

December 2021



Happy Holidays From The Vernon ROCKS

This month's newsletter is chalk full of updates and resources! Be sure to check it out!

[Visit our Website](#)

"Ambition, fueled by compassion, wisdom and integrity, is a powerful force for good that will turn the wheels of industry and open the doors of opportunity for you and countless others."

—Zig Ziglar

Real Talk Member Celebrated at The Village's Girl Within



We are so proud of Saher (pictured left). She was awarded The Village for Families and Children's, 2021 [Girl Within](#) Young Woman of the Year! Through her work, she has supported the coalition's mission to prevent youth substance use and advocated for her peers, amplifying prevention efforts in Vernon. During her acceptance speech, Saher called attention to the barriers to substance use treatment for women in particular and emphasized her desire to continue making lasting community-level changes.

The event showcased strong women throughout the community, the funds raised throughout the event support The Village's early intervention, educational, and

empowerment programs for young women, girls, and their families.

Read more about Saher's accomplishment and the event [HERE](#)

DECEMBER COALITION INITIATIVES



New Billboard on Display Now

The 6th and final billboard of the year is on display on Route 83. (Pictured Above). This billboard encourages people to make healthy choices going in to the new year.

Annual Drunk Driving Prevention Efforts

In honor of [National Impaired Driving Prevention Month](#), Real Talk and RHS's Peer Advocates partner annually with local alcohol retailers to decorate brown bags with prevention messages that discourage drinking and driving. (See image to the right for an example from our 2019 initiative)

December is devoted to preventing impaired driving. During this season, the coalition wants to remind you to celebrate safely by **NEVER** driving impaired. [In 2019, there were 10,142 alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities](#), that is 10,142 people who lost their lives because someone decided to drive under the influence, Connecticut attributed to 94 of those deaths. We can significantly decrease that number. Parties are pre-planned, so should your ride! If you plan to drink, make sure you have a designated sober driver (DD) or call an Uber or Lyft to take you home. If you are the DD make sure you take it seriously!



CT DOT is offering an Uber discount to reduce impaired driving during the holiday season. The discount code, [SAVETHENIGHTCT](#), saves you \$10 on a ride and is available now through January 14, 2022, between the hours of 5 p.m. and 4 a.m. for anyone needing a safe ride home.

The Vernon ROCKS Coalition hopes you have a great and safe holiday season and start 2022 off right!

Handling the Holidays - Providing Mental Health Resources to the Community

The holidays are glamorized as a "perfect" time but often this perception of perfection leads to stress and loneliness. In an effort to provide resources for those who may be struggling during this time we teamed up with local agencies to help. One partnering organization is Vernon Social Services, together we were about to provide a resource card (pictured below) for teens that provides 5 tips for coping with stress. The resource cards will be given to those receiving gift cards from Social Services.

VERNON ROCKS COALITION

5 TIPS = FOR TEENS DEALING WITH = MENTAL HEALTH

| | | | | |
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| Ask for HELP | Focus on your STRENGTHS | Engage in HEALTHY ACTIVITIES | Find STRATEGIES that work | Surround yourself with POSITIVE SUPPORT |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Sometimes we cannot handle life challenges on our own. THAT IS PERFECTLY FINE. Realizing that and asking for help is crucial to maintaining positive mental health. If you need help reach out to a parent, teacher, or other trusted adult so they can help find ways for you to manage your stress. | We all possess incredibly positive qualities. Some people have different skills and abilities, by building YOUR STRENGTHS, you can better cope with your stressors. Your strengths serve as constant reminders that positive outcomes are possible. | Physical activity has been proven to be a great way to release stress. In addition to good nutrition, it helps you feel better inside and out. Right now is a perfect time in your life, as your body and mind develop, to create HEALTHY HABITS that we can carry with us through life. | Mental health issues are MANAGEABLE . There are so many avenues that can be taken to manage your mental health. Identifying coping skills, activities, or hobbies that make YOU happy and incorporating them into your daily life can seriously help in maintaining positive mental health. | Finding friends who support you and treat you kindly helps to keep positivity in your life. Even on social media, whom you follow can drastically impact how you feel, make sure you are engaging in POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS |

For more mental health resources visit www.vernonrocksct.org

In addition, we teamed up with Cornerstone for their Santa's Breakfast to provide some tips for every age to try to make this time as enjoyable and happy as possible.

5 TIPS FOR HANDLING STRESS DURING THE HOLIDAYS

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| <p>Acknowledge your FEELINGS</p> <p>It's normal to feel sadness and melancholy during this time if you've lost someone or if you are not able to see all your loved ones because of COVID-19.</p>  <p>Take time to acknowledge whatever feelings or emotions you may experience during this time.</p> | <p>REACH out</p> <p>If you feel lonely or isolated, call a loved one, video chat, or see if there are virtual events that can offer support.</p>  <p>Seek professional help if you need it. Despite your best efforts, negative feelings can persist. If they do, talk to a professional.</p> <p>Remember it's okay to not be okay.</p> | <p>Don't abandon HEALTHY HABITS</p> <p>Refrain from unhealthy coping habits and do not forget about the expectations and boundaries you have set in your home around safe drinking practices</p>  | <p>Be REALISTIC</p>  <p>We are living in unexplored times.</p> <p>Embrace new traditions, and don't expect this time to be perfect.</p> <p>Practice gratitude for the things that go right but do not stress if things do not.</p> | <p>Take a BREATH</p> <p>Make some time for yourself. Find an activity you enjoy. Take a break to be by yourself.</p> <p><i>breathe</i></p> <p>Oftentimes the holidays make our schedules busy with things we need to do and places we have to go. That can take a toll on our mental health if we do not prioritize self-care.</p> |
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For more mental health and substance use prevention resources visit www.vernonrockscot.org

Click [HERE](#) for more information on handling holiday stress.

IN THE NEWS

America is seeing record-high overdose rates. Within a one-year period, 100,000 people lost their lives to a drug overdose. The New York Times stated, "federal researchers reported the result of lost access to treatment, rising mental health problems and wider availability of dangerously potent street drugs."

Dr. Nora Volkow, director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, remarked, "These are numbers we have never seen before...The fatalities have lasting repercussions, since most of them occurred among people aged 25 to 55, in the prime of life".

Nationally, this crisis is being addressed in the passed stimulus bill. The bill included "\$1.5 billion for the prevention and treatment of substance use disorders, and \$30 million to fund local services for people struggling with addiction, including syringe exchange programs."

Locally, we have to continue to [safely dispose of our medications](#), be familiar with [signs of an overdose](#), and if you or someone you know uses opioids, [carry Naloxone](#)- an overdose reversal drug.

You can read the entire NYT article [HERE](#)

If you or a loved one is having trouble with substance abuse check out the available resources in the area.

[Get Help](#)

If you are aware of an underage party or illegal activity follow the link and submit the anonymous form below, and the Vernon ROCKS Coalition will work with the Vernon Police Department to prevent or stop the activity.

[Report it Here](#)

Are you are interested in becoming more involved with the Vernon ROCKS Coalition we are always looking for more members. You can join by visiting our website!

[Get Involved](#)

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