



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Local SAFE Youth Learn New Skills in Substance Use Prevention at National Training Institute

PETOSKEY, MI - Six students from Antrim, Charlevoix, and Emmet counties, all members of SAFE in Northern Michigan, have just returned from Orlando, Florida where they joined nearly 2,000 substance use prevention and treatment specialists from around the world for Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America's (CADCA) 17th annual [Mid-Year Training Institute](#).

The week-long training, held at the Gaylord Palms, taught participants how to address one of our nation's biggest public health challenges – drug use. CADCA's Mid-Year Training Institute is a one-of-a-kind intensive training opportunity, offering more than 95 ninety-minute and half-day courses geared towards helping participants find solutions to their community's toughest substance use problems.

"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 in Northern Michigan and accompanied the students. "I am so pleased we were able to bring so many SAFE Youth members, thanks to a grant from the Northern Michigan Regional Entity. It was a great experience for all of us."

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. At the training, the coalition representatives heard from several federal leaders, including Deputy Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy Jim Carroll, and Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Frances Harding.

"The Mid-Year is a unique professional development opportunity for coalition leaders and key community stakeholders to learn about the latest research and effective strategies that will directly help them in their critical work of preventing substance use and misuse" said Pat Castillo, Director, National Coalition Institute and Vice President of Training Operations. "After four days of intensive training, leaders will return to their communities with new knowledge, skills, strategies, along with new ways to add to their existing roadmaps to continue to create environments where youth thrive – healthy and drug-free."

CADCA's Mid-Year covered a wide range of topics – everything from how to prevent prescription drug abuse and reduce heroin use to how to create tobacco-free environments, reduce impaired driving and develop policies to reduce marijuana use, synthetic drug use and underage drinking.

Emma Decker, Audri Pulaski, Colin Robbins, Josh Light, Ana Oviedo, and Clare Simard are members of the SAFE in Northern Michigan coalition who participated in CADCA's Youth Leadership sessions with their Youth Advisors, Susan Pulaski and Christie Pudvan. They attended training events to help them become strong community leaders and change agents.

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. For additional information about SAFE in Northern Michigan, visit www.SAFEinNM.com.

Attached Photo: SAFE Youth at CADCA Training (from left to right: Emma Decker, Audri Pulaski, Colin Robbins, Josh Light, Ana Oviedo, and Clare Simard)

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