

# Maine Tobacco Prevention Success Story

## Summary

A group of youth from Maine Arts Academy, having been trained on the tobacco prevention program Sidekicks, decided to form a Youth Taking Action group to help address the vaping epidemic.

### Despite tough consequences at school, youth use of electronic vaping products continues to rise...

According to the 2019 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey, 29% of Maine high school students have used an electronic vaping device at least once in the past 30 days. This number is almost double survey reports of 15% in 2017. What's additionally troublesome is that nearly half of all Maine high school students surveyed have tried vaping at least once. Youth also stated that their social networks were their primary point of access.



"Sidekicks has been an opportunity for my students to learn about the dangers of vaping. My students like the curriculum, it's very easy to follow and the best part is some of my students have applied what they have learned in class to their lives."

- Shara MacDonald, Health Educator, Erskine Academy

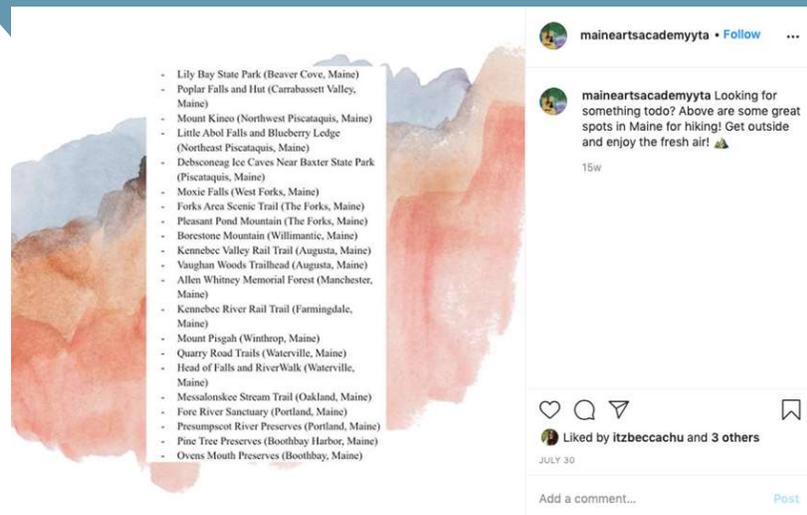
### The Maine Arts Academy Sidekicks group launched an Instagram page!

Students on campus, as well as anyone who followed them, were able to see Instagram posts created by the group promoting various topics: places to hike, games to play, yoga, how to draw and drum, etc. They were able to normalize "healthy" behaviors as opposed to "unhealthy" ones like vaping. The posts also identified additional youth interested in vaping prevention.

## SIDEKICKS

### Time to Tackle This Issue

Upon completion of the empowering Sidekicks peer-to-peer vaping prevention training, a group of attendees decided to partner with April Hughes, tobacco prevention and youth engagement coordinator at Healthy Communities of the Capital Area, to take action. The group convened monthly and developed a project idea aimed at youth vaping prevention. They identified reasons their peers may try vaping, and also discussed messaging that wouldn't be relevant or impactful for youth. With this information, they decided to focus on ways to promote positive and healthy alternatives to vaping (or using other substances) where their peers could see it: social media.



### For More Information, Contact Us At:

Healthy Communities  
of the Capital Area

a.hughes@hccame.org

207.588.5343

[www.hccame.org](http://www.hccame.org)



healthy  
communities  
OF THE CAPITAL AREA  
making connections ~ improving lives



MAINE  
PREVENTION  
SERVICES

Maine Center for Disease Control & Prevention  
Department of Health and Human Services