

Town of Bedford, Town Center, 12 Mudge Way, Bedford, MA 01730-2171

Telephone: 781-275-7727

Fax: 781-275-7767

Web Site: www.bedfordma.gov/youth



Special points of interest:

- *Is It Possible to Wait Until 8th?*
- *Bike Path Smarts and Etiquette*
- *JGMS After School Program Spring 2018*
- *Youth and Family Services Committee 2017-2018*
- *The Importance of Youth Employment*
- *Wednesday, May 2nd is Massachusetts Walk and Bike to School Day, 2018!*
- *Bedford DASH Survey*
- *Mental Health at College and Beyond*
- *Youth and Family Donors*
- *Veterans' Services District*
- *SAFE HOMES*
- *It's 3 a.m. and You're Wide Awake. Is it Insomnia or Something Else?*

Is It Possible to Wait Until 8th?

Over the last several months parents in Bedford have been discussing the impact of technology on their young children and wondering about the recent "Wait Until 8th" movement, referring to holding off on purchasing handheld cellphones or other electronic devices for their children until that grade in school. Parents are concerned about the wave of technology, apps, and gadgets coming along and seeming to bear down on our children. With all of their amazing benefits, cell phones have also been used to bully and shame, especially with girls using that medium. Some parents have talked about implementing new rules in their homes, such as no technology is

taken upstairs and played with in bedrooms or private areas. That includes iphones, tablets, or anything with web or recording access. Some parents think that if the kids want to mess around and create videos of themselves and/or other young guests in the public areas of the home, that may be fine, as long as parents can see what they are doing and doors are always open. Children and any playmates will have to leave any gadgets with a parent in the kitchen or wherever and are only welcome to use them there under supervision. And parents are suggesting that this rule could be applied when their children visit the homes of other friends, too.

The parent discussion has focused on encouraging other Bedford parents to apply this rule and even wondered about creating a community pact with parents to sign on, maybe even similar to the Safe Homes Pledge that parents sign up for related to not providing access to alcohol or other substances or guns to minors in their home. Parents have such diverse reasons for getting their children phones so they can keep in touch with them and know their whereabouts, with many 5th or 6th graders in possession of these devices currently. Would a speaker like

Cont'd on page 4



Inside This Issue:

JGMS After School Program	2
YFS Committee 2017-2018	2
YFS Staff Queries	2
The Importance of Youth Employment	2
Wednesday May 2nd is Massachusetts Walk and Bike to School Day	3
Bedford DASH Survey	3
Is It Possible to Wait Until 8th? cont'd	4
Mental Health at College and Beyond	4
Are My Eating Habits Healthy?	5
Youth and Family Services Donors	5
Summer Concert and Walkabout	5
Veterans' Services District	6
SAFE HOMES	6
It's 3 a.m. and You're Wide Awake. Is It Insomnia or Something Else?	6

Bike Path Smarts and Etiquette

- ◆ Be AWARE of traffic in front of and behind you.
- ◆ Stay to the right, except when passing.
- ◆ Do not pass with oncoming traffic. Just before passing, look behind you to make sure no one is passing you and calmly call out "on your left." Avoid sneaking up on people.
- ◆ Slow down for merging traffic and crowded areas.
- ◆ Avoid or slow down for sand, leaves, gravel, oil, soft tar, water, dogs, and small children.
- ◆ Avoid wheel-eating grates.
- ◆ Do not dominate the entire path.
- ◆ Avoid carrying things in your hands or wearing heavy backpacks.
- ◆ Wearing headphones is not recommended.
- ◆ If you stop to rest, pull off the trail to get out of the way.
- ◆ Wear reflective gear and safety lights at night.
- ◆ If you must skate or bike in the street, move with the direction of the traffic. Always use extreme caution to predict a car's path; look at the driver not just the car. Be prepared for opening car doors.



Adapted from On Your Left, Inline Skating Safety Guide, MA Medical Society

Spring 2018 JGMS After School Program

**BABYSITTER
TRAINING**

GIRL TALK

**SHOOTING AND
EDITING FOR TV**

**ADVANCED
VIDEO
PRODUCTION**

**FITNESS AFTER
SCHOOL**

Bedford Youth and Family Services in collaboration with John Glenn Middle School is gearing up for another successful Spring After School program with a focus on the most popular activities including **Babysitter Training** with Maureen McDermott, **Fitness After School** with Lauren McCarthy, **Girl Talk** with Bedford High School student leaders and advisor Wendy Tanahashi-Works, and **Shooting and Editing for**

TV and Advanced Video Production with Greg Dolan. Activities begin the week of April 2nd and the registration deadline for all programs is Wednesday, March 28th. Space is limited; be sure to sign up as soon as possible to secure your spot.



Flyers are available in our office and at the JGMS Main Office. Feel free to call Jessica Wildfong at 781-275-7727 with any questions or concerns.

2017-2018 Youth and Family Services Committee:

Peter Ricci, Chair ♦ Tom Pinney, at Large ♦ Alison Malkin, at Large ♦ Marcia Morgan, at Large
Caroline Fedele, Selectman & Recreation Liaison ♦ Jeff Wardwell, Police
Ann Guay, School Committee ♦ Mary Seymour, Board of Health Liaison

Newsletter Credits:

Layout & Design
Fran Stander

Editor
Sue Baldauf

Contributors
Sue Baldauf
Jessica Wildfong
Bill Linnehan
Carla Olson



BYFS Staff Queries - Main Number: 781/275-7727

Sue Baldauf, Director, x263 - Counseling referrals or questions ~ General dept. questions ~ Community concern ~ Issue related to Violence Prevention Coalition, Bedford Community Partnership, Business Diversity Training, Progress Fund ~ Parenting Education Topic

Fran Stander, Administrative Assistant, x264 - General questions ~ General community & Resources ~ Job Match ~ Events & Press Releases ~ New Resident Packets ~ Volunteer Opportunities

Jessica Wildfong, Youth Development/Prevention, x262 - JGMS After School ~ Peer Mentoring ~ Youth Website ~ Other youth related issues - Alcohol, tobacco, or drug education ~ Diversion ~ Youth Risk Behavior Survey ~ Safe Homes ~ Fuel Assistance

Carla Olson, Healthy Bedford Coordinator, x260 ~ Safe Routes to School & Healthy Bedford initiatives

Bill Linnehan, Veterans Agent, 781/275-1328 - Any veterans related question

Eliot Counselors: 781-275-7727 Lynne Chapas x261, 978-369-1113 Andrea Vana x4159, Holly Boker x4117, Laura Smith x4136

The Importance of Youth Employment

Did you know that 3 out of 4 youth cannot find a job and that employment rates for youth in Massachusetts and the nation are at a new post-World War II low, with high school students and low income youth faring the worst? What this means for employers is an unprepared, unskilled work force and employees that lack a strong work ethic, an understanding of employer expectations, work place communication skills, and the link of educational goals to work.

If you can give a kid a job, you will help better prepare the future workforce, increase youth earnings over time, and decrease youth risky behaviors from lack of structure and interesting employment.

What you can do: Give a young adult a job! ♦ Subsidize a job or internship ♦ Become a mentor to a youth at your work ♦ Provide job shadow days for youth at your work

To give a local kid a job, contact Job Match at 781-275-7727. For more information about regional youth employment, contact Metro South West Regional Employment Board at 508-281-6910.

Adapted from Metro South West Regional Employment Board, March 2011

Healthy Bedford



Wednesday, May 2nd is Massachusetts Walk and Bike to School Day, 2018!

Hundreds of celebratory events will occur all over the state, with thousands of students and their families walking or riding their bikes to school!

Massachusetts Walk and Bike to School Day is a statewide event organized through the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS). Last year, the Commonwealth set a record with nearly 300 schools participating in events throughout the state. These events help increase the visibility of walking and biking in Massachusetts while showcasing the benefits of healthy transportation in our community.

Walk or Biking to School is an option to consider on almost any day, but event days are extra special! Please visit www.bedfordma.gov/healthy-bedford for walking and biking route ideas, including 2 new maps/routes which illustrate popular routes students can walk or bike to Lane School.

Bedford DASH Shuttle Survey

We are looking for your feedback on the DASH, our pilot transportation service. Whether you have ridden the DASH or not, we would like your feedback on this very brief survey found at the DASH website: www.bedforddash.com. The survey will run from March 22nd to April 6th.

This survey will inform us on how the program is working and how we might improve the service going forward. If you are not yet familiar with the DASH, it is Bedford's portal to portal shuttle service currently running Monday through Friday 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., and is available to all those who live and work in Bedford. The DASH is a 14 passenger fully handicapped-accessible vehicle that will travel throughout Bedford and also to Lexington, Billerica, and Burlington all week days. Concord trips are available on Mondays and Tuesdays. Fares are \$2 for adults ages 18-65 in town and \$4 out-of-town; Medicare Card Holders, Veterans, disabled persons, and seniors age 65+ pay \$1 in town and \$2 out-of-town. Youth under 18 pay \$1 in town and \$2 out-of-town. Discounted prepaid ticket books are available for purchase for \$20.

If you have questions about the DASH, visit www.bedforddash.com or call 781-275-DASH(3274).

Is It Possible to Wait Until 8th?

Cont'd from Page 1

Brooke Shannon or Catherine Steiner Adair in conjunction with the parent association meetings be a good place to further this community conversation?

Brooke Shannon is the founder of the "Wait Until 8th" movement and you can hear her on a previous interview on WBUR http://www.wbur.org/on_point/2017/12/03/smartphones-kids-wait

I know there's been some discussion at both the high school and middle school about educating kids, too, about the responsible use of technology and the addictive impact of screens on their brains.

As we all ponder what choices to make some parents are suggesting a more restrained option such as a simple flip phone, which does not have data or web access. Another

parent suggested one of the new watches that allow a child to have up to 10 pre-programmed numbers that are the only numbers they can use for a call or text and also allows the parent to track their child's whereabouts via an app on their own smart phone. There is no web access on these watches.

In January Screenagers Tech Talk reported two major investors in Apple, JANA Partners LLC and California State Teachers' Retirement System (CalSTRS) wrote an open letter to Apple Inc. asking them to make additions and changes to their products that would make parenting around screen time more effective. JANA and CALSTRS provided several concrete ideas to Apple including a suggestion to integrate internal settings to help parents restrict time:

"...the initial setup menu could be expanded so that, just as users choose a language and time zone, parents can enter the age of the user and be given age-appropriate setup options based on the best available research including limiting screen time, restricting use to certain hours, reducing the available number of social media sites..."

Until children are old enough to make thoughtful choices about technology and understand and appreciate the boundaries necessary for safety, I highly recommend parents refer to Delany Ruston at Screenagers and their Tech Talk Tuesday articles, which are quite good and emailed out weekly to parents who sign up. Many parents were fortunate enough to see the Screenagers movie when it was at the high school

and later the middle school a year or so ago. At this time of our children's lives where they undergo changes physically, physiologically, and emotionally, we as parents need to be in conversation about how to protect them from making harmful decisions, much as we prevent them from alcohol and drugs until their brains are more developed. If we collectively limit social media interactions at this challenging age, it may be easier on us individually as we establish boundaries with our kids and they compare our house rules with other kids they know. The idea of a network of parents who pledge to wait to give their kids phones until 8th grade or even high school can enhance community awareness about the negative impacts of having phones at too-young an age.



Mental Health at College and Beyond

College can be a time of exciting changes and new experiences. It's also a time when those at risk are likely to experience a first episode of bipolar disorder.

This relatively common mental disorder is associated with severe mood swings, difficulty sleeping and loss of touch with reality. But, because episodes are not predictable and there are many symptoms that are connected to bipolar disorder, it

can be challenging to recognize bipolar disorder in oneself and others. Accurate diagnosis is an important step to finding the right treatment.

While the cause of bipolar disorder is not fully understood, stress, substance abuse, biological conditions and genetics may all play a role in its development. Trauma can also be a mitigating factor.

The experience of bipolar disorder can be lonely and

frightening, but mental disorders in college students are not as uncommon as you might think. Studies show that one in three college students report having prolonged experiences of depression, and one in four students have suicidal thoughts or feelings.

Though only about half of those with bipolar disorder receive treatment for their condition, help and effective treatment is available. So, this March 30,

World Bipolar Day, why not take a free, brief online screening to learn if symptoms you or someone you care about may be consistent with bipolar disorder and find some resources where you may be able to get treatment.

Bedford Youth and Family Services offers the screenings at www.bedfordma.gov/youth under the "screenings" section where you will also find local resources.

The Fuel Assistance Program will end at our Bedford office on March 30th, 2018.

Please contact us before March 23, 2018 if you intend to apply this season.

Are My Eating Habits Healthy?

Managing work, family and other obligations can make maintaining a healthy weight particularly challenging. Sometimes, the effort to lose weight, maintain weight, or meet some standard of ideal weight can lead to eating disorders.

The most common eating disorders are the following:

Anorexia nervosa, characterized by someone seeing themselves as overweight, even when they are dangerously underweight. People with anorexia nervosa typically weigh themselves often, severely restrict the amount of food they eat, and eat very small quantities of only certain foods. Anorexia has the highest mortality rate of any mental illness.

Bulimia nervosa is characterized by someone who, while often maintaining relatively normal weight, practices 'binging and purging', where they frequently eat unusually large amounts of food followed by forced vomiting, excessive use of laxatives or diuretics, fasting, excessive exercise, or a combination of these behaviors.

Binge-eating disorder occurs when a person goes through periods of binge-eating but does not purge afterwards.

A commonly held view is that eating disorders are a lifestyle choice. They are actually serious mental illnesses that can seriously compromise a person's health, including lowering the heart rate, causing muscle weakness, loss of bone density, and – too often- death.

While untreated eating disorders can be tragic, the good news is that they are treatable. If you or someone you know is preoccupied with food and weight, you may have the symptoms of an eating disorder. Take a free and anonymous self-assessment at www.bedfordma.gov/youth under the "screenings" section and find local resources. February was Eating Disorders Awareness Month, so share the news about this free resource with friends and loved ones.

Thank you to our Donors:

American Legion
Women's Auxiliary

Anonymous (4)

Bedford Motel

Bedford Post Office
Employees

Bedford Schools
Administration
Employees

Callahan's Kenpo
Karate

Cambridge Savings
Bank

Carleton Willard
Village Resident's
Association

Carriage House

Doubletree Bedford
Glen

First Parish in Bedford
Social Responsibility
Council

Flatbread Company

Michael & Lea Ann
Knight

Mettler Toledo

Millipore Corporation

Moison Ace Hardware
of Bedford

O'Malley and
Colangeli CPA's

Staples

VFW Post 1628

Whole Foods

&

The Residents of
Bedford through
your Taxes

Save the Date

Thursday, July 12

SUMMER CONCERT AND WALKABOUT

Please join us for the first night of the 2018 SUMMER CONCERT SERIES at the Town's Activity Complex, 12 Mudge Way, featuring the Party Band! This event will include a lively concert and walkabout with lots of room for dancing, seating, picnicking and activities. The venue is surrounded by a playground, outdoor basketball courts, tennis courts, a walking track, a skate park and numerous athletic fields. Bands perform on a slightly elevated stage. This event is co-sponsored by Recreation, Economic Development, and Healthy Bedford along with the Bedford Chamber of Commerce. Stay tuned for more details.



Veterans' Services District

Save the Date

Memorial Day

Monday, May 28th at 8:30 a.m.

The Memorial Day observance on May 28th will begin with a remembrance at the American Legion at 8:30 a.m. followed by a march to the Shawsheen Cemetery where several speakers

memorialize deceased veterans.

Participants proceed to the Shawsheen River for a brief reading memorializing the deceased Navy veterans and a wreath is placed in the water. Readings continue at The Old Burial Grounds and Bedford High School with the procession leaving the

School at 11:30 to march to Memorial Park for the closing ceremony. Details will follow the Public Holiday Committee meeting in early April.



Bedford/Lexington Veterans Services

781-698-4848
Lexington

Monday-Friday
8:30 - 4:30 Lexington

781-275-1328
Bedford

Tuesdays & Thursdays
8:30-4:30
Bedford

Sign Up for Bedford's SAFE HOMES



The Safe Homes program is a support network for Bedford parents with children in grades 6-12 who are concerned about alcohol and drug use at pre-teen and teen parties and gatherings. Families who join SAFE HOMES promise to provide a safe and supervised home for teen parties. You can sign up online for Safe Homes by going to our website www.bedfordma.gov/youth (Click on Safe Homes). Participating families will receive a directory booklet containing contact information of others who have joined. The directory will be mailed in late fall to all families that have signed up.

For more information or questions about the Safe Homes Program please call Jessica Wildfong at 781-275-7727.

It's 3 a.m. and You're Wide Awake. Is it Insomnia or Something Else?

Getting enough sleep is one of the most important things you can do for your health. Yet, experts estimate as many as 68 percent of adults experience insomnia, which means they either can't get to sleep, can't stay asleep, or the quality of their sleep is poor.

Excess stress and lack of exercise are two common contributors to insomnia, so finding effective methods to manage stress and get more exercise are often key to reducing insomnia. Other tips to help you get a better night's

sleep include:

1. Go to bed at a consistent time every night, even on weekends, and avoid day-time naps.
2. Practice simple relaxation-inducing stretches shortly before bedtime.
3. Take a hot bath or shower 30 minutes before bed.
4. Practice prayer or meditation.
5. Eat foods that have a calming and cooling effect, such as chamomile tea,

peppermint, pears, and watermelon.

6. Check with your doctor to make sure you are getting enough vitamins D, B12 and iron. Insufficient amounts of these nutrients are associated with poor sleep.

For convenience, many people turn to sleep medications. But sleeping pills can have side effects that may be just as bad as insomnia. Therefore, over the long term you may find it much more effective to change

your lifestyle habits than to turn to medications.

If you are suffering from insomnia and think it may be related to a common and treatable mental health disorder such as depression or generalized anxiety disorder, you can take a free and anonymous mental health self-assessment at www.bedfordma.gov/youth under the "screenings" section.



Mark Your Calendar for Annual Town Meeting March 26th & 27th!

