

2007 Washington State Exemplary Substance Abuse Prevention Awards
November 16, 2007
Vancouver, Washington

We are here today for a very important reason, and that is to honor those who are dedicating much of their lives to one of the most important issues we face today – the prevention and treatment of substance abuse.

For you honorees, this summit not only recognizes your work, it also serves as encouragement to those who might feel like they are fighting a never-ending battle. You are proof that the challenges of substance abuse can, and will, be overcome.

Community activism, the ability to stand up and confront the problem and find more positive choices for our kids and our communities all works and it works well.

A simple thank you hardly seems like enough to express personal gratitude for your perseverance fighting substance abuse in our state. I am confident the citizens of Washington state share my appreciation for your commitment.

This is important work—valuable work. Without your perseverance, dedication and leadership this terrible problem would be much greater than it is today.

I have said it before and will continue to say: Washington is a safer and healthier place for our children and families because of the work you have done and continue to do every day!

As I call your name or your organization's name, please join me on the stage to accept your award:

First we will honor those who have earned the Individual-Professional Award.

Our honoree in this category is Patricia Ike and the Yakama Nation Comprehensive Community Alcoholism Program.

The Yakama Nation Comprehensive Community Alcoholism Program Coordinator and staff dedicate and volunteer their time to target many areas in the community to serve students, parents, community members, school personnel, prevention workers, youth workers, correction officers, probation staff, and juvenile court employees.

Over the past year, these individuals have provided 14 separate trainings reaching over 500 individuals the goal is to train as many people as possible in this skill and expect those trained individuals to implement their knowledge within their specific work environments.

This past spring the Alcohol Program worked with 33 different agencies, with in-kind contributions of over \$50,000 to provide the "Spring Jam" basketball tournament to over 1000 participants in the small native community of White Swan during Spring Break. White Swan is 20 miles from Toppenish, which is where the Alcohol Program's office is located. Patricia and her staff were vital in the success of Spring Jam.

This organization's recent efforts go way beyond expectations.

Patricia's program has been able to overcome obstacles by being persistent and respectful, identifying key players, and following the chains of command in the different organizations. There are also the issues of politics that can also immobilize efforts. She has been able to overcome these obstacles by being visible in the community, being very conscientious about communication, and keeping focused on the goals of delivering services to the community and the youth.

Thank you Patricia and to the entire Yakama Nation Comprehensive Community Alcoholism Program for your work and dedication to prevention.

Our next category is the volunteer award. Ed Neunherz, would you come forward please?

Ed has been volunteering for the Greater Spokane Substance Abuse Council (GSSAC) since 1993. He has served as a board member and has worked on numerous efforts over the years from staffing a GSSAC booth during a public event to assisting with numerous details regarding the Meth Watch program.

Above all, Ed has been attending the DUI Victim's Panel, twice a month for the last 14 years. He arrives at 6 p.m. and assists with the check-in process of approximately 100 plus people each session. He then attends part of the program to provide additional assistance when needed. Ed typically doesn't arrive home until after 8:30. Over the years, Ed has volunteered well over a thousand hours to GSSAC.

Ed's relationship with GSSAC is not a part of his job description which is vice president of Global Credit Union. He volunteers his time because of his dedication to prevention. He is a community leader in all aspects.

He lends his time and expertise to additional community programs such as the Campfire Boys and Girls, Boys and Girls Club and the Lilac Foundation. He is a retired Lt. Colonel from the United States Air Force who is giving back to his chosen community of Spokane.

Ed has been volunteering for GSSAC and the DUI Victim's Panel for 14 years. He is an active member of the Community Coalition and our Meth Action Team. There are few people that achieve this level of volunteerism.

Ed, you're an incredible and well-deserving volunteer. Thank you for all that you do.

Our next award is the Group Award.

Today we are honoring the Tobacco Control Coordinators, also known as the TATU Team for Teens Against Tobacco Use. They are from the American Lung Association of Washington. Representing the team today are Carrie Nyssen, Yvette Avila and Cristal Connelly. Would you each come forward please?

The TATU Team has implemented the Teens Against Tobacco Use program in 37 of 39 counties in Washington state. The goal of the program is to teach teens (high school and middle school) the harmful effects of tobacco use and tobacco industry advertising tactics and then have the teens create their own tobacco prevention presentation to be given to elementary students, targeting grades 4 and 5. More than 1,200 teens and 35,000 youth have been reached every year for the past five years.

In the past two years, collaboration has taken place between the TATU Team and community partners to rewrite the curriculum to be culturally appropriate to Native Americans and Latinos.

The Native American adaptation, Teens Against Tobacco Abuse, has been in demand this year in Washington state and tribes around the country are showing interest. Both adaptations are tremendous undertakings where the group has had to work together to build relationships, trust, a working culture, and group decision making process. The Lung Association convened these two work groups and ensured that consistent progress was made toward the end goal.

Implementing TATU in 37 of 39 counties in Washington state is a major accomplishment. No other statewide funded non-profit program has this achievement. The TATU Team has worked strategically to be accepted in each county and community where they have been successful. Attending coalition meetings, giving group presentations, providing trainings, and attending youth led activities has all led to the acceptance of TATU as a strong and successful statewide implementation.

Congratulations TATU team!

Our next group award is to the Ferry County Drug Endangered Children Task Force. Here today to accept this award is Chief Nick Merritt from the City of Republic's police department.

Ferry County is one of the more remote counties in Washington state. It's up in the Northeast quadrant of our state and much of it borders the western shore of Lake Roosevelt. The Colville National Forest takes up the northern half of the county and the southern half is comprised of the Colville Indian Reservation. The county has a population of around 8,000.

The Ferry County Drug Endangered Children's (DEC) Task Force began in October of 2005. The group consists of 15 individuals representing different agencies within the

county. The purpose of the DEC Task Force is to organize and activate government, agencies, business and citizens to address the county's substance abuse problems. This collaboration addresses the elimination of manufacturing, distribution and use of drugs by standardizing responses to the DEC.

The main goals are to increase community readiness from a vague awareness to a high level of community ownership and to promote change of community laws and norms favorable towards the drug use among citizens of Ferry County. By providing communities with Town Hall meetings, community members will become aware of the abuses and hazardous effects caused by methamphetamine labs as well as other drugs.

The Task Force has coordinated five Town Hall meetings from 2006 to present, providing community members and businesses with an educational pamphlet made by the group with a local toll free number to report suspicious activity that may involve a meth lab or meth user.

Earlier this year Ferry County DEC tested its policies and procedures by doing a Mock Disaster Drill, the first of its kind among Drug Endangered Children's task forces in the country.

Because of Ferry County's DEC passion to make change, they were recently recognized by the National DEC and were invited to attend the National DEC Conference in Kansas City just last month. Both the president and vice president of Ferry County DEC attended and presented a video on the disaster drill to the conference audience.

Ferry County DEC Task Force you are doing some fantastic work. Congratulations on this well-earned award.

Our next category is the Agency Award.

And this award goes is very highly deserved, the Greater Spokane Substance Abuse Council (GSSAC). Accepting this award on behalf of the agency is executive director Linda Thompson, her staff and coalition members. Please come forward.

The Greater Spokane Substance Abuse Council recently celebrated its 25th anniversary as a prevention agency. Over these years, GSSAC has maintained a mission to reduce substance abuse and violence in Spokane County. This mission has been sought through multiple goals that have evolved to increase effectiveness.

First, GSSAC has a community organizing goal that includes bringing agencies and people together around prevention efforts and empowering them to be effective. This goal has lead to multiple coalitions and efforts. Along with the Meth Action Team, the GSSAC Community Coalition meets regularly to network, share resources, and plan strategies to improve prevention efforts and take action. GSSAC also provides several training opportunities. These include trainings on prevention strategies to empower

parents, teachers, prevention workers, businesses, and others to incorporate prevention principles with the youth in their lives.

Furthermore, GSSAC conducts the Substance Abuse Prevention Specialist Training. GSSAC also believes strongly in environmental prevention and maintains a strong goal to create a positive community environment that supports healthy decisions. This goal includes ongoing activities by GSSAC and the Coalition to promote positive community norms and public policies.

As just one example, GSSAC was responsible for having alcohol removed from a family oriented Easter display in a local grocery store as well as a youth centered program no longer using alcohol as part of their fundraising.

GSSAC's Washington Drug Free Youth (WDFY) program involves over 20 different school based clubs with over 1800 middle school and high school members all choosing to be drug free. Subject to initial and random voluntary drug testing, the students are changing the community norms in Spokane County Schools by "making it cool to be drug free."

GSSAC is a program that has consistently gone beyond its required functions. Over the past 25 years, GSSAC has contributed greatly to the field of prevention; not just at the county level but across the entire state.

Linda Thompson is a strong legislative advocate and has testified for prevention on a host of various issues. Through all of this, GSSAC has not just made a positive impact on Spokane County but also the entire state of Washington. Nationally, GSSAC has been involved with the Community Anti Drug Coalitions of America's Coalition Institute through Linda Thompson as a Leader Mentor for CADCA.

The Greater Spokane Substance Abuse Coalition is an incredible model of what community coalitions can do with strong leadership and a resolve toward action. Congratulations.

Next we have a media organization that is being honored today.

Rufus Woods is the editor and publisher of the Wenatchee World. The Wenatchee World is a paper of approximately 56,000 circulation that was founded in 1905 and has been in the Woods family since it was purchased in 1907 by Mr. Wood's grandfather, also named Rufus, and his twin brother Ralph.

Rufus's son, Wilfred, was publisher of the paper from 1950 to 1997 when he passed it along to his son. The paper covers much of North Central Washington, and has long been recognized as the driving force behind the construction of the Grand Coulee Dam. But for years the paper has done something perhaps just as grand, especially in the eyes of many people here in this room.

They are one of the few media organizations that simply won't accept advertisements from alcohol companies. The Wenatchee World is one of them. The paper has only had one modification of this policy over the years – it will allow alcohol advertising if it is mixed in with other products, such as a grocery ad.

Who knows how much this has cost the company over the years, but this is what Rufus has to say about their long-standing policy:

“Accountability seems to be in short supply these days on the business front. As business has gone global and consolidation has occurred, the pressures of Wall Street have made it easy for corporations to view their responsibilities as solely financial. When money's the only thing that's important, then business has no soul. There's got to be more to life than that.”

Rufus Woods has taken the high road: he places the health and safety of our families and community above potential revenue from the alcohol industry. Media influence on alcohol consumption has been well-documented; it is an enormous boost to our prevention efforts that our leading media representative has established this policy.

In addition to maintaining the newspaper's policy, Rufus has volunteered his time to support prevention and education efforts in our community, in particular to traditionally under-served populations such as isolated rural, low-literacy, and migrant bi-lingual students and families. Wenatchee World articles frequently highlight the challenges, and contributions, of individuals and families struggling with disabilities, poverty, or language barriers. In addition, Mr. Woods' editorials consistently remind our community that to be truly healthy, we must be truly inclusive.

Congratulations, Rufus. This award is well earned and has obviously been a long time in coming. Thank you for all you do in Wenatchee.

Our next category is Lifetime Achievement. We have two people being honored in this category.

Melanie Hopkins from Ellensburg is the first honoree. Melanie, will you please come forward?

Melanie has worked for more than 15 years in our community to prevent and reduce substance abuse among youth and adults, as well as to establish and strengthen related collaborations in Kittitas County. She has worked tirelessly to braid local, state, and federal funding for our community into a dynamic and well funded initiative that involves collaboration with community, government, law enforcement, and youth.

Melanie is the Kittitas County Public Health and Community Network Director and is the liaison to the Community Network Board. The board, which is represented by many different facets of the community, is an essential part of the Network's success.

Developing and maintaining this board, as any community organizer will tell you, has been a huge and rewarding endeavor for Melanie.

Melanie and the Network Board are currently establishing a work plan that focuses on developing youth leadership, strengthening parenting skills, enhancing, enforcing and establishing school and community policy and law related to substance use. This includes adopting prevention curriculum in schools as well as increasing awareness and knowledge of substance abuse risk and protective factors.

Achievement of these objectives involves working with youth, parents, other prevention coalitions, school administration and educators, law enforcement, and other community partners. Melanie's work in substance abuse prevention is focused on sustainable, systematic, and community driven change.

And change is happening. DUI rates are going down as a result of the work coordinated by Melanie in the DUI Task Force. By procuring additional funding through federal grants, Melanie has made possible capacity building and strategic planning regarding substance abuse prevention in her county.

An effective drug and alcohol prevention curriculum has been adopted by school districts in her county as a result of collaborative work and brokering funding to initiate the curriculum in her schools, and additionally, Melanie has spearheaded leadership building opportunities for youth in Kittitas County by collaborating with and securing state and federal funding.

What sets Melanie apart from other substance abuse workers in the state is her dedication and effort. Melanie has found ways to keep the vision at the forefront and creative ways to get over the many hurdles.

Congratulations Melanie for this well-earned award.

Our next lifetime achievement award is to Jim Borte of Port Angeles. Jim is with the Clallam County Sheriff's Department. Jim, will you please come up here?

Jim Borte has worked for over a decade and a half in Substance Abuse Prevention. He is currently in Clallam County as the CMASA staff person, and on the Board of Prevention Works, a community coalition of Clallam County.

Jim is on the Board of Port Angeles Healthy Youth Coalition, on the Board of the Clallam County Community Network, is THE staff for the DUI Task Force and the Clallam County Meth Action Team, is the staff that conducts the Alcohol Compliance Checks in Clallam County, is the staff that runs the Victim Panel and the Grim Reaper events, as well as functioning as a community resource. Jim has no administrative staff to assist him in most of his duties.

He is an active Board member on all the boards he sits on not just a name on a list. He assists with media and publicity especially since he is the public affairs officer for the Clallam County Sheriff's Department. He has been a crucial partner in analyzing Clallam County data and in writing the Six Year Prevention Plan for Clallam County. Jim has worked tirelessly for the youth and families of Clallam County.

Jim's role as a member of law enforcement has been very helpful in many coalition activities. He has helped coordinate many community events, the latest a Dads Matter! Forum held in Port Angeles focusing on the importance of fathers in the prevention of substance abuse. He has coordinated funding through CMASA for many types of prevention programming in Clallam County.

Jim works as a paid staff person in the Sheriff's Department but he volunteers many hours of time to ensure quality best practice prevention programs are implemented. Jim has been a strong advocate for evidence based programming, for the use of data from many sources for decision making, and for the use of the risk and protective factor model and the strategic prevention framework model. He also has been a strong advocate for prevention through the years. He has done much training on advocacy.

The latest collaboration was a Dads Matter Forum that was held in June 2007. There were over 60 co-sponsors, over \$8,000 in cash contributions and many months of planning that took place for events to occur. There were over 250 people at the Sequim event and over 140 people at the Port Angeles event. Jim chaired this event with his excellent guidance and organizational skills.

The Dads Matter Forum was a program that focused on the importance of fathers in the prevention of substance abuse. Men and particularly fathers, grandfathers and other male caretakers are not usually the focus of special prevention efforts.

Jim, thank you for your outstanding work in Clallam County.

Now there is just one more thing we need to do today and that is to give some very special and honorable recognition to the Granite Falls School District for a very important accomplishment. Tom Arlt and Vervia Gabriel please come forward. Tom is the district's prevention coordinator and Vervia is the assistant superintendent.

Earlier this year, the Granite Falls School district was named the winner of the National Science to Service Award by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA), a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Science to Service award was created as a way of recognizing community-based organizations or coalitions that have shown exemplary implementation of evidence-based mental health and substance abuse interventions.

For the past several years, the Granite Falls School District has been a leader in drug and alcohol prevention efforts in Washington State. The small school district 45 miles north of Seattle, is very proud of its award winning staff, students and programs.

The Granite Falls Life Skills Training program was first researched and implemented by Tom Arlt in 2001 for middle school students and expanded to elementary students in 2005 and high school students in 2006. The District's 2006 Healthy Youth Survey results showed Granite Falls as having one of the most dramatic declines in drug use of any school district in the state. For example, results show a 27 percent, 21 percent, and 20 percent decline in alcohol, marijuana, and tobacco use for eighth grade students over six-years.

In the same six year period results showed a 20 percent, 20 percent, and 10 percent decline in marijuana alcohol, and tobacco use for tenth grade students over the same six-year period. Meth use for 8th grade went from 4.5 percent in 2002 to 0 in 2006 and from 6 percent to 1 percent for 10th graders.

In addition to the Life Skills curriculum, the district maintains a mentor program for 45 students in grades K-12 and has opened a Community Resource center that provides additional prevention strategies as well as mental health and parenting programs.

Over the past five years Snohomish County Human Service's Prevention Program, with funds provided by DASA, has been a key collaborator with Granite Falls School District by helping fund and support the implementation of the highly successful Life Skills Training curriculum.

Outstanding job, Granite Falls! Thank you for all that you do.

And that concludes our awards for today. Again I wish to thank not only the award winners, but everyone here for your exemplary job of fighting substance abuse in our communities.