



# *Blueprints Promising Programs* FACT SHEET

FS-BPP14

1999 (Updated 08/2006)

## Project Northland

Project Northland is a community-wide intervention designed to reduce adolescent alcohol use. The program includes six years of programming spanning seven academic years and is multi-level, involving individual students, parents, peers, and community members, businesses, and organizations.

### Program Targets

Project Northland is a universal intervention designed for sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, eleventh and twelfth grade students. No programming is delivered in the tenth grade. It has been successfully implemented in rural, lower-middle class to middle class communities.

### Program Content

The success of this program lies in its comprehensive and long-term design. Each of the six years has a specific theme and incorporates individual, parent, peer, and community training.

- In sixth grade, student and parent communication is targeted by requiring parents and children to complete homework assignments together that describe adolescent alcohol use. Group discussions regarding this topic are held in school, and a community-wide task force is also created to address young adult alcohol use.
- In seventh grade, a peer- and teacher-led classroom curriculum focuses on resistance skills and normative expectations regarding teen alcohol use and is implemented using discussions, games, problem-solving, and role plays. A peer participant program also creates alternative alcohol-free activities, and parent involvement continues. The community task force discusses alcohol-related ordinances, and businesses provide discounts for those adolescents who pledge to be alcohol and drug free.
- In eighth grade, students are encouraged to become active citizens. They interview influential community members about their beliefs and activities concerning adolescent drinking and conduct town meetings to make recommendations for the community's help in preventing alcohol use.
- In ninth grade, the curriculum addresses pressures to drink and drive, or to ride with a drinking driver, the influences and tactics of alcohol advertising, and ways to deal with those influences.
- No programming is delivered in tenth grade.
- In the eleventh and twelfth grades, the intervention builds upon the early adolescent program components with new strategies for the students' last years in high school while emphasizing changes in the social environment of young people. The curriculum is based on the social influences theory of behavior change, where students are asked to debate and discuss the social influences to use alcohol and the negative consequences those influences have not only on the individual teen, but on the community as a whole. Through these debates and discussions, students are able to change the social norms surrounding alcohol use and convert negative peer pressure into positive peer pressure. Using an innovative, civil-trial approach, the curriculum challenges high-school students to examine the real-world consequences, both legal and social, of teen alcohol use. The program is peer-led and uses interactive methods to accomplish its instructional goals.

## Program Outcomes

An evaluation conducted at the end of the third year of intervention found significant benefits for intervention students, compared to control students:

- Lower scores on the tendency to use alcohol,
- Less use of alcohol in both the past week and the past month,
- Lower frequency of the combination of alcohol and cigarette use,
- Lower scores on the peer influence scale, and
- Increased communication with parents about the consequences of drinking.

Students who were nonusers of alcohol at the beginning of the intervention demonstrated:

- Decreased tendencies to use alcohol,
- Less alcohol use in the past week and past month, and
- Less cigarette and marijuana use.

An evaluation conducted at the end of the sixth year of intervention indicated the following significant outcomes for intervention students, compared to control students:

- Less likely to increase their Tendency to Use Alcohol and binge drinking, and marginally less likely to increase past month alcohol use.
- Reduced the ability to purchase alcohol in off-sale outlets.
- Parents in intervention communities as compared to parents in the control communities had less permissive norms regarding teen alcohol use.

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