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**HEALTH
DEPARTMENT**
of Northwest Michigan

www.nwhealth.org

Local SAFE Youth Return from Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America Training
In four days of intensive training, they learned latest strategies to keep youth drug free

Eleven students from Antrim, Charlevoix, and Emmet counties, all members of SAFE in Northern Michigan, just returned from the prestigious Youth Leadership Key Essentials Course at the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America's Mid-Year Training Institute in Atlanta.

"Participating in the Training Institute is a great opportunity for anyone working to prevent drug use in their community," said Susan Pulaski, Community Health Coordinator at the Health Department of Northwest Michigan, who coordinates SAFE of Northern Michigan and accompanied the students. "I am so pleased we were able to bring so many SAFE students, thanks to a grant from the Northern Michigan Regional Entity. It was a great experience for all of us."

The training represents the first large-scale initiative of coalition development for youth and adult coaches in the country. Over 100 courses were available as part of the Training Institute, covering topics such as how to prevent prescription drug abuse, create tobacco-free environments, reduce impaired driving, and develop policies to reduce marijuana use. Participants heard from leaders of several federal agencies and learned ways to increase their local coalitions' effectiveness to build safe, healthy, and drug-free communities.

"We learned so many new skills and strategies to become community leaders and agents of change," said Gavin Kerley, a student at Petoskey High School. "My favorite part of the conference was knowing I could apply the things we learned back in Northern Michigan."

SAFE in Northern Michigan is a community coalition dedicated to preventing youth substance use, increasing community awareness, and creating change through collaboration, education, and prevention initiatives and implementing environmental change strategies in Antrim, Charlevoix, and Emmet counties. For additional information, visit www.nwhealth.org/SAFE.

The Health Department of Northwest Michigan is mandated by the Michigan Public Health Code to promote wellness, prevent disease, provide quality healthcare, address health problems of vulnerable populations and protect the environment for the residents and visitors of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet and Otsego counties.



Front row, from left: Cole Essenberg (Ellsworth High School), Gavin Kerley (Petoskey High School), Mitch Pulaski (Petoskey, Graduated), David Paquette (Petoskey High School), Zach Holm (East Jordan High School), Back row, from left: Sidney Ames (Elk Rapids High School), Jasmine Wiatrolik (Pellston High School), Cora Thompson (Pellston High School), Audri Pulaski (Petoskey High School), Billie Lalonde (Pellston High School) and Alleah Sundelius (Ellsworth High School).

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