

Maine Tobacco Prevention Success Story

Healthy Communities of the Capital Area Gives Back to the Community through Tobacco Prevention

Summary: What do you do with your conference and travel budgets when everyone is under a “Stay at home” order? How about support local businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic, and achieve tobacco prevention success years in the making!

Tobacco Prevention is OUR priority – but not the community’s in the midst of an unprecedented pandemic

According to the 2019 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey 48% of Kennebec County high school students say it would be “easy” to get their hands on cigarettes. How much more tempting would tobacco be when they’re bored at home during quarantine? We were determined to persevere with our tobacco prevention efforts, but were finding it difficult to get on the radar of so many businesses and organizations swamped by current events.

Let’s make a deal!

We turned our unused travel and expense budget funds into an incentive for community partners to prioritize tobacco policies. They could get mini grants we offered for staff time, trainings, branded signage, beautification projects, youth engagement – whatever they needed to create and pass a successful, comprehensive tobacco-free policy. We publicized over social media and email, and reached out via phone to get the word out.



City of Gardiner’s beautiful downtown Water Street pocket park, now smoke-free!

“We here at Big Brothers Big Sisters of Mid-Maine are very excited to collaborate with HCCA on bringing anti-smoking/vaping/chewing education to the youth we serve.” – Sophie Piconi, Development Manager



Success!

We were thrilled to successfully offer funds to community partners throughout Kennebec County, some of whom we’d spoken with for years and just needed this final push to create a policy that prevented use of all tobacco products on their property, creating spaces that set positive examples for community youth and provided access to Maine’s free quitting resources at the Maine QuitLink to people who feel ready to try to quit.

The five successful applicants included:

- Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Mid-Maine brought smoke-free policies to 7 sites across Maine!
- Gardiner Main Street, in partnership with City of Gardiner made public parks and waterfront smoke-free!
- Gardiner Boys & Girls Club – sponsored a poster contest for youth to promote their new smoke-free policy!
- Senator Inn & Spa – beautified their former smokers’ area and connected staff to the Maine QuitLink!
- Zardus School of Massage – sent staff to Tobacco Basic Skills training, had HCCA offer staff training, updated handbook and signage!
- Town of Readfield – are taking public spaces in town smoke-free and are creating branded signage!

For more information, contact us at:

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