

From the community Grant Supports Prevention Program for Wolcott Youth



Posted by office258, Community Contributor

By **Community Contributor office258**

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Wolcott Crossroads was recently awarded a \$5,000 grant from the **Bristol** Savings Bank Fund at Main Street Community Foundation to install a projection system at the organization's Youth Center.

"The new projection system will allow us to offer educational forums," stated Joe Dunn, Vice President of Wolcott Crossroads, which seeks to unite Wolcott and create new ways and ideas to combat drug use affecting the community's youth while providing support to families. "This is very important toward our next step of implementing Students Taking an Active Role (STAR), in the hopes of creating a mentor program, for the middle school youth of Wolcott."

STAR is a proactive after-school program that was created to reduce the risk of Wolcott middle school students making unhealthy choices that could lead to alcohol and drug addiction. The program will develop and strengthen decision-making skills, social and emotional learning, leadership abilities and self-confidence.

STAR will run twice during the 2017-2018 school year, once in the fall and once in the spring. It will begin with a trip to Pine Lake Challenge Course in Bristol and culminate with a celebration with family and friends. During the course of the program, game nights, open mic nights and workshops focusing on cultural competency, career exploration and self-awareness among other topics will be held. STAR will also include a community service project that will teach the middle school students about altruism while impacting the Wolcott community.

"The grant from Main Street Community Foundation is allowing us to enhance and expand current program options and create a new, more comprehensive and far-reaching program with the purpose of reducing substance use in youth," said Christina Welch, a member of Wolcott Crossroads' Board of Directors. "The STAR program will have a tremendous impact on the community."

Wolcott Crossroads was established six years ago in response to the deaths of three youth in one year as a result of drug overdoses. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there was a 25.6 percent increase in drug overdose death rates from 2014 to 2015 in Connecticut. To help reduce that statistic, Wolcott Crossroads: Provides critical drug awareness education to local groups and organizations; advocates for legislative change related to treatment and recovery support; hosts a weekly support group for friends and family of substance users; hosts two weekly, young adult oriented 12-step support groups; and puts on community wide events and presentations.

The grant was awarded during a small ceremony at the Wolcott Activities & Learning Center (WALC).

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