

# THE START TO THE SCHOOL YEAR

## HERE ARE THE

# HIGHLIGHTS



**healthy**  
communities  
OF THE CAPITAL AREA  
making connections ~ improving lives



### Sources of Strength

MSAD#11 is supporting the evidence based program Sources of Strength. Our data from MIYHS in 2023 reflects that in 2023 38 % of High School students felt sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more and 39% of our Middle School students felt sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more.

Sources of Strength is a best practice youth mental health promotion and suicide prevention program designed to harness the power of peer social networks to create healthy norms and culture, ultimately preventing suicide, violence, bullying, and substance misuse. We have 25 trained peer leaders at the High School and 18 at the Middle School. These peer leaders will be creating promotions that will be viewed throughout the school year. The High School has started their promotions with Positive Friends and Generosity campaigns.

We have also trained 5 adult mentors at the High School and 4 at the Middle School.



Congratulations to Miss Bischof's Homeroom on winning the Sources of Strength Thankful Turkey Challenge!!

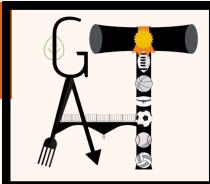
- Peer & Adult Mentor Trainings took place in November with NAMI
- The high school held their Positive Friends campaign - Take a Hike! The goal was for positive friends to hike together. 20 students entered the drawing and one was awarded a \$25 gift card to Gerards!
- The High School October campaign was Generosity. Home Room doors were decorated with turkeys with hands of gratefulness.
- Currently working with Coalition member Ramsey Tripp to provide a spirituality presentation for the Middle and High School for December.

### Gratefulness Turkey Entries



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For more information, visit [www.gardinerareathrives.com](http://www.gardinerareathrives.com) or  
contact Patricia Buck Welton, DFC Coordinator [patriciab@hccame.org](mailto:patriciab@hccame.org)



## MORE HIGHLIGHTS...

### Red Ribbon Week Spirit Days At the Middle School ~ 10/23 to 11/1

- Students raised awareness about the prevention of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, smoking, and violence. They chose a theme each day:

**MON** 10/28 Movie Prop Day: Leave your backpack at home and come up with a creative way to carry your things around the school for the day

**TUES** 10/29 Supporting Cast Day: Wear clothing that represents your favorite team

**WED** 10/30 Play Your Opposite Role Day: Students dress like staff members and staff members dress like students

**THURS** 10/31 Role of Your Dreams Day: Dress up as your favorite character from a book or movie

**FRI** 11/1 Comfy Movie Watching Wardrobe Day: Wear your most comfortable PJs and slippers

There was also an anti-drug presentation to 8th graders and a door decorating contest for all grades.

## Door Decorating Contest Entries

### 27 Doors Decorated!

Theme: Life is a Movie, Film Drug Free

Local Community Member Judges: Chief of Police Todd Pilsbury, Business Owner, Hope, Mayor Pat Hart, Lizzy from 92 Moose, SRO Jordan, and Patricia Welton from Healthy Communities of the Capital Area.

Winners got bragging rights and an ice cream certificate to a local business. Staff received prizes too: choice of two free lunch duty passes, an admin teaches a class, or a \$25 gas card PLUS a STEM-made red ribbon.





## SCHOOL BASED HEALTH CENTER ON TRACK TO BE APPROVED BY MSAD#11 SCHOOL BOARD

In the Spring of 2024 our School Nurse, Nora Diversi was able to make contact with Health Reach who had been running a School Based Health Center at Lawrence High School for the past 2 years. She made plans to visit the health center and in June we took a ride to Lawrence. 4 member of Gardiner Area Thrives Coalition Patricia Buck Welton, Kerry Mansir, Beth Brooker and Nora Diversi, with the Assistant Principal and Superintendent, toured the Health Center at Lawrence High School. Following the visit to the Health Center, we reached out to other possible coalition members, other healthcare providers and community members that would like to support a school based health center. The Advisory Committee was formed and there were two meetings over the summer that formed a plan to hold a community forum before going to the school board.

The Community Forum, planned for October 29th, was widely publicized through the MSAD#11 social media, newsletters and parent forums, Gardiner Area Thrives posted to their social media and shared with Gardiner Main Street to make sure the community was informed as well. The Forum took place on October 29th. 52 people attended including our legislative representatives, town councilors, teachers, administrators and parents. This forum was published in the local newspaper and channel 13 covered the forum.

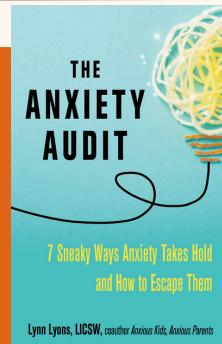
After the forum there was a request to have a proposal to have a School Based Health Center be presented to the MSAD#11 School Board. December 5th was secured as the date. The week before the School Board meeting there was a flurry of disinformation, myths put on social media and a push to have the school board reject the proposal. There was an automated email sent that bombarded the central office with over 500 emails opposing the School Based Health Center, 12 from the district. The others were from outside of our district and out of state. Superintendent Pat Hopkins shared that leading up to Thursday's meeting, she received 633 emails, 542 of which were in opposition to the school-based health center. Of the 542 emails, she said 521 had no connection to the school district, and a majority came from an automated email from a political campaign site. Just 12 of the emails in opposition to the health center came from people living inside the school district. The district has also experienced an influx of outside Freedom of Access Act requests from people outside of the school district, asking for information from far-of-right political groups and individuals, which Hopkins has since made public on the school website. Nora and Patricia worked diligently to engage community, staff and students to write letters of support and come to the meeting to testify.

The school board voted 8 to 2 to move forward with the process.

### Lynn Lyons at Gardiner High School



The coalition again supported the district by publicizing the national speaker who came to educate our students, staff, parents, and community on how to support our youth and each other with anxiety. Lynn spoke with 850 students. The gym was full and they were all listening. 50 people attended the community night. 10 staff members were trained and will be consulting with the coalition throughout the year!



# MORE HIGHLIGHTS...

## Sparking Conversations with The Parent Handbook

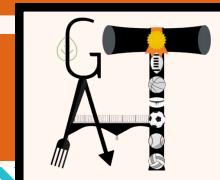


This unique, visually appealing 64-page resource raises awareness and educates readers on the latest trends, warning signs, and tips for effective parent/child communication so that “prevention” is truly possible. By simply placing this resource in the kitchen or living room in the home, conversations will be sparked!

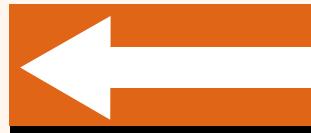
**140 copies were given to 6th Grade Gardiner Regional Middle School parents.**

## THE PARENT HANDBOOK

SOCIAL MEDIA  
VAPING  
ANXIETY  
DEPRESSION  
DRUGS  
ALCOHOL  
GAMING



**In November the Gardiner GSDA invited Hall-Dale GSDA to the Sparetime Bowling Alley for a fun afternoon of bowling, pizza and new friendships!**



More From Sources of Strength

## MORE HIGHLIGHTS

- Vaping/Cannabis/Nicotine: Patricia Buck Welton and Mallory Siddiqui worked together to create a new vaping presentations that would be presented in Health Classes, that included nicotine vaping and cannabis vaping. The presentation was interactive and connected the students at the MS (45) and HS (55) with Sources of Strength.
- SEED came to present to 150 8th Graders
- The librarian at the High School continues to partner with the Gardiner Public Library to offer an afternoon of activities and this fall was offered a class through MaineGeneral (Why Try). They are also collaborating with Selene's Fly Shop to have students learn how to tie a fly on those afternoons.
- A new program on Thursday mornings takes High School students to Helen Thompson School to read to 3rd graders. All the students love it!
- DFC Coordinator presented to the Gardiner Area Ministry, Rotary Club, and the Staff at the Boys & Girls Club on our MIYHS data.
- MyQuit program at the High School and the School Based Health Center.
- Provided information to the Athletic Department for their parent night on the dangers of vaping and MyQuit treatment at the High School.