

# YOUTH SERVICES DIVISION NEWSLETTER

January 2016

Winter Edition

The target audience of this quarterly newsletter is individuals and community agencies who are invested in helping Meriden youth and families learn about the many positive opportunities available to them.

## A MATTER OF CONCERN...

Although the recent 2015 survey results issued by the Meriden Healthy Youth Coalition reflect relatively low rates of smoking among Meriden youth, the current fad related to the use of a wide range of electronic nicotine delivery devices (ENDS) now on the market, may serve to reverse the noticeable downward trend in recent years.

**Geralyn Laut, the Health Department's resident "tobacco treatment specialist" is concerned that the tobacco industry is now luring teens to experiment with E-cigarettes and the like, and thus developing a lifelong dependence on nicotine.**

Although deemed to be less harmful than regular cigarettes, they are not harmless and the long term health consequences are yet to be known.

Between 2011 and 2014 national studies demonstrate rapid increases in ever and past 30 day use of ENDS by high school and middle school students in the U.S. Other reports indicate that the majority of adolescents trying ENDS are also experimenting with other tobacco products, alcohol and marijuana.

Although cessation programming offered through a recent grant from the State Department of Public Health targets adults in Meriden and neighboring towns, no individual, regardless of age will be turned away.



We are located at 165 Miller Street, Meriden  
Center Glass Entrance  
203-630-4225

## Current Services:

- > [Summer and Year Round Employment](#)
- > [Juvenile Assistance and Diversion Board](#)
- > [Teen Outreach Program-T.O.P.](#)
- > [Community Service](#)
- > [Teen Directory](#)
- > [Summer Camperships](#)
- > [Linkages to services](#)
- > [Information](#)
- > [www.meridenhealth.com](http://www.meridenhealth.com)

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If you would like more information about tobacco use in all its forms or would like to host a **QUIT** Clinic ( a one hour workshop providing **Quick Useful Information** about Tobacco ) e-mail [BeTobaccoFree@meridenct.gov](mailto:BeTobaccoFree@meridenct.gov).

Another great resource ...The Truth About Electronic Nicotine Delivery Devices can be found at [www.truthinitiative.org](http://www.truthinitiative.org)



## JUVENILE ASSISTANCE/DIVERSION BOARD

Dear Tammy,

Recently, my son and a few of his friends were stopped by a Police Officer and spoken to on their way home from school. He said that the Officer gave them a “verbal warning” about not using the sidewalks. My son tends to walk on the road because he said the sidewalks get very crowded after school with all of the walkers. Can my son get arrested for not using the sidewalk?

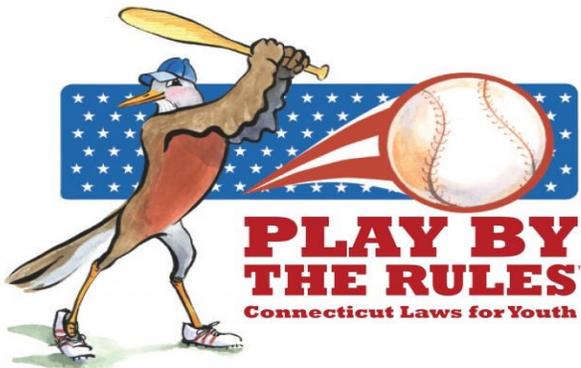
A Worried Mom

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Dear Worried Mom,

In this situation your son and his friends are considered “Pedestrians” (any person who is walking). Pedestrians should always use the sidewalks if available. If there are no sidewalks, they should walk as close to the left-hand edge of the roadway facing oncoming traffic. If you are a pedestrian, you always have the right of way in crosswalks and should use them when crossing the road. However, as a pedestrian you have a responsibility to be cautious and not to step out into oncoming traffic regardless if you have the right of way. Never “jaywalk” and always use cross walks and traffic control devices. A police officer can give a Pedestrian a ticket if they are not following these rules. The JAD board has processed cases for youth that have violated such laws, city ordinances or school rules regarding improper use of a highway by a pedestrian. So to answer your question, yes police can and should take action if youth are not abiding by these rules. Streets can be extremely dangerous if pedestrians are not aware and cautious as they are using the roadways. We have seen cases come before our Board where youth have been injured while walking or riding their bikes because they were not following the roadway rules. Surprisingly even though they are injured, they are still at fault and receive a violation. I hope you find this information helpful.

Best,  
Tammy [tkudla@meridenct.gov](mailto:tkudla@meridenct.gov)



### ***Play by the Rules: Connecticut Laws for Youth***

*Play by the Rules* is the only program of its kind to provide state specific law-related education. The present program is based on a 72-page question and answer, illustrated book and teacher guide that address more than 200 laws. The student handbook is designed for use by middle school students in public, private, and home schools, by incarcerated youth in the juvenile justice system, and by youth in community settings such as scouting or church youth groups. The content is balanced and focuses on the law as it is actually written and enforced.

To order a book or to seek more information visit:  
<http://pbronline.org/connecticut.php>

## TEEN OUTREACH PROGRAM-T.O.P. 2015-2016



The Teen Outreach Program (TOP) is funded by the Department of Social Services to provide year round educational programming along with community service learning experiences to fifty 7th and 8th graders in Washington and Lincoln Middle Schools. The program began in September and will meet each week through June. The youth learn to express themselves, meet new friends, learn about their community, and learn valuable health related information. They also plan and implement community service learning projects. They are asked to complete 20 hours as they choose areas of interest to them.

April Pinto has been hired as the TOP Co-Facilitator. She graduated this past Spring from Southern Connecticut State University with a Bachelor of Science in Public Health. April plans to incorporate her expertise within public health within the TOP Program. Most of all, she is very excited to be working with the students for the remainder of the school year.



To date, students have participated in the Mayor's Cleanup on October 17th. TOP Teens worked together to prepare Halloween Care Packages for children currently residing at Shelter Now. Students planned a Game Night Event held at the Meriden Public Library on December 29th which was open to their families and the general public.

Next steps involve brainstorming a weeklong event in April at the Senior Center in town.



## VENTURE ACADEMY EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

The Youth Services Division and the Meriden Public Schools-Venture Academy have been collaborating to provide high school students with work experience. Each youth has an experience that is tailored to their individual needs. They are paid minimum wage and receive a paycheck every two weeks which is funded by the Meriden Public Schools. The minimum wage has now been brought to \$9.60/hr.



New sites have been developed which include [Master's Manna](#), [Billings Sports](#), and the [YMCA Head Start](#).

The Youth Services Division and the Venture Academy staff have seen an increase in attendance from students, a decrease in negative behaviors, and have seen that youth are gaining new positive connections in the community. This program will continue throughout the school year. Youth will then have experience and the knowledge to apply on their own to the City of Meriden Summer Youth Employment Program. They will be able to share concrete skills that they have learned if they are chosen for an interview.

Call David Gollsneider to learn more at

**203-630-7850, Venture Academy.**

*"We absolutely love our effort with Venture Academy. It has been a win win situation for students, staff, and volunteers. They work hard and we see them flourish. It inspires us throughout the day. We look forward to a long, and healthy relationship."*

Cheryl Trzcinski CEO -  
Mater's Manna



**Athletic TEAM UNIFORMS & EQUIPMENT is Our Specialty**





## Become a part of our community

The official City of Meriden “name the park” contest is open now through **January 31, 2016!**

Now through January 31, 2016, submit your entry to name the park at the Meriden Hub site.

**The top 10 entries selected will win a \$25 gift card. One winning entry will have a chance to win \$1000 and have their entry become the official name of the new park.**

City residents and persons doing business in, employed in or owning property in the city are eligible to participate.

<http://www.meriden2020.com/name-the-park/>

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CITY OF  
MERIDEN  
HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES

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**Today's Youth  
Are Our Future**

**Best Wishes to  
You for a Happy  
and Healthy  
Winter Season**



## New Program Highlights

The CT Judicial Branch has provided two years of funding the Youth Services Division and other local youth serving agencies in Meriden. The goal of the funding is to engage youth in activities. Recognition can be given to the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus who advocated for this funding to come to Meriden.

The Youth Services Division has subcontracted with the South Central CT Substance Abuse Council to offer educational workshops upon request to afterschool high school groups who would like youth to learn about The Teenage Brain, Alcohol/Drug Use and Abuse, Synthetic Drugs, Prescription Drugs, and the local resources to help parents and youth understand more about these important topics. At this time, the Beat the Street Community Center will be working throughout the next few months on having youth learn more about mental health issues and the resources to help. Our two local high schools will also be hosting educational seminars. A play will be developed using youth actors which will be available to the public. Rushford will also be providing Educational Forums based on our community needs. Youth will be included in the planning of these workshops and will also help spread the word to others to help bring new people to the table.

The Youth Services Division receives funding from the City of Meriden, The State Department of Education, the Department of Children and Families, Workplace Alliance, Inc., the Connecticut Department of Social Services, United Way of Meriden and Wallingford, the Meriden Public Schools, Summer Campership Donations, Napier Foundation, Cuno Foundation, the Liberty Bank Foundation, and the Meriden/Wallingford Foundation. Youth Services collaborates with local agencies year round to provide youth and family services through the Meriden Healthy Youth Coalition. Staff also serve on local boards with the goal of understanding youth needs and to help address issues collectively that will help improve the quality of life in Meriden.

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Please take a moment to  
visit our website at:  
[www.meridenhealth.com](http://www.meridenhealth.com)

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