

TOGETHER!

Preventing Youth Violence, Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug Use

Winter 2010

TOGETHER!'s vision is that all young people in Thurston County communities are supported, healthy, safe and valued.

TOGETHER!'s mission is to prevent youth violence and substance abuse through awareness, advocacy and action to support youth and families.

For more information about TOGETHER! or its programs, contact us at:

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TOGETHER!
is a 501(c)(3)
non-profit organization.
All donations are tax
deductible to the extent
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Alcohol Energy Ban Will Help Protect Youth

On Nov. 10, the Washington State Liquor Control Board temporarily banned alcohol energy drinks from the state, effective Nov. 18, 2010, to March 10, 2011. Here is the reasoning and history behind this decision.

The Board says the decision to ban the sale of malt-based alcohol energy drinks is in the interest of public safety, both health-wise and because of the products' appeal to underage drinkers. TOGETHER! has been involved in the fight to ban these drinks for a long time, and agrees with the ban based on its own research.

There is growing consensus among the medical community that these products are dangerous. Many tragedies have been attributed to these drinks, including in Roslyn, Wash., earlier this fall, when nine Central Washington University students were hospitalized after drinking alcohol energy drinks and one nearly died.

The difference between these and other alcoholic drinks is that the stimulants remove the body's natural defense against too much alcohol: falling asleep. People drinking these products stay conscious longer, allowing them to drink too much, and at the same time not know how drunk they are. Also, combining a depressant (alcohol) with a stimulant often is

Other places: Michigan, Pennsylvania, Utah, Oklahoma and several colleges have bans in place. The drinks are under voluntary recall in New York and Indiana.

Federal: The U.S. Food & Drug Administration said on Nov. 17 that caffeine is now an illegal additive to alcohol energy drinks.



Gov. Chris Gregoire announces the ban. TOGETHER! Executive Director Jim Cooper stands behind her. Photo courtesy TVW.

quite hard on the body.

These drinks, which many college students refer to as "liquid cocaine" or "blackout in a can," also contain much more alcohol than many consumers realize.



Alcohol energy drinks appear to be directly marketed to youth. They are sweet and flavored, with bright packaging. They are easily confused with and look similar to non-alcoholic soda and energy drink containers.

Companies use marketing that targets and entices younger audiences. On the websites for many of these drinks, comments and pictures often are posted by users who are underage, according to their profiles.

This trend also is reflected in national public safety incidents: Most problems and hospitalizations attributable to these drinks are among college students, many underage.

Because of the medical danger and the targeting of underage drinkers, TOGETHER! supports the ban of alcohol energy drinks.

To find out more, call or email us or visit our website.

Email and printed newsletter options

TOGETHER! sends out eShare, our email newsletter, once a month. If you wish to join that mailing list, go to www.ThurstonTogether.org and click on "Newsletter Archive," then enter your email address.

This printed newsletter is produced twice yearly, for summer and winter. If you no longer wish to receive it, send an email to dkoenig@ThurstonTogether.org or call 360-493-2230, ext. 20.

A Note from the President

Dear Friends,

As I complete my second year as Board President, I want to say thanks to my fellow Board members and our outstanding staff for the great work they do. They're always there when we need them; their guidance and support are immeasurable.

I am amazed at what the staff accomplishes on a restricted budget while the demand for our services increases. Projects like Food Bank Distribution Day at Evergreen Villages, our Strengthening Families program and our annual Champions for Kids event would not be possible without dedicated staff.

I invite you to learn about us, and join us in our efforts to value and protect our children.



Sincerely,

Rick Hughes
Board President

New Employee Gets Feet Wet via Parsnips, Candy

Evan Welkin has recently joined TOGETHER! as a project coordinator, helping to streamline and support many of our programs and assisting with reporting. He has a wide-ranging background in nonprofit work.

Just a few days into his tenure, he went to our Evergreen Villages Neighborhood Center to help manager Brenda Jones with one of our Food Bank distribution days. Read Evan's story of that experience:

"Coming from a long stretch without regular employment, I was grateful to help Brenda set up the Food Bank pickup for Evergreen Villages residents. Brenda spoke about how the work we do at the community center addresses many different aspects of the low-income residents' needs, offering a one-stop shop of community resources for the 150+ residents who use the Center. ...



Photo courtesy fcm.org

"It was a few days before Halloween when I came in, so we started by packing up candy bags for the kids. Next we unloaded boxes and lined up produce in preparation for distribution. ... Residents slowly filed in once everything was set up, asking questions about produce (what does one do with a parsnip?) and catching up. ...

"I'm looking forward to returning to help unload Thanksgiving baskets, knowing that I have a lot to be thankful for this season and looking forward to what's ahead."

Volunteers Are Heart behind Parenting Classes

Strengthening Families fall session has just ended

Two to three times a year, TOGETHER! puts on a 7-session class to help families with preteens bond and learn how to communicate better. Families get time together before parents and youth split up into separate groups. They also get to eat a meal together as a family.

Sometimes Strengthening Families is open enrollment, and other times it's for specific groups, such as foster families, families dealing with incarceration issues, and Spanish-speaking families.

This fall's open-enrollment class just ended on Nov. 16. The families enrolled have expressed appreciation for the various types of activities and said they better understand and relate to one another now.

The Strengthening Families program wouldn't succeed without the great volunteers behind it.

Gib and Beth Rossing have volunteered as facilitators and



Volunteers Gib (left) and Beth (second from left) Rossing facilitate a previous class.

coordinators for many years now. They do a fantastic job. They facilitate the parent and family sections and arrange the facility, food and other details. Beth said they like how the classes create "more stability and better relations before more severe problems arise."

Janet Hyre facilitates the youth sections and does great work with them. This committed volunteer has been part of Strengthening Families from the start of the program.

Gib, Beth and Janet all deserve many thanks for the work they do for so many families and for TOGETHER!.

Help Celebrate Our 21 Years of Prevention Work

TOGETHER! is turning 21 this year. Join the party! Together, we can prevent youth drug abuse and violence. We're hosting a virtual birthday party this fall and winter to celebrate. Join us!

To help, simply **go to www.ThurstonTOGETHER.org and click "Donate" to send us a birthday present.** Even a small amount goes a long way to making sure all children are supported, healthy, safe and valued.



If you know of someone who is hosting a birthday page for us, you can also donate through their virtual party on our website. And keep an eye on our progress meter there, too!

Champions to Expand in Size and Scope This Year

For nine years, TOGETHER! has hosted the very popular Champions for Kids dinner event. The event recognizes those who support kids and leaves guests feeling good about our community.

Because the event has continued to grow, and because it's the



10th anniversary of Champions this year, we are moving the event into a bigger space with bigger entertainment, and tickets will be available individually as well as by table. Special guests, such as past Champions, will be invited.

This year's event expands in other ways, with a bigger version of community engagement, by adding a social media campaign prior to the Celebration. Community members can create a tribute page for anyone they see as a Champion. A positive buzz will swell as the word spreads and we celebrate the compassionate things that we do for each other.

Champions for Kids Celebration

When: March 7, 2011, 6 p.m.

Where: Marcus Pavilion, Saint Martin's University, Lacey

To purchase a ticket or sponsor a table, contact Diane at 360-493-2230, ext. 15, or dpieroni@thurstontgether.org.

Thurston County Community Needs Assessment Released

We are pleased to introduce to you the Community Needs Assessment, prepared by the Thurston Council for Children and Youth. The report is the result of a community assessment of systems that serve children and youth in Thurston County.

This work is done in hopes of integrating the question "Is it good for the children?" into policy and funding decisions countywide.

This report explains the three top priorities for children and youth in Thurston County as identified by the council:

The Thurston Council for Children and Youth

1. Reduce food insecurity among our children and youth.
2. Increase access to affordable health care, including mental, physical and dental health and chemical dependency treatment.
3. Increase access to and improve the quality of the Early Learning System.

For a copy of the assessment, call Danielle at 360-493-2230, ext. 20.

Gift cards wanted

TOGETHER!'s Evergreen Villages Neighborhood Center serves dozens of children and youth daily, and needs a variety of items.

If you are able to donate a gift card* to Target, Fred Meyer, Office Depot, Costco or Best Buy, you will be helping to keep these kids supported, healthy, safe and valued, and we appreciate it!

**The value of any card donated is tax deductible.*



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Courtesy **TOGETHER!** newsletter
Coupon code 6020-64

November: a great month to quit smoking

November 18 was the annual Great American Smokeout. This is a day every year where people are encouraged to stop smoking for 24 hours. November is Great American Smokeout Month, and it's also Lung Cancer Awareness Month. It's a great time to give quitting a try.

If you would like to quit smoking, call 1-800-QUIT-NOW. They will connect you with a personal Quit Coach, which doubles your chances of quitting successfully.

You can also call **TOGETHER!** at 360-493-2230. We'll provide you with information, connections to resources and a Quit Kit to help you get through.

Here are some quitting tips:

- Cut down on alcohol and caffeine intake.
- Make a strategy before you go to events where others may be smoking.
- Keep healthful substitutes on hand, like gum, raisins, carrots and hard candy.
- Tell family and friends that you're quitting. Let them support you.
- Drink a lot of water. Carry a bottle of it everywhere you go.
- Eat frequent small meals to help stabilize your blood sugar.
- Exercise, especially when you are angry, stressed or bored.
- Make a dental appointment to have your teeth cleaned.
- Make yourself spend time with non- and/or ex-smokers.
- Address other conditions such as depression and anxiety before or during quitting.