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April 14, 2023

Dear Parents of 5th Graders,

You and your 5th grader are invited to an important event “Gearing Up for Middle School” at LYME SCHOOL on Thursday, May 4th, 6pm, and at MILE CREEK SCHOOL on Tuesday, May 9th at 6:00 p.m.

At the end of April and early May, Alli Behnke (Prevention Coordinator at LYSB) will be meeting all 5th graders to talk about substance abuse prevention and introduce them to positive skills for setting their “one choice” to be healthy and safe by staying alcohol and drug free.

As part of this early prevention model, we are asking you to partner with us and participate in a fun evening with your 5th grader. “Gearing Up for Middle School” is a hands-on evening designed to encourage conversation, address excitement/fears around moving up to 6th grade, and facilitate early prevention strategies for youth and families. Research tells us that talking early and often about risky behavior is extremely important now, and as children continue to grow through Middle and High School.

Our data consistently shows that parents/caregivers are the #1 influence in their kids’ lives! Every two years, Lymes’ Youth Service Bureau partners with the Lyme-Old Lyme Schools to survey youth in grades 7-12 about substance use, risky behaviors, as well as protective factors in making positive choices. With average first use of alcohol at 14 and marijuana 14.3, we are committed to providing our younger students and families with support and resources.

The most recent survey (2021) showed a substantial decline in students’ perceived harm of youth alcohol and marijuana use. In 2019, 51% of 7-12th graders reported feeling that daily drinking is harmful compared to only 33% reporting the same in 2021. This rapid decline in perception of harm, along with only 50% of students in 7-12th grade reporting that their families have clear rules discouraging drug and alcohol use, encouraged LYSB and the Lyme-Old Lyme Prevention Coalition to support young families even further.

We know that these conversations can be really hard and we’re here to help! Please join us for a fun night! Pre-register at www.lysb.org. For more information about prevention in L/OL, please visit www.lysb.org/prevention

Hope to see you there!

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