of the successful collaborations of the coalition partners dedicated to the mission of eliminating youth substance abuse from our community.

Four Core Measure Data

As a Drug Free Communities Coalition, DFCC gathers data on four core measures:

- Past 30-day use
- Perception of risk or harm
- Perception of parental disapproval of use
- Perception of peer disapproval of use

This data is collected for alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana, and prescription drugs.

Past 30-Day Use

The 2014 TeeNS data (Table 1) indicates **use of all substances surveyed decreased** amongst **middle school aged youth** in Charlotte County. However, data for **high school aged youth** in the county reveals **an increase in most substances**. For alcohol and cigarettes, reported past 30 day use was up one percentage point. It remains level for synthetic marijuana drugs, such as K2, Spice and Incense. Prescription drug use rose two percentage points in its second year of being part of this survey in Charlotte County. Of great concern is the four-percentage point increase in

marijuana use. With a (failed) Florida Constitutional Amendment ballot initiative, our community, as all of Florida, experienced a high level of media coverage and discussion in the community regarding marijuana for medical purposes. Further, there has been increased publicity on the legalization movement from across the country. It is little surprise teens rates are affected. This signifies the need for the coalition to double down efforts to educated teens and adults on the harms and risks of marijuana on the teen brain.

(Table 1) **2014 Teen Norms Survey – Past 30 Day Use**

<i>Past 30 Day Substance Use</i>	Smoked cigarettes?		Had at least one drink of alcohol?		Used marijuana?		Smoked K2, Spice, Serenity, or incense?		Used Prescription Drugs?	
	MS	HS	MS	HS	MS	HS	MS	HS	MS	HS
2007	9%	22%	14%	39%	9%	22%				
2008	11%	23%	17%	37%	11%	24%				
2009	10%	22%	15%	37%	9%	26%				
2010	9%	21%	14%	34%	9%	25%				
2011	9%	21%	15%	36%	10%	27%				
2012	8%	19%	14%	34%	8%	26%	7%	15%		
2013	6%	16%	10%	31%	7%	25%	4%	10%	6%	12%
2014	4%	17%	8%	32%	6%	29%	3%	10%	5%	14%

The Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey (FYSAS) breaks prescription drugs down by type. It also provides data on additional illicit substances. As the Table 2 shows, 2014 Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey data reports a large **decrease in use of most surveyed substances**. As discussed earlier, unlike this year, both surveys historically fall within several percentage points of each other. The Teen Norms Survey is conducted within the first month of each school year, while the Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey is conducted in late January. The number of teens surveyed differs between surveys, as well. FYSAS uses a randomization process, and in 2014, slightly more than 825 surveys were analyzed, as compared to over 5400 for the TeeNS (which is provided to all students in CCPS).

Additional 2014 FYSAS data indicate use of alcohol in lifetime dropped from 2012 rates in both middle (29.5% to 22.5%) and high (59.3% to 47.3%) school aged youth in our county. Lifetime rates for marijuana dropped from 12.7% to 9.8% for middle school and 43.2% to 32.8% for high school aged youth. Looking at these rates in conjunction with past 30-day rates, appears to support increased intervention and prevention activities to reduce likelihood that those who do experiment, continue to use.

(Table 2) 2014 FYSAS – Past 30 Day Use

Past 30 Day Use by Substance	Charlotte County						Florida - Statewide					
	2010		2012		2014		2010		2012		2014	
	MS	HS	MS	HS	MS	HS	MS	HS	MS	HS	MS	HS
Alcohol	14.6%	36.7%	13.3%	35.6%	10.4%	25.1%	16.8%	38.0%	12.3%	33.9%	10.1%	28.4%
Binge Drinking	8.1%	20.0%	5.0%	19.7%	4.5%	11.9%	6.9%	19.6%	4.7%	16.4%	3.9%	13.7%
Cigarettes	8.2%	17.8%	5.3%	17.9%	3.2%	10.9%	4.5%	12.1%	2.7%	9.6%	2.0%	7.1%
Marijuana	7.4%	23.0%	8.4%	22.0%	4.7%	17.3%	5.7%	18.6%	4.2%	18.5%	4.2%	18.6%
Synthetic Marijuana	---	---	---	9.6%	---	1.3%	---	---	--	4.3%	--	1.4%
Inhalants	3.5%	1.7%	4.2%	1.9%	2.5%	1.6%	4.8%	2.0%	3.8%	1.6%	2.8%	1.3%
Club Drugs	0.3%	1.2%	0.4%	1.9%	0.5%	1.5%	0.6%	1.7%	0.4%	1.5%	0.4%	1.0%
LSD, PCP, or Mushrooms	0.3%	2.3%	0.5%	2.8%	0.8%	1.1%	0.7%	1.4%	0.5%	1.3%	0.6%	1.4%
Methamphetamine	0.0%	0.5%	0.3%	1.4%	0.9%	0.3%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%	0.5%
Cocaine or Crack Cocaine	0.0%	1.2%	1.1%	1.8%	0.6%	0.5%	0.7%	0.9%	0.4%	0.9%	0.4%	0.7%
Heroin	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.7%	0.4%	0.0%	0.3%	0.4%	0.2%	0.4%	0.2%	0.3%
Depressants	1.6%	4.7%	1.3%	4.4%	0.5%	2.3%	1.1%	2.7%	0.8%	2.1%	0.9%	2.1%
Prescription Pain Relievers	1.3%	5.0%	1.7%	4.3%	2.0%	1.7%	2.2%	3.4%	1.7%	2.8%	1.6%	2.6%
Prescription Amphetamines	0.6%	0.8%	0.1%	1.0%	0.8%	1.7%	0.6%	1.4%	0.4%	1.5%	0.6%	1.7%
Steroids	0.3%	1.4%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%	0.5%	0.2%	0.3%
Over the Counter Drugs	1.6%	1.6%	1.2%	4.6%	1.8%	2.1%	2.2%	2.9%	1.7%	2.6%	1.7%	2.4%

Perception of risk or harm

In Charlotte County, even students who choose not to drink alcohol report a limited understanding of the harm associated with drinking alcohol regularly. The FYSAS reports only 37.6% of surveyed teens report a **perceived “risk of harm”** from drinking every day. This is an increase from the rate two years ago of 36.8%. Combined statewide data for middle and high school age teens indicates our community is below the state percentage of 42.5% reporting great risk of harm for alcohol use daily.

Charlotte teens report great risk of harm for smoking a pack or more of cigarette daily at 66.5% as compared to the state percentage of 69.1%. Likewise, Charlotte teens report a lower perception of risk of use of marijuana (36.5% for weekly use) as compared to state figures (37.7%). Charlotte’s 72.1% for perception of great risk of harm for prescription drugs is within one percentage point of the state percentage of 71.2%.

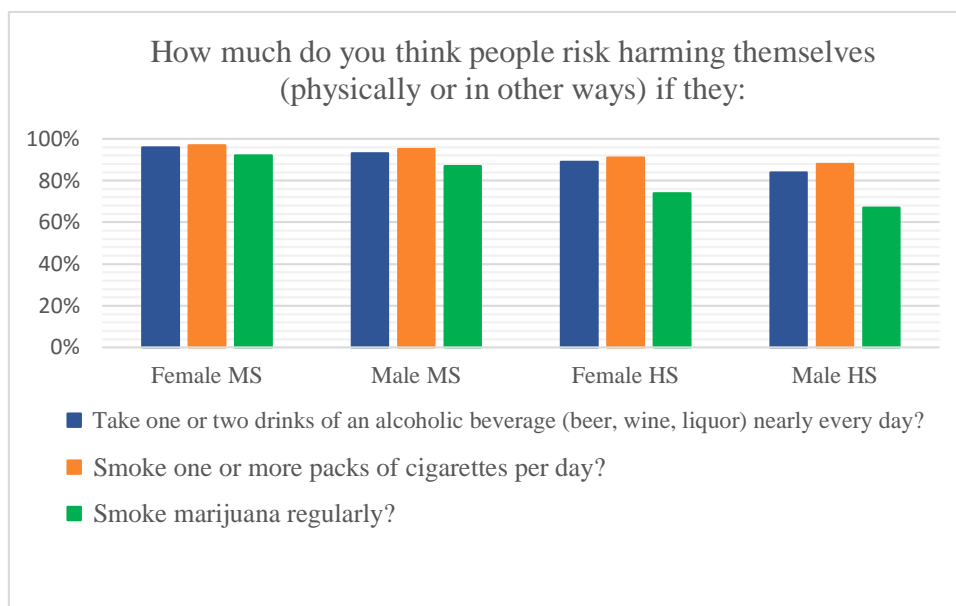
The following chart breaks this data down by middle and high school age, and provides statewide data for comparison, as well as data from previous survey.

(Table 3) **2012 and 2014 FYSAS – Perception of Risk or Harm**

<i>Perception of Great Risk or Harm</i>	2012 FYSAS				2014 FYSAS			
	Charlotte MS	State MS	Charlotte HS	State HS	Charlotte MS	State MS	Charlotte HS	State HS
One or more drinks everyday	42.3%	45.2%	33.1%	38.8%	43.6%	45.7%	33.5%	40.0%
Smoke a pack or more everyday	73.5%	67.6%	60.9%	68.7%	69.2%	68.0%	64.6%	70.0%
Smoke marijuana regularly	64.8%	65.6%	33.8%	39.6%	53.0%	53.8%	24.8%	25.4%
Try marijuana once or twice	36.5%	38.4%	15.4%	19.4%	35.4%	37.1%	15.8%	16.3%
Prescription drug use without a doctor's order			65.8%	68.6%	73.2%	71.7%	71.3%	70.8%

The 2014 TeeNS offers us a different look at the perception of risk of harm. Table 4 provides this data by gender for additional insights. The data shows us that this survey (September 2014) indicates a higher percentage of teens in Charlotte County perceiving harm from use of alcohol, cigarettes and marijuana than reported in the FYSAS. One difference in the surveys is the question posed. The FYSAS asks about “great risk or harm”, while the responses below reflect all responses indicating a **level of harm from some to great**. This is an important distinction to understand in the survey data from these two surveys. It is also important to note that both surveys indicate marijuana now presents as the substance of least perceived harm.

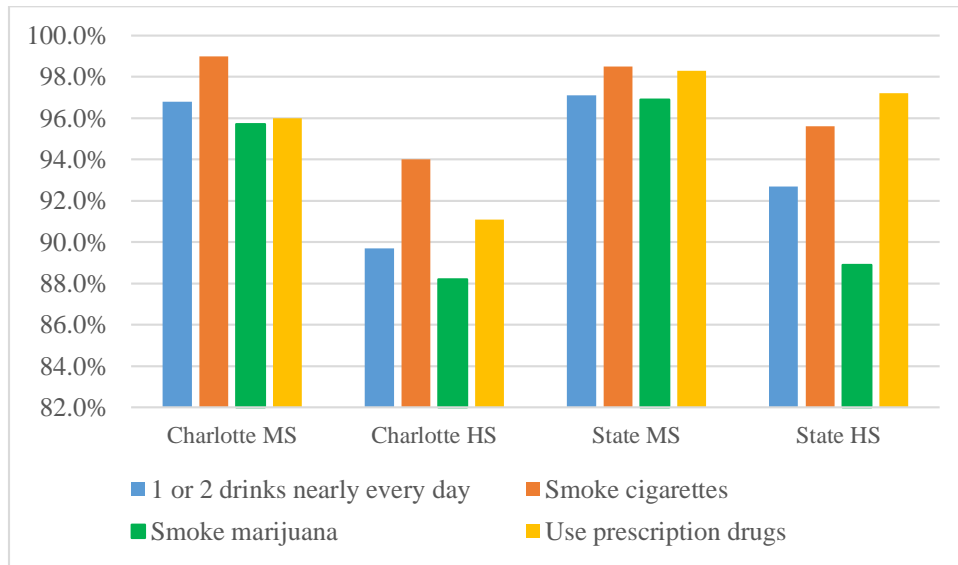
(Figure 1) **2014 TeeNS Data – Perception of Risk of Harm by Gender**



Perception of parental disapproval of use

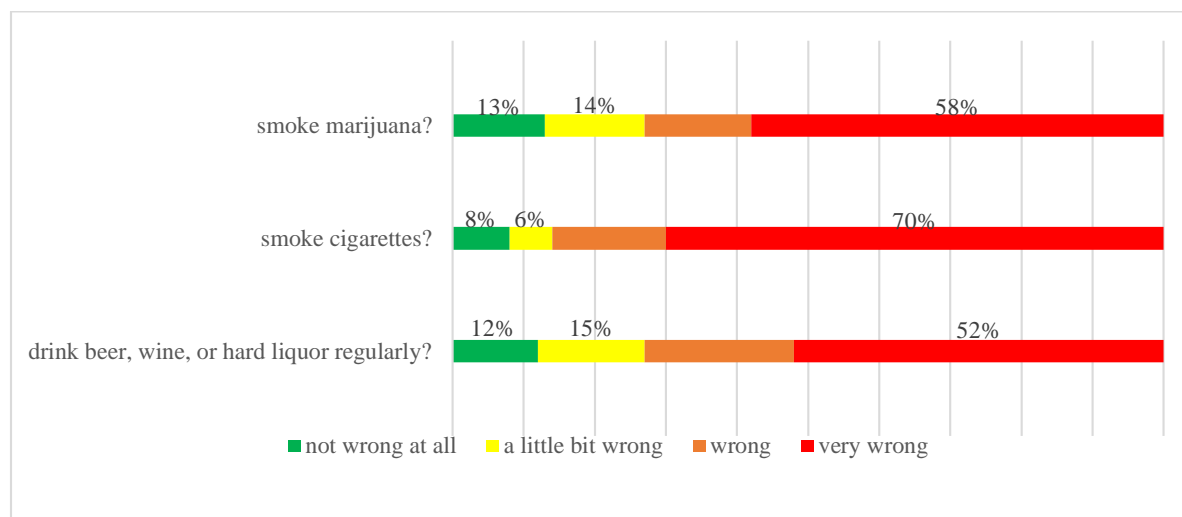
Parents play a key role in preventing youth substance abuse. Perception of parental approval is one measure to help gauge how well they are communicating their disapproval. Both the FYSAS and TeeNS provide the coalition with this data.

(Figure 2) **2014 FYSAS – Perception of Parental Disapproval**



The 2014 TeeNS provides additional depth in to the perception of parental disapproval by Charlotte County teens. Data is provided on the perceived level of disapproval by parents from “not wrong at all” to “very wrong”.

(Figure 3) **2014 TeeNS – Perception of Parental Disapproval of Use**

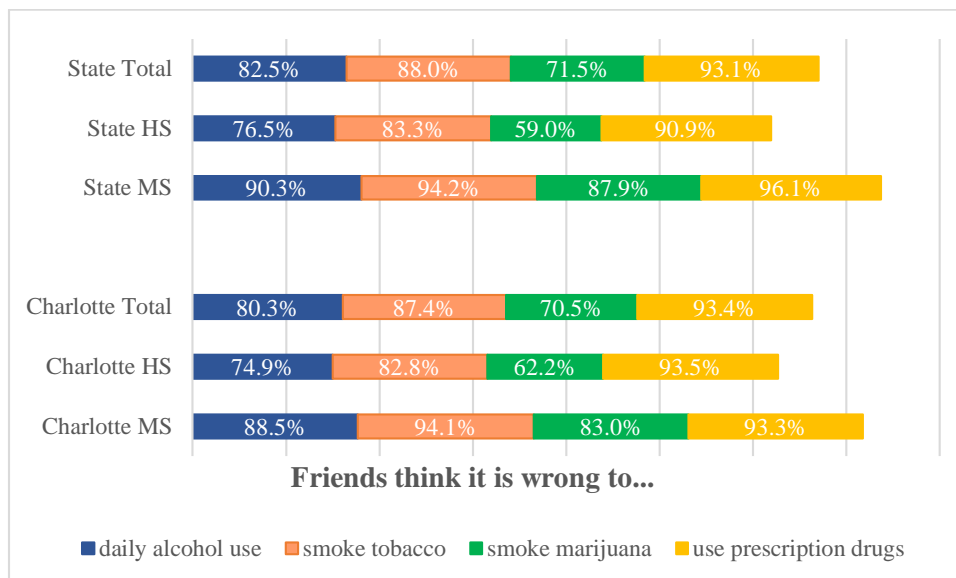


Only 52% of teens state they believe their parents would think it was “very wrong” for them to drink beer, wine, or hard liquor regularly (2014 HS TeeNS). Additionally, only 58% report the perception their parents think it would be “very wrong” for them to use marijuana. When asked about where they receive information about alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, high school teens rank their parents as #1 for believability, yet they access the internet more frequently (#1 source for information per 2014 HS TeeNS), which ranks lowest in believability amongst a list of thirteen sources. Data from the 2013 Developmental Assets survey indicates the area of positive family communication as a very low asset area. These factors indicate a need for building skills in communication and education for parents to better equip them as influencers of their child’s behavior and choice regarding alcohol and drugs.

Perception of peer disapproval of use

It is a commonly shared view that teens want to “fit in”. This is one of reasons perceptions can have such an impact on teens, including with substance use. The fourth core measure deals with one of these perceptions – peer disapproval of use. The following graph, visualizes 2014 FYSAS data for the county and state. The graph depicts how perception levels of “friends think it wrong to...” differ between substances. According to this data, use of prescription drugs has the highest level of peer disapproval both locally and in the state. In our county, except for prescription drug use, perceptions of peer disapproval differ greatly between high school and middle school teens. It is particularly concerning to note that perception of peer disapproval for marijuana is over 10 percentage points lower in high school than in middle school. However, Charlotte County high school rate of perceived disapproval is higher than in the state (62.2% v. 59 %).

(Table 4) **2014 FYSAS Perception of Peer Disapproval – Charlotte and State**



TeeNS provides additional insights into this measure. Table 4 depicts this data reflecting perceptions of high school age respondents.

(Table 5) **2014 TeeNS – Disapproval of Typical Student – High School**

<i>Typical student at your school disapproves of each of the following:</i>	Female HS	Male HS
drinking beer or wine	60%	52%
smoking cigarettes	42%	36%
smoking marijuana once or twice	65%	56%

It is also important to survey personal disapproval of alcohol, tobacco and drug use. 73.7% of Charlotte County teens surveyed believe it is wrong to drink alcohol regularly (up from 2012 FYSAS rate of 69.3% disapproval).

TeeNS data for middle school age teen provides insight into sixth-eighth grade personal beliefs and perceptions of friends and peers (typical student).

(Table 6) **2014 TeeNS Personal Belief and Perception of Peers – Middle School**

<i>Indicate how much you (agree or strongly agrees) with each statement:</i>	actual student	your friends	perceived typical student
There is nothing wrong with people under 21 drinking beer or wine	7%	9%	14%
There is nothing wrong with smoking cigarettes	4%	5%	10%

Additional Data

Binge Drinking

According to data from the 2014 FYSAS, Charlotte County high school age females report higher percentage of engaging in **binge drinking** than males with one-four drinks, while males report higher percentage of one and then five or more drinks on days they drank during the past 30-days. The 56% of male high school drinkers who drank five or more drinks per day on the days they drink is 24.9 percentage points higher than state (31.1%). Binge drinking occurs more frequently between the ages of 15-17 (4% ages 10-14 as compared to 12.7% ages 15-17).

For the first time, the 2014 FYSAS asked high school teens if they had “blacked out” during the past 30-days. Data for Charlotte County shows 17.4% report having experienced this effect of alcohol. More females (20.4%) than males (14.5%) in Charlotte County reported blacking out in the past 30-days. Similar data is reported for the state, with 19.8% of females and 18.1% of males reporting this occurred. The overall percentage for the state was 18.9%, below our local rate.

Risky Behaviors and Consequences of Use

As a result of drinking:

- 6% report **injury to themselves**
- 13% report **sickness**
- 6% report **punishment by parent/guardian**
- 6% report **damage to property**
- 5% report **injury to others**
- 6% report **impaired relationships**
- 6% report **trouble with police**
- 5% report **impaired driving**

TeeNS data (2014) provide additional insight into the risky behaviors of Charlotte County teens. Indicating an increase of two percentage points from 2013 TeeNS data, 15% of high school students report **driving a car after drinking alcohol** within the past 30 days. With no change from the previous year, 17% report **riding with another student** that had been drinking in the past 30 days. 2014 FYSAS data indicated that 18% of high school teens report riding in a car with someone who has been drinking in the past 30-days; while 6% indicated they drove after drinking. This is an improvement in this survey’s 2012 data of just under 24% riding car and 8% driving after alcohol. According to the 2014 FYSAS, **males are more likely to drive** (6.8% v. 5.3) after drinking, while **females are more likely a passenger** (20.5% v. 15.5%).

However, risky behaviors related to driving have a **higher reported incidence if marijuana is involved**, as indicated by the 2014 FYSAS. These data indicate 19.9% of high school teens surveyed reported in the past 30-days **riding in a vehicle driven by someone who had used marijuana**. This is almost two percentage points higher than if alcohol data for the survey. Additionally, there is a three-percentage point **increase** in those who **report driving a car in the past 30-days after having used marijuana**.

The coalition has collected additional risky behavior factors as part of its assessment process. Researchers cite an association between substance use and increased serious delinquency, increased serious risk behaviors, and poor academic performance.¹ The FYSAS provides data on several behaviors classified as delinquent. These data points do not necessarily reflect use of alcohol or drugs, but are indicators of the types of risky behaviors occurring in our community. It must be also acknowledged that the FYSAS is given in a school setting. Therefore this is not

¹<http://www.ncjrs.gov/html/ojjdp/204171/index.html>

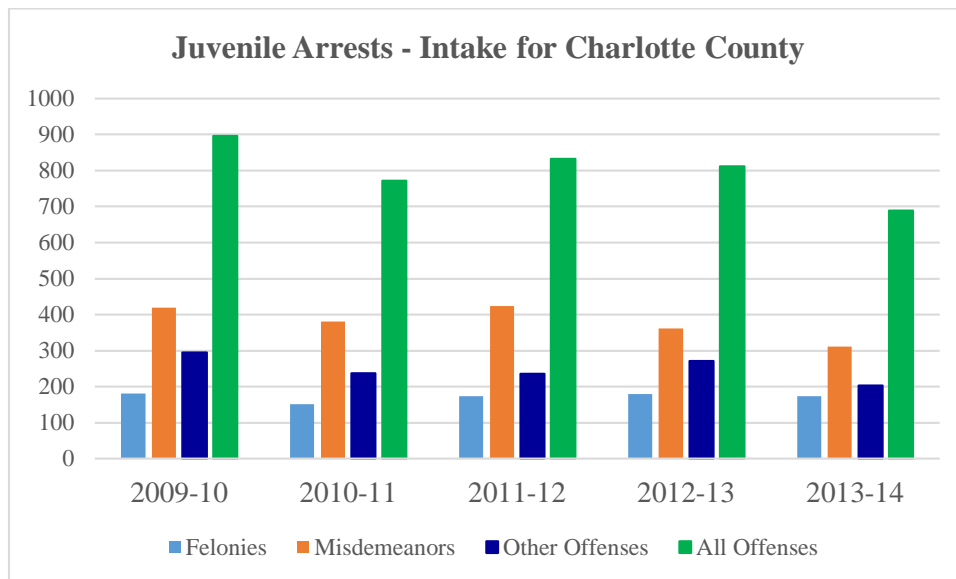
reflect data which includes teens who do not attend school, such as those who have dropped-out or are in an alternative setting.

(Table 7) **2012 and 2014 FYSAS – Delinquent Behavior**

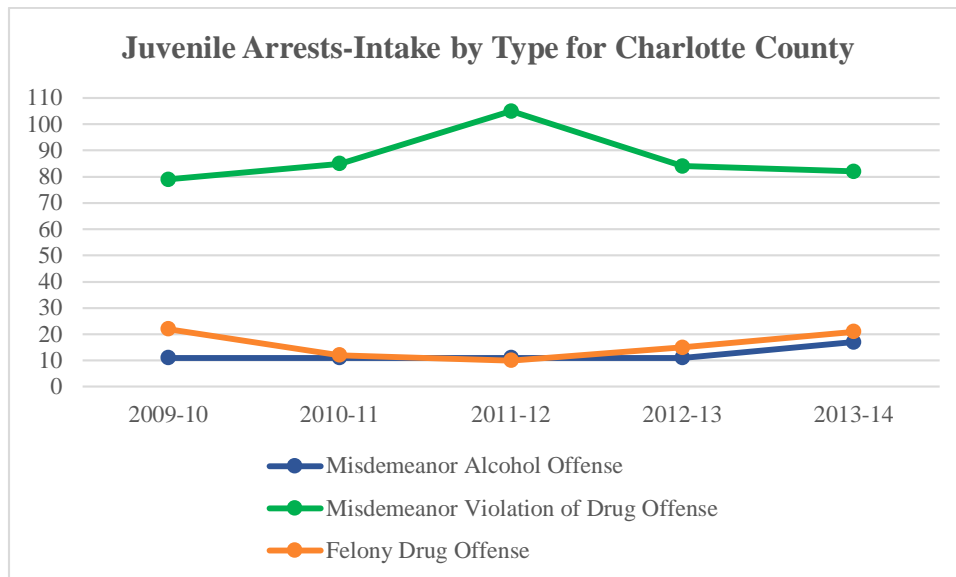
<i>Delinquent Behavior</i>	2012 FYSAS				2014 FYSAS			
	Charlotte MS	State MS	Charlotte HS	State HS	Charlotte MS	State MS	Charlotte HS	State HS
Carrying a gun	4.3%	4.3%	5.1%	4.5%	5.7%	5.1%	6.8%	5.4%
Selling drugs	3.0%	2.2%	8.9%	7.1%	4.1%	2.1%	7.2%	6.9%
Attempting to steal a vehicle	1.8%	1.4%	4.6%	2.0%	1.2%	1.1%	2.0%	1.5%
Being arrested	2.3%	2.5%	5.7%	4.0%	2.7%	2.2%	5.5%	3.3%
Attacking someone with intent to harm	8.9%	8.0%	1.3%	7.8%	5.5%	6.7%	5.3%	7.0%

The coalition also collects data from the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. The following graphs provide a general overview of delinquent and criminal behavior for Charlotte County youth:

(Figure 4) **FL. Dept. of Juvenile Justice – Felonies, Misdemeanors & Other Offenses**



(Figure 5) **FL. Dept. of Juvenile Justice – Alcohol and Drug Offenses**



Family dysfunction also plays a role in many at-risk behaviors for Charlotte County teens. Using cumulative data from **2007-2012**, 39% of the juveniles assessed by DJJ as being high risk to reoffend have a **parent with a mental health, drug and/or alcohol problem**. 43% of those youth have a **parent in prison**. Additionally, Florida Department of Law Enforcement reports 692 arrests for domestic violence, up from 643 in 2012.

Education and School Performance

Academic performance and absenteeism in Charlotte County can also reflect at-risk behavior among Charlotte County teens. The most current data available (2011-2012) from the Department of Juvenile Justice indicates only 1% of juvenile offenders at during that time were not enrolled in school. However, 91% had a history of suspension.

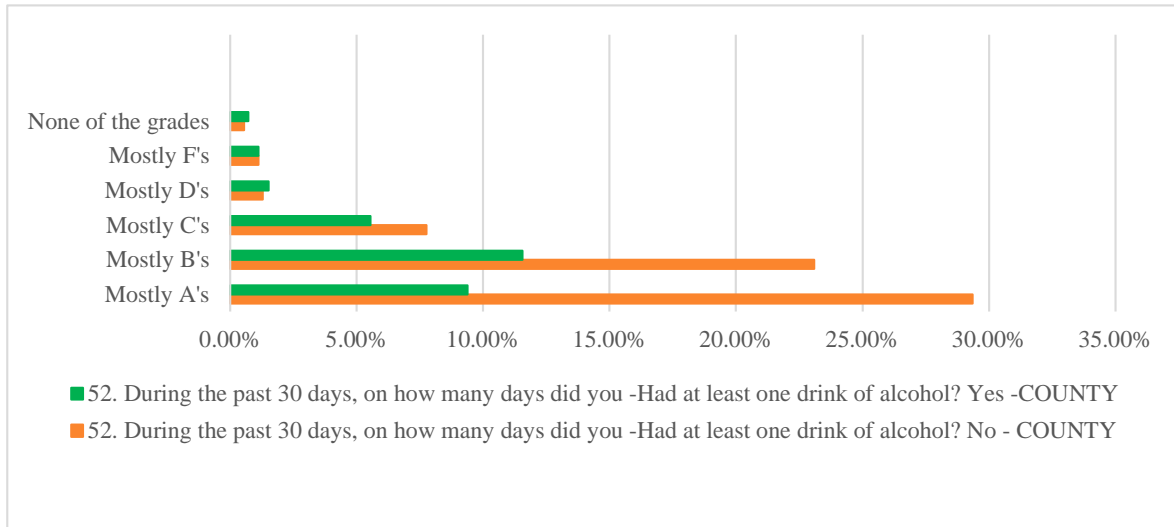
District 2011-12 school year data shows that the district had a 2.8% drop out rate; up from 2.4% the previous year, and higher than the state rate of 1.9%. However, graduation rates exceeded the state rate for 2011-12 at 75.6% (state rate 72.6%). The overall school grade, as assigned by the Florida Department of Education, fell from “A” to “B” in 2012 and then to “C” in 2013 and 2014.²

² Florida Department of Education

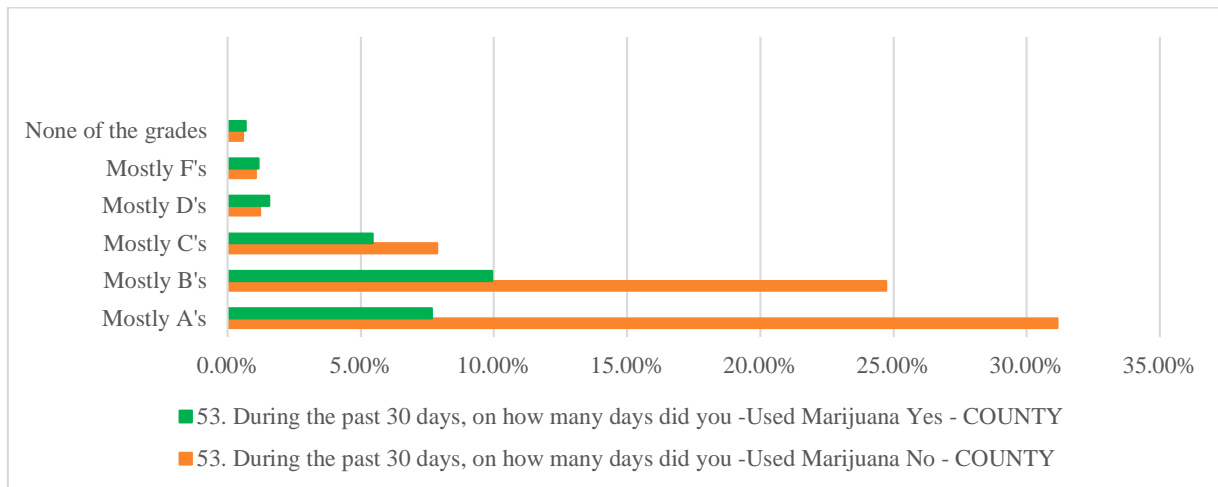
The 2013 Charlotte County Community Needs Assessment reports school enrollment dropped by 5.81% in 2012 from 2008 rates; while state enrollment grew by 2.38% overall. During the 2011-12 school year, the number of Charlotte County students eligible for the National School Lunch Program rose to 61.38%. 2011-12 school year data shows that 6% of Charlotte County students were chronically absent. This rate is better than the state rate for the same time of 9.1%.³

The following charts of 2014 Teen Norms Survey data provides a vivid image of grades achieved by those teens who report use of alcohol or marijuana as compared to those who do not report “past 30-day” use.

(Figure 6) **2014 TeeNS- Grades in High School and Alcohol Use**



(Figure 7) **2014 TeeNS- Grades in High School and Marijuana Use**



³ <https://www.charlottecountyfl.gov/services/familyservices/Documents/2013NeedsAssessment.pdf>

This information clearly shows the importance of preventing use, as well as working to reduce the use of those teens who do use in our community.

Additional data from the Teen Norms Survey (2014) shows the effect of alcohol and drugs on education and school performance. As a result of using alcohol:

- 5% report school absences as result of alcohol
- 5% report late papers, missed exams, failure to study

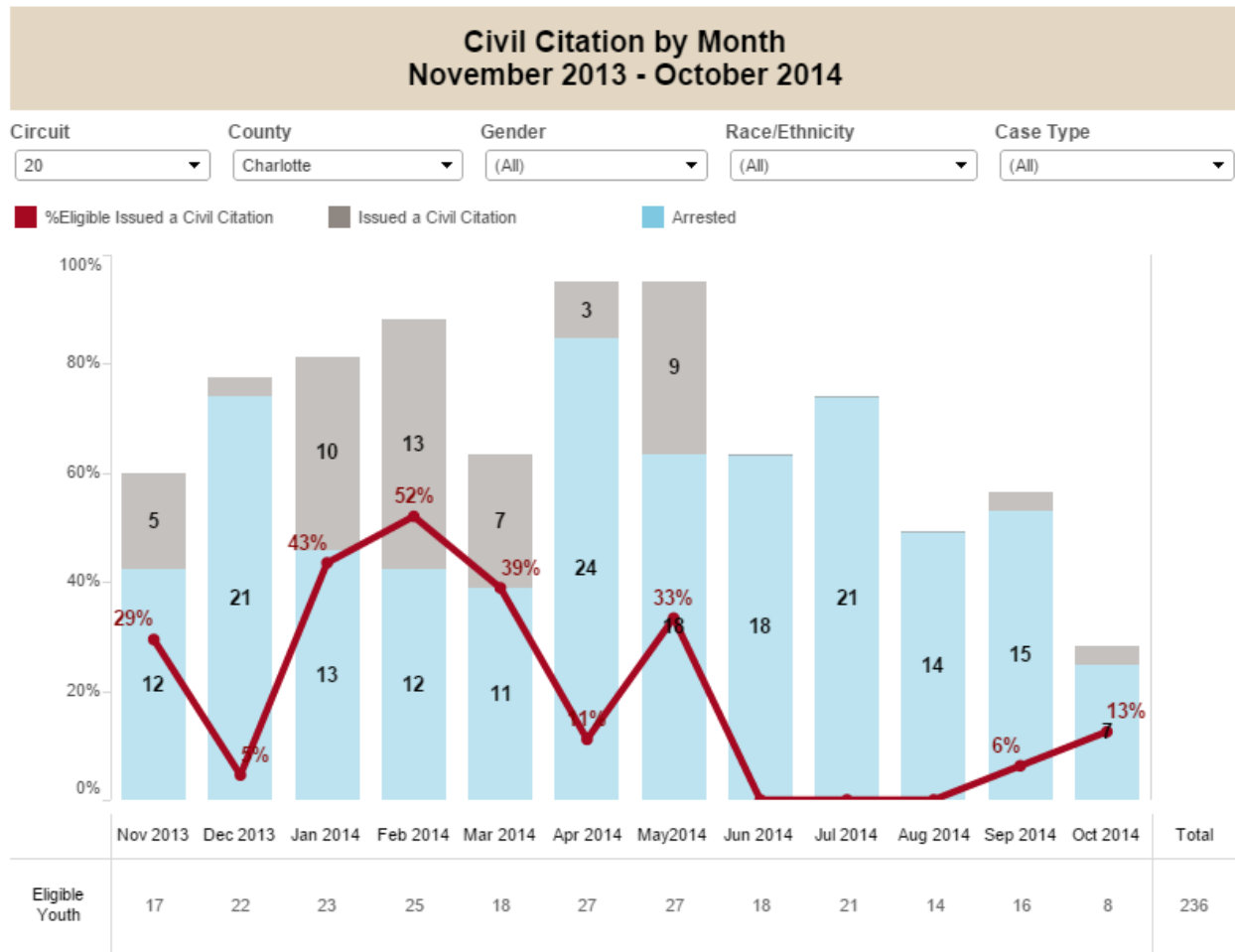
2014 The Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey provides additional data on negative behaviors in schools as reported by respondents. This information includes use of alcohol and drugs at school, as well as other negative behaviors, such as bringing a handgun to school.

(Table 8) **2012 and 2014 FYSAS – Negative Behavior - School**

<i>Negative Behavior</i>	2012 FYSAS				2014 FYSAS			
	Charlotte MS	State MS	Charlotte HS	State HS	Charlotte MS	State MS	Charlotte HS	State HS
Being Drunk or High at School	6.1%	5.4%	11.2%	15.5%	---	---	---	---
Taking a Handgun to School	0.4%	0.7%	7.9%	0.8%	0.6%	0.6%	1.5%	0.8%
Getting Suspended	16.9%	13.1%	17.8%	11.1%	11.5%	11.0%	7.8%	9.7%
Drinking alcohol before or during school	---	---	---	---	2.1%	3.6%	6.8%	7.3%
Smoking marijuana before or during school	---	---	---	---	5.5%	4.1%	13.4%	13.7%
Used another drug to get high before or during school	---	---	---	---	1.6%	1.8%	4.0%	4.1%

Additionally, Charlotte County has a civil citation program through both the County Human Services Department and Department of Juvenile Justice. Charlotte County has both a Teen Court and Neighborhood Accountability Board (NAB). DFCC works with NAB to provide education and community service activities for those teens whose offense involved alcohol, tobacco or drugs.

(Figure 8) **Florida Dept. of Juvenile Justice – Civil Citations Eligible and Issued**



Local Community Influences

Perceptions and Norms

Research consistently shows that perceptions of use of alcohol, marijuana and other drugs, among adolescence is one of the strongest predictors of future use and experimentation (Olds, Thombs, and Tomasek, 2005, Perkins, 2003, Haines 2003). The more students perceive that their peers are engaging in at-risk behavior, the more likely a teen is to make the decision to engage in the same behavior, should the opportunity present itself, in order to fit in to what they perceive as the “norm”. The same theory holds between teens and adults. If teens perceive their adult influencers believe it is acceptable for them to drink or experiment with substances, then when faced with the opportunity to do so, they are more likely to do so.

Charlotte County has tracked youth use and perception data since 2004 utilizing the Teen Norms Survey (TeeNS) developed by NIU. The 2014 TeeNS data shows the immense exaggerated perception of use as compared to actual reported use.

(Table 9) **Teen Norms Survey – Perception of Use vs. Actual Reported Use**

2014 Perceptions	2014 Actual Reported Use
High School teens perceive 79% of their peers have been drinking in the past 30 days (2014 TeeNS)	30-day use of alcohol is 32% of high school students (2014 TeeNS)
High School teens perceive that 78% of their peers have used marijuana in the past 30 days (2014 TeeNS)	30-day use of marijuana is 29% of high school students (2014 TeeNS)
High School teens perceive that 56% of their peers approve of drinking beer or wine for experimentation purposes (2014 TeeNS)	33% of students state they approve of high school students drinking beer or wine for experimentation purposes (2014 TeeNS)

According to the 2013 Developmental Assets survey of Charlotte County high school aged teens, developmental asset areas of “community values youth”, “creative activities”, “adult role models” and “caring neighborhood” are assets with the lowest rankings. Some of this may be reflective of Charlotte County’s status as a retirement community, but it does provides insight on key ways to build the assets of our youth. In the end, building development assets will have a positive effect on substance abuse rates. This same data shows that our teens are be highly motivated and have strong values – but, the internal areas related to social skills and identity are low. Further, many of the external areas that are low often have relation to the poor social skills and identify assets.

Local Laws and Environmental Influences

Since 2006, the local Sheriff and Chief of Police have applied a consistent focus to maintain retail compliance of alcohol sales as well as the prevention of drinking and driving. As a result, Charlotte County’s alcohol related car accidents, DUIs and compliance have improved significantly. Charlotte County Sheriff’s Office reports that DUI arrests have dropped for the third consecutive year. The following data was provided to the coalition by each Law Enforcement Agency listed.

(Table 10) **Arrests for Driving Under the Influence by LEA – Charlotte County**

	Punta Gorda PD	CCSO	FHP	Total
2011	123	561	47	731
2012	86	521	66	673
2013	62	381	28	471

A “Charlotte Sun” Newspaper report (1/6/14) quoted two local attorneys who cite a decrease in their business related to DUIs. Both state that the community is much more aware of the efforts of law enforcement to crack down on DUIs; and are using designated drivers. One of the attorneys also cited the economy as a possible impact; it is less expensive to drink at home.

Historically, Charlotte County has ranked in the first quartile for alcohol related accidents and fatalities and averaged only a 35% compliance rate in early 2002. Between 2000 and 2002, DUI checkpoints were not conducted in Charlotte County, so naturally, these figures were low. In 2002, **adult binge drinking** was rated at 18.4% by the Florida Behavioral Risk Factor Survey, but this has since dropped to 12.3% in the latest, 2010 survey – below the State rate of 15%. Three year rolling rates of alcohol related motor vehicle accidents **have also decreased** during this period, after an uptake from 2003-2006.⁴ In 2013, CCSO reported 115 alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes and PGPD reported 34. While this is an improvement, consideration needs to be made given that 17% of high school teens report **riding with a friend who has been drinking** and 32% report the same **with a family member who has been drinking** (2014 TeeNS).

Charlotte County currently has 50 establishments licensed to sell alcohol for every one public school. At a 50 to 1 ratio, the exposure to alcohol advertising, sales and service is immense. Environmental scan regularly conducted by Drug Free Charlotte County youth document alcohol and tobacco signage in the community. Without a county ordinance prohibiting the sale or advertisement of alcohol near a school, unless they live next to their school, Charlotte County youth cannot travel to a middle or high school without being exposed to alcohol or tobacco advertising.

On February 1, 2010, the county enacted its first open container ordinance, prohibiting the consumption of alcohol on county right-of-ways. Regrettably, the ordinance does not include the county parks or beaches, including the facilities such as baseball fields designated for youth. While rates for DUI’s and public drunkenness are low for Charlotte County, the tax collected on alcohol sales as well as volume of alcohol sold as reported by the Department of Beverage and Professional Regulation indicates Charlotte County, per capita, has one of the highest consumption rates of alcohol in the state. As THE last communities in Florida to adopt an open container ordinance, it will take some time for this ordinance to be regularly enforced and accepted as the community norm.

In addition to exposure to beer consumption, many of the facilities and events considered family events in Charlotte County have the capability to be “full liquor”. For example, the Spring Training games for Rays baseball are “full liquor” selling beer as well as any liquor. This is

⁴ Behavioral Risk Data from Florida Charts – www.floridacharts.com

somewhat ironic, since their regular season games are beer-only. Additionally, the fair and annual rodeo are full liquor events, increasing the likelihood of public drunkenness, drinking and driving, and at-risk behavior.

TeeNS data (2014), attributes teen **access to alcohol** primarily from social or family sources. Teens report parents as the number one source of alcohol, followed by a friend who is 21 or older. The 2013 Developmental Assets survey indicates that 45% of the respondents attended at least one or more parties in the past year where alcohol was served.

The following tables provide information on the usual sources and drinking locations of high school teens who reported past 30-day use of alcohol on the 2014 FYSAS.

(Table 11) **2014 FYSAS – Usual Source of Alcohol for Teens Reporting Past 30-day Use**

<i>High school teens reporting use of alcohol...</i>	County Female	County Male	Total County		State Female	State Male	Total State
Bought it in a store	3.2%	9.8%	6%		4.9%	11.7%	8.1%
Bought in a bar, restaurant, or club	0.0%	0.0%	0%		2.2%	1.2%	1.7%
Bought at a public event	1.1%	0.0%	0.6%		16.3%	19.1%	17.5%
Someone bought it for me	25.2%	32.9%	28.5%		48.6%	36.3%	43.0%
Someone gave it to me	58.4%	24.8%	44.1%		0.2%	0.5%	0.3%
Took it from a store	0.0%	8.7%	3.7%		11.5%	10.5%	11.0%
Took it from a family member	4.5%	9.1%	6.5%		15.6%	1.7%	17.5%
Someone bought it for me	7.7%		10.6%				

(Table 12) **2014 FYSAS – Usual Drinking Location**

<i>Usual Drinking Location</i>	2012		2014	
	Charlotte County HS	State HS	Charlotte County HS	State HS
My home	27.6%	24.6%	26.1%	32.5%
Another person's home	41.7%	48.9%	45.7%	46.3%
Car or other vehicle	2.1%	1.9%	4.4%	1.6%
Restaurant, bar or club	0.7%	4.0%	0.5%	2.7%
Public place	3.5%	5.1%	3.2%	3.9%
Public event	2.9%	1.2%	0.0%	1.6%
School property	2.4%	1.1%	0.0%	1.2%
Some other place	19.1%	13.2%	20.2%	10.3%

During the recent economic downturn, Charlotte County has had a history of the second highest foreclosure rate in Florida. Cheap foreclosure properties brought an organized grow-house operation from the East Coast of Florida (Miami area) into Port Charlotte. In 2009, three of these “high operation” homes were of the 28 busted in Charlotte County. A high operation grow house utilizes advanced carpentry skills, electric wiring and hydroponic devices to literally gut a home and turn it into nothing but a working grow house. As cited earlier, the Charlotte County Sheriff’s Office instituted a special unit focused on detecting and shutting down grow houses in the county.

As indicated earlier, both Charlotte County and City of Punta Gorda passed ordinances prohibiting the sale of synthetic drugs and regulating the display of paraphernalia in 2013-14. This will provide a strong tool for law enforcement to help address the sale of incense, spice and other synthetic products.

Access to Services and Financial Resources

As a satellite community sandwiched between two very large communities, Charlotte County has always been accustomed to doing more with less. A significant downturn however started in 2004, when Hurricane Charley devastated a large portion of the community. Destruction of homes resulted in a loss of residents, a loss of a tax-base and a loss of students to the school district, also resulting in a loss of funding. With state and federal allocations for prevention being based on a per-capita basis, funds have decreased while need continues to increase. The Charlotte County grants-in-aid program is a County-funded initiative that funds not for profits to assist with their basic human service projects. Recently, a collaboration between the Charlotte Community Foundation, United Way of Charlotte County and Charlotte County Government provided the means to develop the 2013 Community Needs Assessment. This compilation has resulted in several recommendations for future priorities for funding and service delivery. Included in these recommendations are six key human service areas, with prevention as a preeminent approach. Youth substance abuse prevention has been identified under the key area of Family Services. Further, a collaborative approach with multi-partnerships throughout the community is expected. As a community coalition, Drug Free Charlotte County is already well positioned to be an active participation in the greater community planning process.

The biggest financial resource lacking in Charlotte County at this time that may directly be impacting youth substance use is the availability of health insurance for families with children, particularly teens. Parents discovering that their teens are experimenting with marijuana face few options for treatment or medical care beyond the assistance of what is available on school campuses. The mental health needs for families, particularly those families in distress due to the loss of a job and/or home are going largely unmet, as state dollars for Medicaid were already over-extended by the needy families that existed prior to the hurricane.

Adult Health and Wellness as Community Influences

One of the first adult health and wellness factors that is likely to have an influence on teen substance abuse is “percentage of adults who engage in heavy or binge drinking” as measured by the 2013 Florida Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System data. Charlotte County’s 18% overall (male and female) percentage is above the state’s 17.6%. Men (20.5%) lead women (15.6%) in binge drinking. Adults age 18-44 comprise the highest percentage of binge drinkers (24.9%), but only a difference of two percentage points from ages 45-64 (22.1%). More adults reporting binge drinking have an income over \$50,000/year and are not married.

Tobacco use is another adult health and wellness factor that yields valuable data for the coalition and community. Charlotte County has a higher percentage (21.3%) of adults who are current smokers (2013 BRFSS) than the state (16.8%). While tobacco use is higher than the state, Charlotte County also reports a greater number of *former* smokers (34%) than the state (28.1%). Women, in Charlotte County, lead men as being current smokers (23.2% as compared to 19.3%). In addition, similar to data reported for binge drinking, the age group of 18-44 leads with the most smokers. Furthermore, smokers are less likely to be married. However, current smokers are more likely to have an income under \$50,000.

Health consequences related to these substance use behaviors may be revealed in data gathered in the Community Health Assessment process of the Community Health Improvement Partnership and the Florida Department of Health – Charlotte County. The lung cancer death rate (21.3%) in the county is greater than the state’s rate (16.8%). Heart disease is the second leading cause of death in Charlotte County. Furthermore, Charlotte County has seen an increase in hospitalizations due to strokes, even though this rate is decreasing statewide. These diseases are directly and indirectly linked to smoking and alcohol consumption.

Finally, for the purposes of this assessment, it is important to include data on behavioral health issues in the community. Through the Community Health Assessment process, the coalition has learned that nine out the last ten years, Charlotte County has exceeded state rates for suicides. Suicide by firearm is the number one mechanism, followed by accidental poisonings. Furthermore, 18.7% of Charlotte County respondents in the 2013 BRFSS indicated having been told at some point in their life they have a depressive disorder. This compares to the state rate of 16.8%.

Maternal and Infant Health Factors as Community Influences

At the time of preparing this assessment, Drug Free Charlotte County and the Charlotte County Healthy Start Coalition were in process of gathering data for their collaborative Substance Exposed Newborn (SEN) workgroup. Additionally, the Healthy Start Coalition is preparing for its five-year assessment and strategic planning process, in which Drug Free Charlotte County is

actively involved. More data on maternal and infant health factors will be revealed in Healthy Start's process, which can be reported in a future county youth substance abuse assessment.

However, it is possible to state that a major concern is the county's rate of women who are pregnant and smoke. Rolling year data from 2012-2014 shows that Charlotte County's rate of women who smoked during pregnancy is 2.3 time higher than the state's rate.

Assessing the Trends by Substance

Alcohol

Further examination of 2014 FYSAS data indicates rates of **use of alcohol or any illicit drug** during lifetime of 43.3%. Taking use of alcohol **out of that data** indicates that among Charlotte County teens **who reported use** of various drugs in their lifetime; only 6.9% respondents had **not** used alcohol, only illicit drug(s). Similarly, data for past 30-day use of **any drug other than alcohol** was 5.9%. This points to alcohol as a priority issue among Charlotte County teens for substance abuse prevention purposes.

Our **most current data**, the 2014 TeeNS, shows that 68% of high school teens in Charlotte County **did not** have alcohol in the past 30 days. This data shows past 30-day use among high school teens increased by one-percentage point from the 2013 TeeNS data rate. Within a few weeks of the 2013 TeeNS survey date, the county also conducted a Developmental Assets survey through the Search Institute. Data on past 30-day use is similar to 2013 TeeNS – but, slightly lower at 68% of teens reporting **no** past 30-day use (same as 2014 TeeNS).

TeeNS data also indicates that in 2014 a **higher percentage of female high school teens drank alcohol** in the past 30 days; in fact, four of the past seven years show higher rates of female use than male. Middle school males and females had similar rates of past 30-day alcohol use (8%) in 2014. However prior to 2013 TeeNS data, males in middle school usually reported higher rates of use of alcohol (2012-2006). The age of onset, as reported by middle school teens (2014 TeeNS) 11.51 years; increasing from the 2013 rate of 10.96 (2014 TeeNS). Working to increase this age is important, as research indicates staving use of alcohol or drugs past age 15 significantly reduce the likelihood of addiction issues later in life.⁵

Marijuana

Marijuana is **the second substance of choice** among Charlotte County high school teens at 29% – outranking regular tobacco use (17%) by 12 percentage points according to the 2014 TeeNS data. The 2013 Developmental Assets Survey indicated 24% for marijuana and 11% for

⁵ <http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/AA67/AA67.htm>

cigarettes. The age of onset, as reported by middle school teens, is 11.53 years, which is slightly older than 2012 data of 11.45. However, it shows first use of marijuana within less than two month of first use of alcohol (11.51 years).

Historically, the FYSAS showed a high of 30.1% **past 30 day use of marijuana in high school grades** in 2002, with a drop to 20.4% in 2004, and then to 17.2% in 2006. In 2008, FYSAS data shows an **increase** in past 30-day use (high school) to 21.4%, followed by another increase in 2010 to 23%. This was followed by a drop in 2012 to 22% and then, to 17.3% in 2014. However, as discussed earlier, the discrepancy between 2014 TeeNS and FYSAS data is concerning as to validity. Therefore, the coalition is relying on its most current data, which is the 2014 TeeNS.

Even with the discrepancy in 2014, similar trends can be seen in the TeeNS data since 2006, until 2014. TeeNS data has shown slightly higher rates annually than FYSAS, though still within several percentage points (excepting 2014).

While FYSAS shows **lifetime marijuana use** among students is decreasing from 36% (middle and high school age combined) in 2002 to 23.6% in 2014, this rate is one-percentage point above the state average. **Perceived risk of harm** of regular marijuana use among students in both middle and high school has dropped from a high of 63.3% in 2006 to 36.2% in 2014 (FYSAS). Additionally, perception of risk of harm to try marijuana has dropped from 31.4% to 23.7% during the same period. However, the overwhelming majority of students, 72.2%, report that it is wrong for someone their age to smoke marijuana.

Marijuana use rates **between genders** show males taking the lead in both the FYSAS and TeeNS data for 2014. This was also seen in the 2013 Developmental Assets survey.

Though only anecdotal, there is a major factor that may contribute to increases in marijuana use. Florida had a constitutional amendment initiative on the ballot in November 2014 to legalize marijuana for medical purposes. Additionally, in the Spring of 2014, the state legislature passed “Charlotte’s Web” legislation, creating a process for patients to obtain a certain strain of marijuana (Charlotte Web) for medical purposes. Add the additional attention given to states legalizing marijuana for recreational use and others for medical use - our teens are surrounded by mixed messaging. Much misinformation on the scientific facts of marijuana, its safety and use for medical purposes was evident in many news items and community conversations. There is no ready or direct way to measure the impact this issue may have on teen use and perceptions. However, the pronounced changes in TeeNS data for 2014 may be some indication of its effect.

Further, while again anecdotal, increase in street-level availability of marijuana might be attributed to the perpetuation of marijuana grow houses. In June of 2013, the DEA reported that Florida has the largest number of indoor grow houses in the country⁶ lending itself to affordable

⁶ <http://www.jrn.com/fox4now/news/212553641.html>

experimentation. According to the Charlotte County Sheriff's Office reports, from February to May 2013 alone, six local grow houses were shut down by a special investigation unit recently created.

Prescription Drugs

Prescription Drugs: 2013 was the first time Charlotte County used the TeeNS to ask about past 30-day use of prescription drugs. 6% of middle school and 12% of high school students reported a past 30-day use. Of concern, is that these rates increased in 2014 slightly – to 7% for middle school and 14% for high school. The perception of use is greater, at 29% for middle school and 53% for high school teens. Perception of harm or risk of use for prescription drugs is highest of all surveyed substances at 73.2% for middle school and 71.3% for high school teens, according to the 2014 FYSAS.

FYSAS shows reported steroid use in the past 30 days fluctuating since a high of 1.9% in 2002 for high school to a low of 0.1% in 2006. Rates began to rise again in 2008, reaching 1% in 2010, but falling to 0.4% in 2012 and then negligible in 2014.

Cigarettes and Tobacco

The 2014 TeeNS reports past 30-day use of cigarette rate of 17 % and 4% for high school and middle school teens, respectively; with males reporting higher use than females. Middle school rates decreased from 2013 TeeNS by two-percentage points. However, high school rates are up slightly from 2013 TeeNS data of 16%. Average age of onset for tobacco by Charlotte County teens is the lower than alcohol (11.51) or marijuana (11.53); occurring at just over age ten and t (10.83), which is likely **prior** to entering sixth grade. 2013 is the lowest age of onset in the past five years for middle school teens at 10.51.

Cigarette use has the second highest level of perception of harm between alcohol, marijuana, misuse of prescription and cigarettes. Additionally, 83.6% of all teens surveyed by the FYSAS in 2014 indicated they think it would be wrong for someone their age to smoke cigarettes. This is the highest for this indicator since, and including, 2004.

Synthetic Marijuana:

2014 FYSAS data shows that 1.3 % of Charlotte County high school teens reported use of synthetic marijuana in past 30-days. This was a drop of over eight percentage points from 2012 (9.6%). 2014 TeeNS data reports higher use at 10% for high school, holding at 2013 rates, but lower than 2012 rate of 15%. There was a reduction in past 30-day use in middle school teens, dropping from 4% (2013) to 3%.

In November of 2013, Charlotte County passed an ordinance prohibiting the sale of synthetic drugs and restricting display of paraphernalia. This ordinance went into effect January 2014. The City of Punta Gorda has also followed suit with an ordinance for that community. As these ordinances are enforced, they are expected to support reduction in reported use of synthetic marijuana among Charlotte County teens.

Other Drugs

Inhalants use dropped to 1.9% from 2.8% (2012 past 30-day use) in the 2014 FYSAS report. The 2013 Developmental Assets indicated 9% of teens surveyed reported past 30-day use.

Club drugs, cocaine, heroin, or similar all fall below 2% reported past 30-day use. However, these rates have risen slightly in previous years, as per FYSAS, and bear monitoring.

Prioritizing Our Issues

Examination of data clearly shows that alcohol and marijuana are the top two substance abuse issues among Charlotte County teens. Key data indicators for each are listed below:

Underage Alcohol Use

- 32% of Charlotte County high school teens report past 30-day use of alcohol (2014 TeeNS). This is a one-percentage point increase from 2013 TeeNS.
- Charlotte County high school teens perceive that 79% of their peers have had alcohol in the past 30 days (2014 TeeNS)
- Females report higher percentage of engaging in binge drinking than males with 2-4 drinks, while males report higher % of 1 and then 5 or more drinks on days they drank during the past 30 days. The 56% of male high school drinkers who drank 5 or more drinks per day on the days they drink is 24.9 percentage points higher than state (31.1%) according to the 2014 FYSAS.
- 8% of Charlotte County middle school teens report past 30 day use of alcohol (2014 TeeNS). This is a two-percentage point decrease from 2013 TeeNS.
- Charlotte County middle school teens perceive that 47% of their peers have had alcohol in the past 30 days (2014 TeeNS)
- 45% of Charlotte County high school teens participating in the 2013 Developmental Assets Survey reported attending a party in the past year where alcohol was available
- 2014 TeeNS reports 9% of Charlotte County high school teens who reported using alcohol in the past-30 days say they a parent gave it to them and 5% said another family member gave it to them. 2014 FYSAS data indicates 6.5% took alcohol from a family member.

- 2014 FYSAS data shows an increase in the number of teens getting alcohol from a store rose to 6% from 3.7% in 2012.
- 17% of Charlotte County high school teens report riding in a car with a friend who has been drinking and 32% report riding in the car with a family member who had been drinking (2014 TeeNS)
- 15% of Charlotte County high school teens report driving a car after they had been drinking (2014 TeeNS)
- Age of onset (first use) of alcohol has risen to 11.51, higher than 2010 age of 10.96 (2014 TeeNS), but still too early.

These key data points signify potential areas of impact: perception of use, access through adults and availability at parties, addressing alcohol use at younger age to decrease age of onset.

Marijuana

- 29% of Charlotte County high school teens report past 30-day use of marijuana (2014 TeeNS). This is a four-percentage point increase from 2013 TeeNS.
- Charlotte County high school teens perceive that 78% of their peers have had marijuana in the past 30 days (2014 TeeNS)
- 6% of Charlotte County middle school teens report past 30 day use of marijuana (2014 TeeNS)
- Charlotte County middle school teens perceive that 39% of their peers have had marijuana in the past 30 days (2014 TeeNS)
- 19% of high school teens report driving a vehicle after using marijuana in the past 30-days (2014 FYSAS)
- 9% of high school teens report driving a vehicle after using marijuana in the past 30-days (2014 FYSAS).
- According to 2014 TeeNS data, teens the average age of onset for marijuana (as reported by middle school teens) is less than two months (11.53) after average age of onset for alcohol (11.51)
- Perception of harm of regular marijuana use is decreasing in both middle and high school teens
- 82% (n166) of Charlotte County children admitted for substance abuse treatment in 2014 report marijuana as drug of choice according to data from Central Florida Behavioral Health Network for Charlotte County admissions.

These key data points signify potential areas of impact: perception of use, perception of harm or risk of use, educating parents to help to decrease age of onset.

Other Issues of Concern

Prescription Drug Abuse

While the Teen Norms Survey has only reported on prescription drugs for two years, the rates of use are of concern to the coalition. This issue will continue to be monitored. Development of a logic model for this issue area will be part of the overall coalition plan in 2015.

Tobacco and Electronic Cigarettes

The Florida Department of Health continues to serve as the lead for this issue area in Charlotte County. With the slight rise in tobacco use rates, and growing opportunities use and misuse of electronic cigarettes, the coalition needs to maintain a strong presence in the local Tobacco Partnership.

Our Local Resources

Utilizing the community coalition model, Charlotte County has been working collaboratively in the community since 2005. As such, critical collaborations exist in such a way to cover three critical components to a community's response to substance use: prevention, enforcement and treatment.

Charlotte County Public Schools, one of the founders of the coalition, remains a key partner with the coalition. Drug Free Charlotte County's staff are located in free office space at the Charlotte County School Board and within the Charlotte County Sheriff's Office community policing office. With this strategic placement, the coalition is able to be located at two ends of the community while having access to school district and Sheriff's Office resources. Of particular importance is the access to Charlotte County School's students, staff and parents. This high level of access facilitates the implementation of prevention programs, outreach to parents and access to students. As a result of this partnership, Drug Free Charlotte County has been able to track substance use trends through the use of two critical student surveys and implement student social norms projects that are beginning to show small changes in perception and use. This relationship has also been critical in the systemic recruitment and development of a youth empowerment model that is teaching students to advocate for change on their school campuses and within their community. As a direct result of this partnership, **Drug Free Charlotte works regularly with youth and adult volunteers that accumulate over a combined 1,000 volunteer hours each year.**

Support Departments within the School District are also valuable to the coalition's role. The transportation department provides bus transport for youth during street advocacy days and the school social work program provides referral support to families seeking drug treatment services. The District print shop prints many of the parent information mailings as well as other coalition support materials such as newsletters and flyers. **In total, it is estimated Charlotte County that Public Schools provides the coalition with approximately \$127,000 in in-kind services.**

Charlotte County Sheriff's Office and Punta Gorda Police Department are other founding partners and critical for the continued success of our work. The relationship with the Sheriff's Office and Police Department are critical in reducing youth access to alcohol and other illicit drugs. These agencies also assist in providing teacher and parent training as well as assisting with classroom education through their School Resource Officers. In partnership with these agencies, compliance has increased from 35% to as high as 100% on four occasions (no less than 14 stores are checking during an operation). **In addition to space (valued at over \$32,000) and resources, the Sheriff's Office also provides up to \$33,000 per year from drug forfeiture liquidations that Drug Free Charlotte County is able to use as match funding.**

The Children's Services Council is a Governor's appointed council that is mandated by state statute to leverage funds and coordinate services for children in Charlotte County. The coalition has been working with the Council since its inception in 2008 to integrate the Developmental Assets model into all youth services in Charlotte County, beginning with the school district. Developmental Assets is a **positive youth development model** that encourages communities to build upon 40 assets that are proven to build resiliency and success in children and teens. In 2013, the council conducted its first Developmental Assets survey providing key information upon which future initiatives can be developed. During 2014, the Council created a special workgroup to develop and implement a workplan to improve our community's developmental assets. Several activities have been implemented, including a Youth Summit with over 100 teens drawn from all Charlotte County High Schools. This summit has spawned, CCVOLT (Charlotte County Voice of Local Teens), an initiative to empower and activate our youth.

Florida Department of Health in Charlotte County- In 2012-13, the department started a community collaboration – Community Health Improvement Partnership (CHIP) – that has, as one of its key community issues, tobacco prevention and cessation. CHIP's focus on community wellness provides the coalition with another opportunity to interlock its activities with the greater community. The Department's 2015 Community Health Assessment (CHA) will provide an excellent foundation of community health and wellness data for the coalition to use in future assessments. Furthermore, CHIP provides an avenue for partnership growth, and leveraging resources between community members, businesses, government and health and social services providers.

Other critical relationships include a partnership with the *School Health and Advisory Council*, which oversees health and well-being of students and includes members from the Department of Health, Healthy Start, local hospitals, pediatricians and school nurses. This partnership is critical in the response to at-risk student behaviors such as substance use and sexual activity.

Charlotte Behavioral Health Care, the community's primary mental health provider utilizes over \$17,000 of state prevention dollars with Drug Free Charlotte County for prevention activities. This helps supports the coalition's social norms campaigns and social marketing with

parents. Additionally, this partnership includes a PPG (Prevention Partnership Grant) to provide science-based programs (Alcohol EDU and Project Alert) and additional social norms activities. Treatment services for adults and youth are provided by this community partner at several locations throughout the community; including inpatient and outpatient services.

Charlotte County Healthy Start Coalition collaborates with Drug Free Charlotte County on a Substance Exposed Newborn (SEN) workgroup. In addition to exploring data on newborns exposed to prescription and illicit drugs, the workgroup has identified tobacco use as a major “substance” presenting in newborn babies in Charlotte County.

Though **Hanley Center** does not have offices in Charlotte County, their contract staff also provides the community with parent skills programs, a steroid prevention program and wellness programs for seniors with a focus on addressing alcohol misuse.

These agencies also provide **valuable CEU training** to our school social workers, school psychologists, school nurses and other professionals to keep them abreast of substance use and prevention related content.

Peace River Distributing has been a long partner at the coalition table. They help get the coalition’s *Be the Wall* campaign out to beverage retailers and servers. Additionally, they provide free Responsible Beverage Server training and “We ID” materials to retailers.

Further, our **local Chambers of Commerce** are strong partners in helping the coalition reach businesses in our community. This provides the coalition with the opportunity to present community data and build awareness about the youth substance abuse issues in our community. These organizations also offer the opportunity for the coalition to promote drug free workplaces and tobacco free businesses.

Regional collaborations with other coalitions through our Management Entity (Central Florida Behavioral Health Network) also offer the coalition the opportunity to share ideas, resources and reach. These relationships also offer training opportunities for coalition members and staff.

During 2014, our **faith community partners** played a critical role in educating our community on the risks of marijuana use and the facts behind marijuana as medicine. They have committed to continuing this work alongside the coalition.

Youth Leaders work with coalition staff to implement *Friday Night Done Right* in the community and schools. They are key in our retail scan activities, and conduct street advocacy activities throughout the year. In July 2014, they attended the National Youth Leadership Institute in Orlando, Florida. This help build their skills in the Strategic Prevention Framework.

Media Partners, including a local radio host and media specialists with CCSO, help the coalition with Public Service Announcements. During 2014 and through early 2015, two PSA’s

ran in the local theater. One was created for our *Be the Wall* campaign. A second was created by our youth leaders for a safe driving campaign.

New Sister Community Coalitions have emerged in our community. Both the communities of Punta Gorda (**Drug Free Punta Gorda**) and Englewood (**Englewood Community Coalition**) now have coalitions being formed through the support of DFCC and local community partners. Englewood has the additional support of a mentoring grant through the Drug Free Communities Support Program (federal). They are being mentored by the Safe Climate Coalition in Lake County. These coalitions will help build capacity at their local levels, while working alongside DFCC to further countywide efforts in a collaboration manner. Both coalitions are also the lead partners in the implementation of D-Fy (Drug-Free Youth) in Charlotte County.

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