

Ledge Light Health District

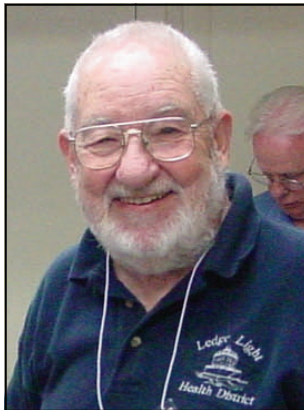


2006-2007
Annual Report

Providing Public Health Services to the Citizens
of East Lyme, Groton, Ledyard, New London and
Waterford, Connecticut

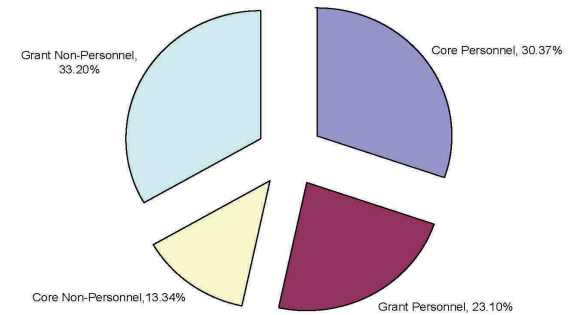
The Ledge Light Health District
dedicates this
2006-2007 Annual Report
to

Francis "Sam" L. Crowley

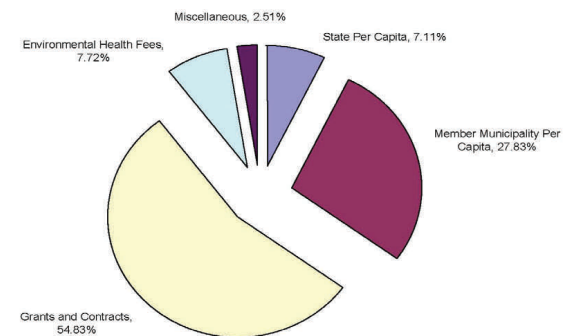


for ten years of dedication as the
Director of Ledge Light Health
District

FY06/07 Expense Categories



FY06/07 Revenue Sources



Administration & Finance

As the programs and activities of the District continued to grow in the last year, the demand on back-office operations increased as well. Changes in staffing and infrastructure increased support to District colleagues as they advanced important public health programs.

Improved Customer Service: An additional Administration and Finance staff member was added who is cross-trained in various activities. All staff can now be a resource across multiple functions.

Information Technology: New FileBound® software allows staff to store and retrieve electronic copies of Environmental Health records. Staff can log into the system from any computer that has an internet connection, allowing access to required information from remote offices or other off-site locations. The software also acts as a database, tracking progress on permits and maintaining current information on licensed establishments. File Bound® is an important part of the District's emergency communication system that can be used to send public health alerts.

The District website: www.ledgelighthd.org is an important tool for sharing information about District activities and programs. This year the public health alert section was launched. Alerts are posted about situations that may negatively impact the health of the community. Public health alerts may include a food or product recall or a posting about a rabid animal. This site also allows residents to automatically receive new alerts. Visit our website and click on the Public Health Alerts tab to sign up today.

2006-2007: A Transition Year



I take great pleasure in dedicating this Annual Report to Sam Crowley, who nurtured the growth and guided the program development of this health district so skillfully for 10 years.

Sam stepped down in January and slipped easily into his new role as a consultant to public health organizations. Sam also found the time and energy to steer his boat for a nine-week journey through American and Canadian waterways. As Sam's many friends would exclaim: "What a curmudgeon."

Sam leaves us a solid platform and a skilled staff to pursue our mission of preventing disease, illness and injury among the populations we serve. He has earned our grateful thanks.

The Organization ~

The District is governed by a fourteen member Board of Directors as prescribed by CT State statutes. Ledge Light Health District serves approximately 120,000 residents, providing all 10 Essential Public Health Functions and enforcing the Public Health Code of the State of CT.

Ledge Light Health District employs a staff of 28 public health professionals to provide Community Health Education, Environmental Health Services, Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, and Public Health Emergency Planning/Response.

Baker Salsbury

Baker Salsbury, MPH, MSW, MHSA

Dedicated to Public Health

Our Mission: *To prevent disease, illness and injury; To protect our environment; To promote improved health and prosperity for all residents.*

The Ledge Light Health District provides professionally managed, comprehensive public health services designed to improve the quality of life in our service area. The District service area consists of the Town of East Lyme, Town and City of Groton, the Town of Ledyard, the City of New London and the Town Waterford with a service population of over 120,000.

Our Staff:

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Cindy Barry | Assistant Director, Health Education & Community Relations |
| Cheryl Beebe | Financial Assistant |
| Yolanda Bowes | Project Assistant |
| Mary Buckley-Davis | Asthma Program Coordinator |
| George Calkins | Senior Sanitarian |
| Sue Congdon | Epidemiologist |
| Janice Costin | Administrative Assistant |
| Catherine Dragoo | Grants Administrator |
| Monica Farina | Emergency Preparedness Coordinator |
| Michelle Hamilton | Drug Free Communities Coordinator |
| Kenn Harris | Community Health Coordinator |
| Heather Kozlowski | Project Assistant |
| Kerensa Mansfield | Community Health Coordinator |
| Stephen Mansfield | Deputy Director of Health |
| Hillary Martin | Sanitarian I |
| Ryan McCammon | Sanitarian II |
| Jennifer Muggeo | Assistant Director, Administration & Finance |
| Felix Prokop III | Sanitarian II |
| Baker Salisbury | Director of Health |
| Brain Sauvageau | Senior Sanitarian |
| Kimberly Stone | Environmental Technician |
| Martin Tolentino | Community Health Educator |
| Janeese Watson | Project Assistant |
| Kimberly White | Sanitarian II |

Oral Health and In-School Dental Programs

The Southeastern Connecticut Oral Health Collaborative (SMILES) was formed in August 2001 as an outgrowth of statewide oral health activities including safety-net dental providers and health and social service professionals in New London County. Now in the fourth year of funding by the Connecticut Health Foundation, SMILES remains committed to changing the system of dental care in the county. The vision is a seamless system of dental care for all residents.

SMILES mission is to ensure that:

- All residents, especially children, have access to quality, affordable, and comprehensive oral health services
- Community service providers understand and reinforce the importance of good oral health on overall health and make the necessary referrals to dental care
- The county's dental providers, private and safety-net, meet the demand for services

Brighter Smiles and Smiles on the Move: In-School Dental Programs

SMILES' collaborative partners continue to expand their In-School Dental Programs through Community Health Center's "Brighter Smiles" and United Community & Family Services' "Smiles on the Move". In-School Dental Programs bring preventive dental care to children during the school day.

The programs visited 78 schools and nine TVCCA Head Start and Early Care & Education sites in 14 towns during 2006/07. Over 1,100 children took advantage of this convenient program, providing a cleaning, exam and fluoride treatment by a registered dental hygienist in the familiar school setting. In-School dental services are fully covered by HUSKY insurance.



In February, New London County celebrated its second annual Give Kids A Smile® Day. Twenty-three area dentists volunteered their time. Over 120 children were screened and 112 received free dental treatment. Celebrations were held throughout the county as dentists from East Lyme to Colchester opened their offices to children who may have had difficulty accessing dental care. Thanks to these dedicated dentists, more children in New London County are proud to show off their beautiful smiles.

New London County Health Assessment

In July 2006, the CHAMP partners contracted with the Center for Health Policy, Planning and Research at the University of New England to conduct a comprehensive health assessment of New London County residents. The commissioned study utilized data from a random-digit-dialed telephone survey of 1,300 households on health and health related topics. The study also used hospital emergency department and inpatient data, birth and mortality data, cancer registry and infectious disease data.

The objectives of the study were to:

- Develop a comprehensive baseline profile of health status and utilization indicators of county residents
- Assess the adequacy of existing services in meeting priority health needs while identifying duplications and gaps in services
- Provide recommendations on improving access and quality of care through integration of the public health system with health care providers and the community
- Develop a process for dissemination and use of data information from the study

The study summary report was released on April 5, 2007 at a conference sponsored in part by Mohegan Sun. Speakers from Maine General Health and Eastern Maine Healthcare described how similar studies have been used to improve the system of care in their communities. Conference attendees participated in focus groups to provide feedback on the key findings and provided recommendations for next steps. The study Oversight Committee reviewed the focus group feedback and formulated an action plan to address the study findings. Currently, a new collaborative is forming as an outgrowth of CHAMP to prioritize key issues identified in the study and coordinate activities to address those issues.

The summary and full study report are available for public viewing at www.ledgelighthd.org/programs/NLCStudy along with the conference presentations.

The Ledge Light Health District is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of community members appointed by our member municipalities. As defined by Connecticut State Statute, each member municipality appoints one director for each 10,000 population and one additional member for each 10,000 population or part thereof.

2006-2007 Board Members:

Town of East Lyme

F. Kent Sistare, Jr, Esq.
Phyllis Wienski, RN (Treasurer)

City of Groton

Shirleyann Dunbar-Rose (Chair)

Town of Groton

Steven Carlow, M.D.
Catherine Kolnaski
Jackie Massett
Howard Root, M.D.

Town of Ledyard

Marilyn Richard, Ed.D., APRN
Dennis Sindel, D.D.S. (Secretary)

City of New London

Sherry Bassi, Ed.D, APRN (Vice-Chair)
Martin Berliner
Corina Vendetto

Town of Waterford

Bruce Kruszewski
Bruce Shewbrooks



Meetings: The Board of Directors meet on the second (2nd) Thursday of each month at 5:30pm at 943 North Road in Groton.



✓ Inspect Food Service Establishments

Ledge Light Health District is responsible for licensing and regulating activities involving the preparation and service of food that is sold or given to the public within the District. This includes traditional food service establishments, temporary events, vendors and caterers.

The following activities are performed by the District Sanitarians:

- Inspect all establishments that prepare and serve food that is sold or given to the public
- Review plans for new or remodeled food service establishments to assure compliance with the CT Public Health Code
- Investigate all complaints associated with food service establishments
- Identify and investigate all reports of food borne illness (food poisoning)

✓ Monitor Shellfish Beds

The waters of Fishers Island Sound provide access to some of the best shell fishing grounds on the Connecticut coast. Ledge Light Health District, in cooperation with member municipalities' Shellfish Commissions and the State of Connecticut Department of Aquaculture, works to assure that the recreational and commercial shell fishing areas remain sanitary.

District Sanitarian responsibilities include:

- Open and close shellfish beds as needed (in case of heavy rainfall, sewage spills, high bacteria counts)
- Conduct periodic shoreline surveys to investigate complaints of possible point source pollution (those that flow directly into a surface water source, usually out of a pipe or specified trench/ditch)
- Monitor rainfall data
- Notify associated agencies, individuals and the media of shellfish area openings and closings

Community Health Access Management Program (CHAMP)

In September 2004, Ledge Light Health District, in collaboration with seventeen health and social service providers in New London County was awarded a 3-year, \$1.9 million grant to create a county-wide healthcare access network. The collaborative partners named their effort CHAMP (Community Health Access Management Project). Under the guidance of Project Director, Sue Peters, CHAMP developed a system of care to:

- Improve healthcare access
- Provide coordination of affordable healthcare and social services
- Improve efficiency in the healthcare delivery system through a reduction of duplicate services and an increase in information sharing

The CHAMP partners continue to improve access to healthcare for New London County residents. CHAMP's Access to Care and Pharmacy Assistance Programs are available on a continuing basis at partner locations.



Yolanda Bowes, Elizabeth Lopez, Jessica Lyman and Sue Peters

Harry A. Watson Jr. Summer Public Health Internship

In the fall of 2004, Harry A. Watson, Jr., founding member of the Ledge Light Health District and past Chairman of the Board of Directors, resigned to become Mayor of the Town of Groton. To honor his service to the District and address a shortage in the public health workforce, the Harry A. Watson Jr., Summer Internship Program was established for high school juniors and seniors in the District service area. A formal application was established. High ranking candidates were interviewed by a selection panel.



The internship program provides successful candidates the opportunity to work with District staff in various disciplines of public health.



This past year, Danielle LaFleur and Christopher Soeller were chosen for the 6-week paid summer internship. Danielle and Chris worked side-by-side with District staff learning various aspects of public health and making significant contributions to the daily work of Ledge Light Health District.



Their activities included:

- Sampled beach water
- Participated in septic system field work
- Observed food inspections
- Posted environmental health alerts
- Prepared and staffed health fairs
- Supported regional coalitions
- Designed health education materials
- Worked with the media and wrote press releases

✓ Monitor Beach Water Quality

Bathing water quality is measured by the number of enterococcal organisms (a group of organisms that may indicate the presence of potentially harmful bacteria).



Ledge Light Health District wants to ensure that a day at the beach does not result in illness related to poor water quality. At least once a week, from mid May to mid-September, a Sanitarian collects water samples from different bathing areas in the District. The water samples are then sent to the state laboratory for analysis. The test results are compared with state guidelines – if the sample result is greater than 61 per 100ml, the water is then re-sampled to double check the results. If the second test confirms the elevated level, a bathing advisory is posted at that location. Ledge Light Health District continues to monitor the site and removes the advisory as soon as the levels are safe.



✓ Review Septic System Plans

Many homes rely on on-site sewage disposal systems to treat their domestic sewage. Ledge Light Health District is responsible for reviewing, approving and inspecting all residential and commercial septic systems that discharge less than 500 gallons per day.

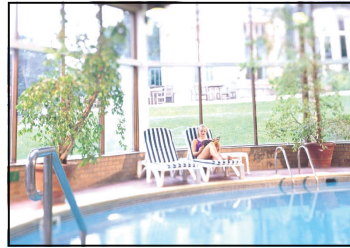
These activities include:

- Conducting soil evaluations and percolation tests to assure site suitability
- Reviewing and approving plans for septic systems
- Assuring that construction activities do not adversely impact the on-site septic system or reduce potential repair area
- Inspecting new or repaired septic systems
- Investigating complaints related to failing septic systems
- Retaining records for all new and repaired septic systems including as-built drawings

✓ Public Pools

All pools that are open for public use are inspected at least once annually. This comprehensive inspection ensures that the pool is equipped with all necessary safety equipment and water testing documentation, including:

- First-aid kits
- Safety signage
- Emergency phone numbers
- Depth markers on pool deck
- Chemical analysis of pool water



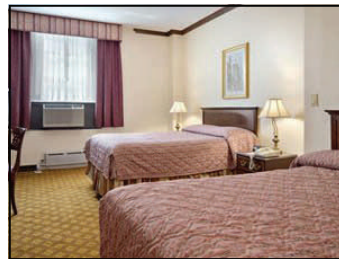
In the event that unsafe or unsanitary conditions pose a public health risk, the District Sanitarian takes immediate steps to close the pool until the pool is brought up to the CT Public Health Code.

✓ Salons

The District licenses and inspects over 90 establishments in our jurisdiction. Inspections are conducted annually and focus on ensuring that sanitary conditions are maintained.

✓ Lodging Establishments

Ledge Light Health District maintains registration information for all lodging establishments in our jurisdiction. In the event of a complaint or if unsanitary conditions are discovered, the District uses the CT Public Health Code as a regulatory tool to bring the establishment into compliance.



Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response

The District continues to work in a leadership role in local, regional, and state planning and response related to public health emergency preparedness. As the Region 4 lead agency, and fiduciary, the District coordinated health and medical leaders from New London, Windham and Northeastern Counties to work on establishing communication protocols, an inventory of resources, and exercises to better prepare a public health response. This effort has provided infrastructure in establishing the Health and Medical Emergency Support Function as outlined by federal and state officials. The region collaborates with the CT Department of Public Health, and the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security.

In 2007, Ledge Light Health District in cooperation with the Department of Emergency Preparedness hosted a communications exercise, and participated in a tabletop pandemic flu exercise. The “School Dismissal Tabletop Exercise” was attended by 85 school, municipal, emergency, public health and medical officials to explore school dismissal as a containment measure for pandemic flu.

Communications remained at the forefront of planning. The Health Alert Network was established to use web-based technology to deliver phone, fax and electronic mail alerts simultaneously to six directory groups, with over 850 entries. The District continues website development serving as a source of public health alerts, educational materials, and information about meetings.

Ledge Light Health District received official recognition as a “Medical Reserve Corps”. This designation allows medical and other volunteers to operate and receive protection under the Federal Citizen Corps organization. Volunteers remain an essential part of the infrastructure responding to any emergency requiring health and medical support.

District staff members have continued training to meet Federal Emergency Management Agency guidelines for Incident Command and National Incident Management Systems to fully integrate with other emergency responders. Assuring the health of public safety and emergency responders with personal protective equipment resulted in purchasing supplies to meet projected needs.

Communicable Disease Prevention and Response

The District monitors, investigates and provides control measures for communicable diseases in order to limit their spread. The staff works closely with hospitals, clinics, physicians and residents to achieve this goal. Prevention information and educational materials are provided to the public, schools, businesses and medical providers. Much of this information is available on our website.



Communicable disease monitoring and investigation for tuberculosis, along with other reportable disease outbreaks are identified for containment measures. The district works closely with long term care facilities to control gastrointestinal and respiratory outbreaks in residents.

The Childhood 0-2 Immunization program tracks children for registration and continued enrollment in the CT Children's Immunization Registry. Immunization protects children against preventable disease and prevents outbreaks in the community. Outreach assures continued protection during early development.



The 50 member Public Health Advisory Pandemic Flu Committee addresses vital issues to respond to pandemic flu and other related emergencies.

✓ Rabies Prevention

Rabies is an infectious disease that affects the nervous system of mammals. It is usually transmitted through the bite of an infected animal, although disease transmission is possible if saliva from an infected animal comes in contact with an open wound or mucous membrane. Raccoons, bats, foxes and skunks are the animals most commonly associated with rabies. The District, in cooperation with our member municipalities and animal control officers, maintains strict protocols to ensure that potentially rabid animals are transported and tested for rabies in a timely manner. In the event of a positive rabies report, the District conducts door to door notification in the community where the animal was captured.

✓ Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention

Lead is a dangerous contaminant with severe effects in children. Exposure to lead may negatively affect children's behavior and development. District Sanitarians enforce the CT Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Regulations. When the District receives a report of elevated blood lead levels, an environmental investigation is initiated to determine how the individual is being poisoned. The District follows up with the family during the period of remediation and recovery.

✓ Mold Remediation

Molds are types of fungi that live on plants, food, dry leaves, wood and other organic materials. Mold spores are the reproductive parts of the microorganism. A group of mold spores can be seen with the naked eye. When present in large amounts, mold may adversely affect health by causing allergic reactions, triggering asthma episodes and other respiratory problems.

Molds need water to survive and grow. If mold is found in a home, the source of the moisture must be identified. Improved ventilation, dehumidification or leak repair may be required. The existing mold should be removed. Discard mold contaminated materials that cannot be dried out and cleaned. Hard, non-porous materials may be cleaned with a bleach and water solution. Always wear gloves and ventilate the area well when using bleach. Wear gloves and a respirator with a HEPA filter when cleaning or handling moldy materials.

Health Education Activities

The District's Community Health Education and Promotion staff is committed to providing health promotion activities and community outreach that incorporates multiple prevention strategies to address the needs of the community. Education staff work in partnership with local and state agencies, community coalitions and health and human service organizations to deliver coordinated initiatives aimed at preventing disease, illness and injury among all residents.

The functions of public health education include:

- Collect and provide public health data
- Assess public health needs
- Convene and collaborate with local agencies and interested parties
- Adopt evidence-based public health programs
- Participate in town, regional, and statewide coalitions
- Utilize multi-media to promote and protect public health
- Advocate for specific health policy and environmental changes
- Educate the public about health and wellness
- Participate in community events and health fairs
- Evaluate effectiveness of health promotion programs

An excellent example of putting these public health functions into practice was the formation the African American Health Council of Southeast CT in January 2007. Local, state and national data was collected documenting high death rates due to cardiovascular disease among African Americans. The District applied for and received 3-year funding from the CT Department of Public Health to engage leaders from the African American, faith-based and medical communities for the purpose of implementing a plan to reduce premature deaths due to heart attack and stroke.

A 3-year plan to prevent cardiovascular disease among African Americans was adopted. The plan includes educational programs, health screenings, community events and a media campaign. All program activities are closely monitored with effectiveness measured and adjustments made throughout the life of the project.

Health Education Programs

Celebrate Health: Heart Attack and Stroke Risk Reduction Program

The *Celebrate Health* Program is an initiative of Ledge Light Health District funded by a 3-year grant from the CT Department of Public Health in December 2006.

The goal of the Celebrate Health program is to reduce the incidence of death and disability from heart disease and stroke among African Americans. This work is accomplished through cooperation with the African American Health Council of Southeastern CT. The program includes an aggressive media and public awareness campaign and a 6-week health education workshop held in churches and community organizations.

Since January 2007, the African American Health Council has attracted 27 active members. Key partners include the American Heart Association, the American Cancer Society, the Faith in Action Network, the NAACP, individuals affected by heart disease and community residents.

The Celebrate Health program incorporates the priorities of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention for heart disease and stroke:

- Control high blood pressure (hypertension)
- Control high blood cholesterol
- Know the signs and symptoms of heart attack and stroke
- Know the importance of calling 9-1-1
- Improve emergency response
- Improve quality care
- Eliminate health disparities

The first "Celebrate Health" series was held in May 2007. Seventeen individuals wishing to set goals to improve their health and reduce their risk of heart attack and stroke participated.



Breaking the Silence: Breast Health Awareness Program

Ledge Light Health District, the Susan G. Komen Foundation CT Affiliate, and the SECT Breast Health Task Force continued a multicultural, breast cancer awareness campaign called, *Breaking the Silence*. After hearing from hundreds of women and men, it was clear that few people talk to one another openly about breast cancer. With the help of well-known local breast cancer survivors, the Breaking the Silence campaign has encouraged community members to start talking.

Initiatives of the Breast Health Task Force included:

- Task Force members visited local high schools and provided Mother's Day cards. Teens learned about the importance of early detection while reminding their mothers aunts, and grandmothers to have an annual breast cancer screening. Over 400 cards were mailed.
- Educational displays and presentations were provided at senior centers, senior and Navy housing and public libraries.
- Radio and newspaper advertisements and posters reached thousands of community residents.
- "In the Pink: A Celebration of Women's Strength, Beauty and Healing" was held at the Hygienic Art Gallery featuring artwork by local artists.



Groton Adolescent Substance Abuse Prevention

The Groton Adolescent Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition (GASP) was established in 1999, under the auspices of Ledge Light Health District. The Coalition has been continually assessing the strengths and weaknesses in the community that promote or threaten positive outcomes for youth. In May 2006, the Groton Youth Survey was administered to 562 teens in grades 7-12. This survey created a picture of what life is like for teens in Groton with respect to school, family, peers and community. The answers to over 40 questions were compared to earlier surveys to measure changes in attitude, knowledge and behavior related to substance abuse. The full report can be found on the District website: www.ledgelighthd.org

Policy change initiatives, enforcement activities, campaigns to limit access to alcohol and other drugs by teens, positive youth development and family programs are the hallmarks of the GASP Coalition. In 2006-07, the Coalition reached nearly 8,000 Groton residents through programs such as Boys and Girls Club, Second Step, Strengthening Families, Violence is Preventable, Maritime Academy, Art for All, ACE Camp and activities through the Youth Advisory Council. Teenagers attended MADD Power Camp and returned with new ideas for reducing underage drinking which sparked the following activities: the "Sticker Shock" campaign, the 2007 "Bag Swap", "Parents Who Host Lose the Most", and the "Point of Sale" campaign.



Health Education Programs

Lyme Disease Prevention Project

Ledge Light Health District received a 4th year of funding from the CT Department of Public Health to continue a comprehensive project aimed at reducing Lyme disease. In 2006/07 the District launched its “STOP THE BITE” campaign gaining national attention for the use of landscape demonstration sites and deer resistant plantings as part of an integrated approach to reducing tick borne disease. Project activities included: newspaper inserts to 49,000 homes, activity books and materials for children and schools, a poster contest, library displays, tick warning signs for golf courses, patient education and tick testing. A new landscape demonstration site was established at Toby May Field in New London. Thanks to all the members of the Lyme Disease Prevention Project Advisory Committee and the New London Rotary for their dedication and participation.



Healthy Kids Are Happy Kids Program

This year the Ledge Light Health District was fortunate to obtain funding to continue a pilot obesity prevention program for children at Eastern Point Elementary School. The goal of the program was to increase awareness among elementary school children about healthy food choices and the importance of daily physical activity.

The 2006-07 Healthy Kids Are Happy Kids team implemented activities to:

- Introduce a healthy tip of the week on morning announcements
- Demonstrate an exercise of the week during morning announcements on Monday and engage the entire school for 5-10 minutes every day
- Implement a walking club for teachers and children using pedometers and neighborhood maps
- Provide opportunities for kids to teach each other about “eating smart” and enjoyable physical activity
- Offer Jazzercise for teachers, parents and children
- Celebrate a year of fun, fitness and healthy food



Health Education Programs

Asthma Management and Outreach Programs

Ledge Light Health District coordinates the New London County Asthma Action Partnership together with the Uncas Health District.

In 2006-07 asthma program staff:

- Served on the CT Statewide Asthma Strategic Planning Committee
- Collected local and state prevalence data
- Provided education for teachers, daycare centers, school nurses and parents
- Supported the EPA *Tools for Schools*—Indoor Air Quality Program by hosting a regional symposium
- Continued the *Putting on AIRS* program for New London County residents with asthma. A Certified Asthma Educator provides client education, reviews medication and provides ongoing case management. A Registered Sanitarian conducts a home environmental assessment. In the last year 25 children and adults with asthma were provided services.



Ledyard Safe Teens Coalition:

In October 2006, a 3-year grant from the CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services established a community coalition to address underage drinking in Ledyard. Ledyard residents, schools, police, parents and youth organizations chose the name “Ledyard Safe Teens Coalition.”

In May 2007, the coalition surveyed 378 teens in grades 7-12. The survey measured their knowledge, perceptions and attitudes with respect to the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Additionally, questions were asked regarding teen’s lifestyle and behaviors. The results will be used in 2007-08 to create a strategic plan unique to the Ledyard community.

The Coalition's mission is: *To foster a healthy, safe, and drug free environment for Ledyard youth through community partnerships.*