

February 2026

COMMUNITIES THAT CARE

Of Marinette & Menominee Counties

NEWSLETTER

2025 YEAR IN REVIEW



CTC Coordinator Messages

“ Looking back on the past year, I am in awe of our coalition’s resilience. Despite facing unexpected funding shifts and barriers that disrupted our path, we never stopped moving forward. What stood out most was how our members stepped up during moments of uncertainty. While it was a challenging chapter, it proved the undeniable strength of our community and the unwavering commitment to our mission. Because of your support, we continue to see data trends shift in our youths’ favor. Thank for standing with us, and we are ready to move forward with whatever 2026 has in store for us! ”



-Karianne Lesperance

“ As I reflect on 2025, the greatest takeaway is the strength of our community working together. Despite periods of uncertainty, including funding challenges, we were continually supported by trusted partners and dedicated coalition members. Our funding partners’ generosity sustained CTC’s prevention efforts, while coalition members contributed invaluable time, expertise, and commitment to addressing challenges and protecting our youth. Together, these partnerships affirmed the importance of our work and set the stage for continued progress in 2026 and beyond as we build a stronger, healthier community for our young people. ”



-Cindy Grabowski

A FUNDING DILEMMA

On September 30, 2025, the Communities That Care (CTC) coalition was notified that the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) had announced the recompetes of the 2025 Drug-Free Communities (DFC) Support Program grants just days earlier. This federal grant was expected to fund a significant portion of CTC’s prevention action plan activities and operational expenses for the next five years. With the unexpected announcement occurring just prior to the start of the anticipated fiscal year, CTC faced an immediate \$125,000 funding shortfall, with a potential impact of up to \$625,000 over the next five years.

In response, the coalition quickly mobilized to inform community partners and stakeholders of the funding loss, while actively pursuing alternative funding opportunities. At the same time, CTC began preparing and submitting a revised application under the new DFC recompetes cycle, released in early 2026.



DATA PRIORITIES



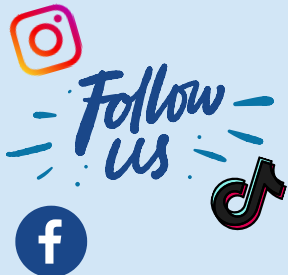
PROSOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

According to the 2024–2025 Youth Survey administered to 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students across our region, participation in sports teams and school-based activities ranked as the top reported pro-social influences among local youth. In contrast, involvement in community-based activities and religious organizations were reported at lower levels. These findings highlight important opportunities for growth. As a community, we can work together to expand access to positive, engaging activities and make them more appealing and inclusive for youth. Increasing opportunities for connection, belonging, and meaningful involvement plays a critical role in preventing youth from turning to alcohol, marijuana, and tobacco/nicotine products.

Check out 2024-25 data priority findings at www.ctcmarinettemenominee.org/ctc-data



Youth Focus Group Infographics were updated to showcase key statements that youth want adults in our community to know about youth drug and alcohol use. Focus group sessions were held in four school districts across the two counties in random selection of 9-12th grade students to compliment data findings from the student survey.



21 IMPACTFUL STATEMENTS

from Marinette & Menominee area high school youth about alcohol, marijuana, and nicotine products during the 2025 focus group sessions.

1

WHY DO KIDS USE?

- “Because it’s normalized as part of society.”
- “Addiction. It started out as ‘fun’...then you get addicted.”
- “A lot of reasons - to get a buzz, peer pressure, or look cool. Academic stress reliever, mental health issues and curiosity too.”
- “We are being more influenced by social media and they’re starting because of that...”

2

HOW ARE YOUTH GETTING IT?

- “Parents don’t pay much attention, so it’s easy to get alcohol from the cabinet at home.”
- “If you look old enough, are tall or built, they won’t even bother checking ID.”
- “I tried my first beer at 10 from my dad.”
- “Parents are usually drinking at the same time and not paying attention - especially at graduation parties.”

3

PERCEIVED PARENT ATTITUDES

- “Parents don’t really care as long as they (youth) are drinking somewhere with someone they know.”
- “My parents told me if I am going to drink, then do it with them because it’s legal (WI).”
- “At least in my situation, I don’t know of hardly any parents that don’t let their kids drink, or have drinks with their kids.”
- “I think there’s more parents who don’t perceive underage drinking as an issue vs those who do think it’s a problem.”

4

CHANGING THE CULTURE

- “Marijuana feels similar to alcohol, which is now normalized. Everything happening around marijuana is doing the same to it.”
- “Everyone is drunk on the 4th of July - and if you are drunk, the adults and parents won’t know because they are too.”
- “I feel like something needs to be changed at our school, especially with athletes getting caught and being waived because, ‘oh we need you on the team’.”

5

WHAT YOUTH WANT PARENTS AND ADULTS IN THE COMMUNITY TO KNOW

- “I feel like (substance use prevention) education should be more ‘real life’ scenarios.”
- “Be a better role model.”
- If a parent is using alcohol and have it in their household - keep it out of their kid’s sight and don’t promote it. If parents will portray it negatively, it will make a difference for the kids.”
- “Adults should use less around kids.”
- “There’s not a lot to do in town, not a lot of events. So when we are bored, a lot of kids turn to drugs and alcohol. Get us an Olive Garden, inflatable water park, summer activities, go karts, mini golf - literally anything!”
- “Supplying them isn’t helping them - it’s hurting them.”



WWW.CTCMARINETTEMENOMINEE.ORG
WWW.MMHYC.ORG



2025 FUNDRAISING EVENTS



**RAFFLES!
{ OPEN TO
THE PUBLIC! }**

YOUTH ICE FISHING DERBY 2025

**RIVER PARK CAMPGROUND ENTRANCE
MENOMINEE, MI**



**KIDS'
DOOR
PRIZES!**

CTC held its annual Youth Ice Fishing Derby fundraising event on February 8th, 2025.

**TASTY
TRAVELER
FOOD
TRUCK!**



LOGGING & HERITAGE FESTIVAL 2025

CTC's Funding Workgroup Participated in the 2025 Logging & Heritage Festival selling glow merchandise to raise funds for the coalition!



BILLBOARDS

Don't let nicotine control your brain.

COMMUNITIES in CARE of Marinette & Menominee Counties

healthy youth coalition

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

The Alcohol, Tobacco, and Marijuana Products/Policy workgroup in collaboration with HYC members created educational and impactful billboards in Marinette and Menominee Counties depicting brain development and negative impacts of alcohol, tobacco and marijuana use.

KNOW VAPE

COMMUNITIES in CARE of Marinette & Menominee Counties

healthy youth coalition

www.parentsagainstvaping.org

KEEP THE HEAVY METAL IN MUSIC NOT YOUR BODY

That isn't water vapor you inhale.

COMMUNITIES in CARE of Marinette & Menominee Counties

healthy youth coalition

2025 EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

COMMUNITY TALK:
MARIJUANA, TEENS, AND TOMORROW

A TOWN HALL EVENT FEATURING A DOCUMENTARY VIEWING AND Q&A WITH LOCAL EXPERTS

BAYSHORE ARTS CENTER AT UW-GREEN BAY, MARINETTE CAMPUS 750 W BAY SHORE ST.

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 19 6:00-8:00 P.M.
 (DOORS OPEN AT 5:30 P.M.)

LIGHT SNACKS & DOOR PRIZES WILL BE OFFERED

REGISTRATION IS ENCOURAGED!
 CLICK BELOW OR SCAN THE QR CODE
<https://communitytalkctc.eventbrite.com>

PROVIDENT HEALTH FOUNDATION OF MARINETTE/MENOMINEE

COMMUNITIES OF CARE

FEATURED DOCUMENTARY:

"CANNABIS-INDUCED PSYCHOSIS: A SILENT EPIDEMIC"
 Johnny Kenneth Stack
 2/7/00-11/20/19

JOHNNY'S AMBASSADORS

GUEST PANELISTS FROM:
 MENOMINEE POLICE
 MARINETTE COUNTY
 NORTHPOINT
 NORTHEAST Technical College

KATHI & CHRIS SULLIVAN
"SULLIVAN'S MESSAGE"

A community presentation designed for parents/guardians and adults who work with youth, focusing on the impacts of substance use, mental health challenges, and underage drinking.

Kathi Sullivan "Taylor's Message"
 Kathi shares the story of her daughter, Taylor, who tragically passed away during her senior year after a series of poor choices at underage parties. Determined to give Taylor's passing meaning, Kathi is driven by her loss and alarming youth drinking statistics to spread Taylor's Message.

Chris Sullivan "Not in the Playbook"
 Chris Sullivan, former NFL player, shares his journey to the league, his career's collapse from addiction, and his recovery. He discusses choices around alcohol, drugs, mental health, and how he overcame those struggles, often saying, "My sobriety chip means more to me than my Super Bowl ring. *Both were hard to get.*"

FEBRUARY 19TH, 6:30PM
PESHTIGO ELEMENTARY LEARNING CENTER CAFETERIA

PRIZES, CHILD CARE AND A LIGHT MEAL WILL BE PROVIDED

Sponsored by Marinette County ADAPT, Provident Health Foundation, Peshtigo School District, and CTC's DFC Grant Funding

PROVIDENT HEALTH FOUNDATION OF MARINETTE/MENOMINEE
 COMMUNITIES OF CARE
 PESHTIGO SCHOOL DISTRICT

REGISTER HERE
[HTTPS://SULLIVANSMESSAGEPHS.EVENTBRITE.COM](https://sullivanmessagephs.eventbrite.com)

Sullivan's Message - Kathi and Chris Sullivan came to Peshtigo High School in February for a schoolwide presentation during the day and a parent education event in the evening. Kathi shared the story of her daughter, who tragically passed away during her senior year of high school after a series of poor choices at underage drinking parties. Her husband Chris shared his journey to the NFL, his career's collapse from addiction, and his recovery.

Breaking Through the Clouds - Laura Stack, founder of Johnny's Ambassadors, came to Menominee High School for a parent education event. She spoke about her son Johnny's descent from a bright student to struggling with addiction to marijuana and mental illness.

Community Talk: Marijuana, Teens & Tomorrow - A town hall event was held at the Bay Shore Arts Center featuring the documentary from Johnny's Ambassadors titled "Cannabis Induced Psychosis: A Silent Epidemic." The documentary was followed by a panel of 10 local experts who answered questions from 70+ audience members.

BREAKING THROUGH THE CLOUDS

"Navigating Through the Age of Youth Cannabis and Vape Use."

The Dangerous Truth About Today's Marijuana
 Laura Stack, CEO
 Johnny's Ambassadors

Laura shares her personal story, detailing Johnny's descent from a bright student to struggling with addiction and mental illness. With moving candor, she reflects on the warning signs, their attempts at rehabilitation, and Johnny's own warning about marijuana use just days before his death. Laura's story is backed by scientific research on the harmful effects of high-THC marijuana, urging parents to educate themselves and their children about the risks of these substances.

The Impact of Vaping
 Melissa Blume, Community Health Educator
 Public Health, Delta and Menominee Counties

Also featuring Community Health Educator, Melissa Blume, Health Educator for Public Health, Delta and Menominee Counties, who will be providing an educational opportunity for parents to have a deeper understanding of vaping, the impact it has on developing brains, and how they can support their children to remain vape-free.

APRIL 23RD, 2025 6-8 PM
 Menominee Jr./High School Lecture Hall - 2101 18th Street

REGISTRATION ENCOURAGED - CLICK HERE!
[HTTPS://BREAKINGTHROUGHCLLOUDS.EVENTBRITE.COM](https://BREAKINGTHROUGHCLLOUDS.eventbrite.com)

LIGHT MEAL AND PRIZES WILL BE OFFERED! YOUTH AGES 12+ ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND WITH A PARENT OR ADULT

ALCOHOL AVAILABILITY

ID SCANNERS

In 2025, CTC purchased two ID scanners to be made available throughout Marinette and Menominee Counties for community events where alcohol is served. These scanners provide event organizers with an additional tool to accurately verify age and reduce the risk of underage alcohol access. This year, we piloted the scanners at the Marinette County Fair and Peshtigo Historical Day. The scanners successfully identified expired IDs, attempted “pass-backs,” and underage purchase attempts.



If you or someone you know is organizing an event where alcohol will be served and would like to reserve an ID scanner, please contact the coalition for more information.

“LOCK IT UP!” CAMPAIGN

Beer fridge/cabinet locks were again provided to over 100 adult parents and community members (21+) at no charge this fiscal year, thanks to our DFC federal grant and the Provident Health Foundation. These locks help reduce youth access to alcohol in home and social settings.



POSTER & COASTER CAMPAIGN

underage drinking
Brain Development Statistics

- The earlier someone starts drinking alcohol and the more frequently they drink, the greater the risk of negative consequences, including the development of alcohol-related problems later in life.
- Alcohol can negatively impact cognitive functions such as attention, memory, learning, decision-making, and impulse control.
- Alcohol use during adolescence is associated with an increased risk of developing alcohol use disorder (AUD) and other mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression later in life.
- Alcohol use during adolescence, when the brain is still developing, can have significant negative impacts on brain structure, function, and cognitive abilities, potentially leading to long-term problems.
- The prefrontal cortex, responsible for higher-level cognitive functions like decision-making and impulse control, is particularly vulnerable to the effects of alcohol during adolescence.
- Studies indicate that alcohol use can affect the development of both gray matter (responsible for processing information) and white matter (responsible for connecting different brain regions).
- The effects of alcohol on the developing brain can have long-term consequences, potentially impacting cognitive abilities, mental health, and overall well-being into adulthood.

underage drinking
Parental Statistics

- Locally, our youth say that parents are the #1 reason why they do or don't drink.
- Drinking under the age of 21 harms brain development and increases the chances of becoming an alcoholic.
- Teens who start drinking before age 15 are 5x more likely to develop alcohol dependence later in life.
- The most alcohol use by age 12 has been associated with alcohol abuse and other related alcohol behaviors, including chronic drinking and driving, absenteeism from work or school, and increased risk of using other drugs.
- More than 90% of the alcohol consumed by young people is in the form of binge drinking (four or more drinks per hour).
- The chance of an alcohol addiction disorder is seven times higher if someone has lifetime abstinence from alcohol consumption. The risks are even more pronounced if there is a family history of alcohol use disorder.
- Across the nation and in Wisconsin, underage drinking rates have declined in the last two years, but Wisconsin remains above the national average.

underage drinking
Accessibility Statistics

- Locally, the #1 way youth obtained alcohol was from parents, willingly.
- In 2023, among adolescents ages 15 to 17 who reported drinking alcohol in the past month, 84.3% reported getting it for free the last time they drank. In many cases, adolescents have access to alcohol through family members or find it at home.
- Around 50% of underage drinking is BINGE drinking. Adolescents are not responsible or developed enough to responsibly drink under the age of 21, even when monitored or provided to by adults.
- The Healthy Youth Coalition provides FREE fridge locks to safely lock up alcohol. Contact them for one today! 906-863-5665 ext. 1038

underage drinking
Understanding the Law

- Providing, selling, or allowing a minor to consume alcohol is illegal. Violating this law is typically considered a Class A misdemeanor, which can result in a fine of up to \$100, 143h City of Marinette and possible imprisonment for up to 9 months. If the minor causes harm or injury and is involved in an accident or leaves harm, there may be additional legal consequences.
- Selling alcohol to a minor or allowing a minor to consume alcohol in certain public places can result in more severe penalties, such as fines of up to \$1,000, jail time, and suspension or revocation of their alcohol license.
- Individuals who provide minors alcohol can face civil liability if the minor causes harm or injury while intoxicated.
- Even if the alcohol is provided in a private home, the consequences can be severe. Providing alcohol to a private home can have severe consequences. In addition to potential fines and jail time, if someone allows a minor to drink at a private event, they could be liable for any damage or harm that results from the minor's consumption (such as accidents or injuries).
- There are very limited exceptions, such as when alcohol is provided by a parent or guardian to their own child in the family home. However, this is subject to very specific conditions and is often closely scrutinized.

ATM workgroup members presented to the Marinette Tavern League (MTL) to educate on the prevention efforts that CTC is working towards in our communities. They shared the “Posters and Coasters” campaign materials that were created to help educate the public on the effects of underage drinking and serving to minors. Many materials were taken and distributed throughout the area in their establishments.

Thank you, MTL, for supporting our efforts!



COMMUNITY PREVENTION

HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT (HIPS)

Coalition members and staff, along with Marinette Police Dept. Captain Joe Nault, led parents and adult community members through the HIPS teen mock bedroom display. This display helps participants see firsthand some of the ways youth may hide drug use. HIPS presentations were done at NWTC with nursing students, Crivitz and Coleman School District parent-teacher conferences, and other various community events.



RESOURCE FAIRS & PRESENTATIONS

Coalition members presented and shared resources at various local schools and community events, including:

- Niagara Mobile Unit Resource Event
- DAR Community Kids Day
- Community Connection Day
- Goodman School District Educational Presentations with Staff and Jr High & High Schools



ADVOCACY WORK

Coalition members continue to educate key leaders and community members on the importance of creating healthy environments where youth can grow and thrive. Attendance at local city council meetings remains a priority as communities navigate the increasing number of marijuana retailers and related signage. Coalition members have educated about how the visibility and normalization of marijuana marketing may influence youth perceptions and attitudes. In addition, coalition representatives have engaged with local leaders to inform and educate how signage policies promote youth-friendly community standards.

Throughout the year, the coalition also hosted and participated in numerous events focused on empowering community members to use their voices effectively. Through continued education and engagement, CTC remains committed to supporting policies and practices that prioritize the health and well-being of youth.



COMMUNITY PREVENTION

WORKGROUP RECAPS

Data *Workgroup*

WHAT ARE THEIR DUTIES?

The Data workgroup reviews youth surveys and public data to identify priority outcomes and problem behaviors. Members may assist with data collection for grants and track changes in community outcomes over time.

- The Data Workgroup has completed analysis of the most recent youth survey and focus group results and has begun sharing these insights with community partners. Recent presentations were delivered to local school districts, the Menominee County Board, Representative Elijah Behnke's office, and the Community Health Partnership of Marinette and Menominee Counties.
- Alongside this work, the team has finished several environmental scans and compiled the findings for use in upcoming planning efforts. Marijuana-related scans are also underway and are expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2026.

www.ctcmarinette-menominee.org

CHECK IT OUT
↓

This year, the Funding Workgroup focused on building the sustainability fund to prepare for the eventual end of federal funding and this year's gap in funding. The Funding workgroup also took on many fundraising events this year including:

- **CTC/HYC Youth Ice Fishing Derby:** Our Youth Ice Fishing Derby planning went well in 2025 with a location change for the January 2026 event! We had extremely generous donors to assist in purchasing bucket raffle prizes.
- **Logging & Heritage Festival:** This event went so well this year selling glow merchandise throughout the island!
- **Vegas Night:** We moved Vegas night from a fall event to a spring event which gave us a gap year! We are planning an excellent event in April!

Acknowledgments: We deeply appreciate all donors, especially the Provident Health Foundation and the M&M Area Community Foundation, for their grant supporting prevention activities, especially when our federal grant paused. We are anxiously awaiting updates in the 2026 year.

Funding *Workgroup*

WHAT ARE THEIR DUTIES?

The Funding workgroup identifies funding needs and manages the acquisition of public and private funds to support the community coordinators, community board, and the action plan programs, policies, and practices.

Outreach *Workgroup*

WHAT ARE THEIR DUTIES?

The Outreach/Maintenance workgroup is responsible for promoting CTC, educating, and updating the community about the work of CTC, promotion and organization of community events, social media and website maintenance, and assistance with recruitment of volunteers.

Outreach has worked on keeping up with social media posts, creating radio ads, maintaining the website, and building our coalition. This group is present on Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram and is always looking for members who would like to help with this initiative!

Alcohol, Tobacco/Nicotine, & Marijuana Products/Advocacy

Workgroup

WHAT ARE THEIR DUTIES?

The Alcohol, Tobacco/Nicotine, and Marijuana (ATM) Product/Advocacy workgroup identifies and implements prevention strategies that aim to combine individual and environmental-focused initiatives to impact local conditions and root causes of youth use of alcohol, tobacco/nicotine, and marijuana products. The goals of this group include providing information and support, building skills, enhancing access and reducing barriers and system/environmental change efforts. We will measure our impact through audiences reached, evaluations and measuring outcomes. This workgroup also identifies advocacy opportunities and changes specific to the local problem behaviors and local conditions. ATM helps develop the annual action plan to educate local leaders on what's happening, best practices and sample policy language.

The ATM workgroup tackles a large portion of CTC's yearly action plan. Highlights for this year include multiple parent and community education events, new prevention billboards and signage throughout the community, collaboration with local school districts, and continued advocacy with local and state officials.

COALITION OPERATIONS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee is the "steering committee" for CTC and is made up of the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of all four workgroups. This group is responsible for sharing information and fostering collaboration between work groups; approving materials to be used, and tracking coalition progress.

"VOLUNTEERS DO NOT NECESSARILY HAVE THE TIME; THEY JUST HAVE THE HEART."

- ELIZABETH ANDREW

WHOLE GROUP COALITION MEETINGS

Whole Group meetings occur quarterly and are an opportunity for workgroups to come together to hear what other workgroups have done in the previous quarter or are planning for the next quarter. These meetings are open to community members, funders, or other organization representatives to attend and learn about the work happening within Communities That Care and share their own news and upcoming events. Each of these meetings also holds an opportunity for a presentation by an organization or service within our community that aligns with CTC's mission.

We welcome anyone interested in hearing about CTC to join us online or in-person at a future meeting. To see our upcoming meeting time and date, please check out our "upcoming events" section on our website homepage at www.ctcmarinette-menominee.org!

THANK YOU TO OUR MAJOR FUNDERS



**Drug-Free
Communities**

Local Problems Require Local Solutions



**MENOMINEE
COUNTY** 
Intermediate School District



THANK YOU TO OUR MEMBERS & ORGANIZATIONS THEY REPRESENT

Bethel Lutheran Church
City of Marinette Police Department
Healthy Youth Coalition of Marinette & Menominee Counties
Marinette County Public Health
Menominee County GSRP
Northeast Wisconsin Technical College
Parent Members
Public Health, Delta & Menominee Counties
Stephenson National Bank & Trust
UW-Extension Marinette County
RAYS Foundation
Menominee County ISD

ALSO, THANK YOU TO OUR SISTER COALITION



With your support we are able to reach the youth in our community!

“NEVER DOUBT THAT A SMALL GROUP OF THOUGHTFUL, COMMITTED CITIZENS CAN CHANGE THE WORLD: INDEED, IT'S THE ONLY THING THAT EVER HAS.”
-MARGARET MEAD