

For Immediate Release:
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Southshire Substance Abuse Coalition Appoints New Leadership

Bennington and Manchester, Vt. — The Southshire Substance Abuse Coalition (SSAC) has appointed Glen Gross, of Arlington, to be the new coalition and Drug Free Communities program coordinator. The SSAC has also appointed Kerri MacLaury, of Bennington, as program manager for the Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant.

“The Southshire Substance Abuse Coalition has an ambitious program to reduce tobacco use, underage drinking, and drug use among youth in Bennington County,” said Ralph Provenza, executive director of United Counseling Service, SSAC’s fiscal agent.

“This is a unique opportunity to promote better community health. Both Glen Gross and Kerri MacLaury will be working with school-age youth, parents, and community members to identify problems and take steps to reduce substance abuse.”

Gross and MacLaury expect to do this through building relationships with local community members and agencies, soliciting input, and developing prevention resources and activities to reduce substance abuse. Recently, the SSAC sponsored the Sticker Shock Campaign that swept through town and is currently partnering with Southern Vermont College to deliver a social norms campaign.

“This is an excellent opportunity,” Gross said, “to provide the community with resources they say they really need. Everyone these days can use a little more help and we’re thrilled that we can offer our support.”

In prior work, Gross has been the coordinator of a substance abuse prevention coalition in New London, CT, and the community coordinator at the Northshire area’s substance abuse prevention coalition, The Collaborative. Gross has also been an adjunct instructor at Southern Vermont College since 2007. He has a master’s degree in teaching from Connecticut College, a master’s degree in College Student Personnel Services from Miami University, and a bachelor’s in History from State University of New York at Geneseo.

“The community has very real needs when it comes to substance abuse,” MacLaury said. “Being able to offer the community, and its youth, educational opportunities, resources, and substance-free programming means so much to me personally and to many others involved.”

MacLaury worked for two years of AmeriCorps service in the Vermont Youth Development Corps AmeriCorps*State program. Her focus was on youth substance-free event programming and substance use prevention. For her service with AmeriCorps, she received a Governor’s Award for Outstanding Volunteer Community Service. She has a bachelor’s in Literature from Whitman College.

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The Southshire Substance Abuse Coalition is a volunteer group dedicated to advocacy and action related to substance abuse prevention and education. Its members include interested citizens, parents, and youth, the local faith community, representatives from MAUHS, MAUMS, SVC, Bennington College, Turning Point Club, PAVE, Center for Restorative Justice, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Bennington County, the Vermont Dept. of Health, Div. of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs, Dept. of Children and Families, and local law enforcement agencies.

The SSAC meets the 2nd Thursday of every month from 8:30am-10:30am at the Career Development Center. To join the SSAC or inquire about volunteer opportunities, call (802) 442-5491 or send an email to info@southshirecoalition.org.

United Counseling Service serves children, adults, families, and seniors through nationally recognized counseling, early care and education, and clinical support. Visit www.ucsvt.org to find out more.

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