

# Chippewa Valley Coalition receives five-year federal grant

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By Nicole Tuttle  
Voice Reporter



Dakota High School student Kyle Paskulovich and Macomb County Circuit Court Judge James Biernat met through the Chippewa Valley Coalition for Youth and Families teen court program. The coalition was recently awarded a five-year grant from the Drug Free Communities grant program.

The White House announced on Sept. 19 that the Chippewa Valley Coalition for Youth and Families had earned a second five-year grant from the Drug Free Communities grant program.

“Our coalition for youth and families received another five-year grant from the federal government of \$125,000 a year, and that grant was awarded to 197 organizations across the country, and only 19 are schools,” Chippewa Valley Superintendent Ron Roberts said on Sept. 22. “And I don’t think people realize, they might here, but in the community, people probably do not realize the work that the coalition does. There is nothing like it in public education that I know of in our state, where we have all those community agencies brought together along with local churches and religious organizations in order to do things which are in the best interest of our students to keep them drug-free and healthy.”

Through the grant, the coalition will receive \$125,000 each year over the next five years. Chippewa Valley Coalition for Youth and Families Executive Director Dr. Charlene McGunn said that the award period begins Oct. 1 of this year.

“It is a continuation of a grant we have had for the last five years, but it is another five years. It is highly competitive,” McGunn said.

The coalition received its first federal Drug Free Communities grant from the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in 2009.

Community coalitions that are at least six months old can apply for up to \$125,000 per year for up to five years under the grant program, and each coalition can apply for two cycles of funding, for a maximum of 10 years. To be eligible for Drug Free Communities funding, coalitions have to comply with a minimum one-to-one match requirement,

doubling the federal investment. The matching amounts have to come from non-federal sources.

“It is a difficult application process, but we are very fortunate and gratified. It relates to the hard work of our coalition and partners of our coalition, and members of our youth who are involved in the Coalition Teen Councils. What we had to do is outline what we are doing and what we intend to do, and it is based on the ability to prove that you have the capacity to make significant change both in school youth and in community, and attitudes of community towards youth,” McGunn said.

The Chippewa Valley Coalition for Youth and Families is an anti-drug coalition that combines schools, families and the community in a partnership to prevent and reduce youth substance use and its consequences. It serves the geographic area of the Chippewa Valley Schools district, including parts of Clinton and Macomb townships.

“The coalition has expanded dramatically, in the last eight years particularly in the last five years because of increased funding. We are the only Drug Free Communities coalition grantee in Macomb County. We want to support the good work of other coalitions in the county and provide information to them and create videos and print materials and model strategies that we will share,” McGunn said. “We will also support other coalitions in the county in their applications for Drug Free Communities.”

McGunn said that the money from this second grant will be used to expand the coalition, particularly in areas of community outreach, community partnerships and education campaigns on the issues of youth use of all drugs. Reaching students at elementary school age and the parents of these students is a particular goal of the coalition, according to McGunn

“We are particularly involved in a campaign to educate on the issues related to youth marijuana use and the dangers of marijuana for kids,” McGunn said.

*Nicole Tuttle is a freelance reporter. She can be contacted at [ntuttle.reporter@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ntuttle.reporter@sbcglobal.net).*