

# FIGHTING BACK

COMMUNITY INITIATIVES TO REDUCE DEMAND  
FOR ILLEGAL DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

Charlotte NC ♦ Columbia SC ♦ Gallup NM ♦ Kansas City MO ♦ Little Rock AR ♦ Milwaukee WI ♦ Newark NJ  
New Haven CT ♦ Oakland CA ♦ San Antonio TX ♦ Santa Barbara CA ♦ Vallejo CA ♦ Washington DC ♦ Worcester MA

## Mayors Support Resolutions

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supports the San Antonio Fighting Back strategy to reduce substance abuse as an important vehicle for encouraging collaboration across public and private institutions and grassroots organizations, and for developing comprehensive solutions that include these policy resolutions.

Mayor Jim Dailey of Little Rock, Arkansas points out, "Substance abuse addiction must be treated on an equal basis as other medical conditions." Dailey is the former Chair of the Little Rock Fighting Back Steering Committee. He believes that multiple factors influence an individual's propensity toward addiction in the same manner that they influence whether an individual becomes ill with any other medical condition. "Health coverage for substance abuse treatment should be equal to those benefits prescribed for other medical conditions," says Mayor Dailey. "Until [substance abuse addiction] is addressed with 100 percent health coverage, we will not be taking it seriously enough and we won't be able to make a difference in the problem."

Crystal Swann, Assistant Executive Director of the US Conference of Mayors, co-facilitates the Drug Control Task Force. Her responsibilities include disseminating information, and gathering support to help mayors make these resolutions a reality in cities across the country. For more information on the US Conference of Mayors, visit their website at [www.usmayors.org](http://www.usmayors.org), email [info@usmayors.org](mailto:info@usmayors.org) or call (202) 293-7330. ♦

## Fighting Back Staff Members On The Move...

**Charlotte, NC: Curt Peters** joins Charlotte Mecklenburg Fighting Back as Public Service and Information Specialist. Peters has a background in television media and was a Public Service and Information Specialist with the Mecklenburg County Department of Health and Mental Health prior to his position with the Fighting Back Project. Peters says that working with the Fighting Back Project in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County has given him a greater understanding of the impact of substance abuse on communities and a broader perspective on the ways communities can make a difference.

**Worcester, MA: Kirsten Nichols**, former project director of Worcester Fights Back, is now executive director of Prevention and Women's Services for Spectrum Health Systems. Spectrum is a non-profit organization that operates the Prevention Center in Central Massachusetts, a regional clearinghouse and technical support service. It also administers a number of treatment and support services for substance abusing women involved in the criminal justice system.

**Columbia, SC: Elaine Dowdy**, former regional director of the Fighting Back Midlands Prevention Alliance, has been named Director of Prevention and Intervention Programs for the South Carolina Department of Alcohol

and Other Drug Services. Dowdy oversees prevention services, community-based outreach, and school intervention programs that include substance identification and referral. Dowdy says, "My experiences with Fighting Back have been an incredible asset in preparing me for this position. I am using the skills and vision I have developed in applying Fighting Back philosophies toward my work at a state level." **James Brown**, succeeds Dowdy as project director for the Midlands Prevention Alliance, which now includes several counties.

**Kansas City, MO: Keith Brown**, former director of Project Neighborhood, has taken his Fighting Back lessons and experiences to full time work in the ministry. His non-profit organization, Agape Outreach and Development, Inc., uses a spiritual framework to reach out to individuals and families in the neighborhoods they live in, encouraging them to take action to reduce mayhem and discourse in the community. "Fighting Back gave me experience in coalition building and taught me to think in terms of the broader elements of a community to develop solutions," explains Brown. He says this initiative is the result of giving Fighting Back principles a spiritual directive. ♦

## Resolutions in Brief

Below are brief summaries of three of the substance abuse resolutions from the US Conference of Mayors. Visit their website, <http://www.usmayors.org/uscm/resolutions/> to access these and other resolutions in greater detail.

### Parity

Requiring health care providers to offer full parity coverage for drug treatment, providing the same level of coverage for substance abuse services as they would for other illnesses.

### Aftercare and Recovery Supports

Ensuring that every prisoner has received adequate treatment before being released and continues to receive treatment if needed while on probation or parole.

### Drug Courts

Recognizing drug courts as an option that can enhance public safety and help reduce crime, and therefore funding them accordingly.

## New SAFB Board Members

**Travis Bishop** – Assistant City Manager

**Mike Mitchell** – Former member of the San Antonio Spurs

**James Howard** – San Antonio School District Trustee

**John Pichot, MD** – Director, VA Addiction Psychiatry Residency Program

**Jerry Pittman** – Deputy Chief, San Antonio Police

**John Sparks, MD** – Hospital Administrator, Bexar County Jail

**Rufus Hoefler** – Administrative Director, Psychiatric Addiction and Recovery Services Division of the University Health System

## Fighting Back Mayors Support US Conference of Mayors' Resolutions on Substance Abuse Treatment

Mayors from Fighting Back communities support the resolutions that focus on expanding access to treatment for substance abuse, passed at the US Conference of Mayors' June 1999 meeting in New Orleans. Three of the resolutions have particularly important implications for Fighting Back Initiatives: **parity for drug treatment, aftercare and recovery supports, and drug diversion courts. Leadership** and support from city government on these issues are crucial to the success of the

Fighting Back strategies to measurably reduce substance abuse.

"I strongly support the drug policy initiatives adopted at the Annual Meeting of the US Conference of Mayors," says Howard Peak, Mayor of San Antonio, Texas. "Drug addiction is a disease that requires a multi-faceted response, including law enforcement, prevention education, and mandatory substance abuse treatment." Mayor Peak says he recognizes and continued on last page

## New Leadership Strengthens San Antonio Fighting Back Management Board

The San Antonio Fighting Back Management Board welcomed nine new members this summer. The new **leaders** strengthen **links** with key public and private community institutions: police, economic development, public health, and city government.

Willie Mitchell, chairman of the management board, sends a clear call to action to all board members. "Involvement with SAFB takes a lot of commitment. All board members must be willing to give of their time and active participation to make things happen," says Mitchell.

**Leadership** from new board member Jerry Pittman, Deputy Chief - San

Antonio Police Department, has been instrumental in providing data on drug-related crimes in the target area. Board member Rufus Hoefler, Administrative Director – Psychiatric Addiction and Recovery Services Division of University Health System, is spearheading the development of a comprehensive strategy to increase access and availability to substance abuse treatment, recovery, and aftercare within the Fighting Back target area. Veteran governance board members, ministers John Sanders and Claude Black, are actively leading their congregations to establish programs to support families struggling with substance abuse problems, and services for youth whose parents are in treatment. ♦

The Fighting Back Newsletter is a periodic publication that reports on the Fighting Back community strategies to reduce substance abuse.

This newsletter is produced by the Fighting Back National Program Office, Join Together, Boston University School of Public Health  
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Visit the new Fighting Back website at [www.fightingback.org](http://www.fightingback.org)

For more information about community strategies to fight substance abuse, go to Join Together Online at:

[www.jointogether.org](http://www.jointogether.org)

Co-editors: Barbara Charton and Lisa Falk

## Fighting Back National Program Offices Launches New Website

Use the Internet to learn about Fighting Back strategies across the country. The Fighting Back website, [www.fightingback.org](http://www.fightingback.org), was launched this summer to provide electronic access to information about the Fighting Back strategies to measurably reduce substance abuse. "The Fighting Back website is a tool to highlight and communicate complex, interlocking strategies that Fighting Back communities are undertaking to address their **most significant** substance abuse problems," says Janice Ford Griffin, Deputy Director at Join Together. Griffin oversees the activities of the Fighting Back National Program Office.

Information on the website clearly illustrates the importance of linking old and new partners, collecting and analyzing local data, and reinforcing bold leadership among individuals and institutions. The information tries to capture the real life struggles to

achieve the promising goals that communities work toward, and the political realities that challenge them.

Learn about the efforts in the Santa Barbara strategy to train all the hotel and restaurant owners and employees in the South State Street area in responsible beverage service. Find out how the Kansas City strategy has improved the system to refer patients for substance abuse treatment by expanding screening for alcohol and other drugs in the Truman Medical Center Emergency Room. Discover the data and statistics important to all the Fighting Back strategies to analyze and balance citizens' perceptions and experience with substance abuse with documented incidents and prevalence.

See the box below for a list of Fighting Back communities you can visit by connecting with [www.fightingback.org](http://www.fightingback.org). ❖

### Use the Fighting Back Website to connect with:

- ❖ Project Neighborhood Inc. Fighting Back: . [www.pni.org](http://www.pni.org)
- ❖ MHCDO Fighting Back Initiative: . . . . . [www.mhcdo.org](http://www.mhcdo.org)
- ❖ Northwest New Mexico Fighting Back: . . . [www.cnetco.org/~nci/](http://www.cnetco.org/~nci/)
- ❖ Vallejo Fighting Back Partnership: . . . . . [www.fight-back.org/main.htm](http://www.fight-back.org/main.htm)
- ❖ Little Rock Fighting Back: . . . . . [www.littlerock.org/government/departments/community/fighting.html](http://www.littlerock.org/government/departments/community/fighting.html)

## New Haven Fighting Back Uses Newspaper Column to Advocate for Substance Abuse Issues

New Haven Alderwoman Ester Armand, Reverend Bonita Grubbs and State Representative John Martinez have all used the *Forum* column in the *New Haven Register*; to reach out to the community and advocate for constructive strategies to reduce substance abuse. All three residents are members of the New Haven Fighting Back Steering Committee, and provide active **leadership** to New Haven's efforts to reduce substance abuse.

Armand's article called attention to the need for ready access to quality treatment and recovery services for community members with substance abuse problems. Rev. Grubbs' article articulated the importance

of active participation on the part of all community leaders and residents to become involved in efforts to reduce substance abuse and related mayhem. Martinez used the column to speak out about the need for sober housing and other aftercare supports to sustain recovery from addiction.

The column is an effective use of their leadership platforms to support broader awareness of the issues, and mobilize the public sentiment that influences policy makers. Find out more about the *Forum* articles by visiting the *New Haven Register* online at [www.ctcentral.com](http://www.ctcentral.com) or call Melinda Tuhus, Public Relations and Policy Specialist at New Haven Fighting Back at (203) 946-6438. ❖

"Drugs are everybody's business. We at Project Neighborhood have brought together through collaboration the grass roots community, health care providers and specifically law enforcement from all levels – local, state and federal. Through these collaborations we are educating each other and seeking ways to help one another in reducing alcohol and drug abuse in our community."

– Rev. Andrew King, Sr.,  
Congress of National  
Black Churches,  
Kansas City  
Missouri Affiliate,  
Project Neighborhood  
Board Member and  
Co-chair of the Law  
Enforcement Community  
Partnership Committee

## Former Fighting Back Sites Share Local Data with the Community

In Milwaukee, juvenile arrests for violent crimes are at the lowest levels in seven years. In McKinley County, home to Northwest New Mexico Fighting Back, alcohol and drug related deaths have decreased dramatically over the past 20 years. In Newark, there is a documented link between homelessness and alcohol and other drug addiction. All three of these cities are collecting and analyzing **local data** to better inform their strategic efforts to measurably reduce substance abuse. They report this information to the broader community to correct myths and misconceptions, and illustrate the true nature of substance abuse.

**Local data** has helped the residents of McKinley County measure progress on reducing their most important substance abuse problems. They have documented a 54 percent reduction in alcohol and drug related mortality from 1976 - 1997. During the past year that downward trend has begun to increase slightly. Sharing this information through the community report allows leaders and residents to work together to evaluate and shift their strategies for more effective results in the community as a whole.

In Milwaukee, the Community Report Card showcases 11 indicators on substance abuse from **local data** collected and analyzed from the police department, school survey, the

Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavioral Survey, and other sources. Community leaders and service providers alike have found the community report process to be one of the most important elements in facilitating community-wide planning and implementation.

Newark has used their community report to make substance abuse prevention and treatment a priority for local elected officials. Newark Fighting Back has become the recognized central repository for the collection and analysis of **local data**, specific to the city of Newark, on substance abuse related issues. ❖

### Milwaukee Indicators

This list includes five of Milwaukee's most important substance abuse indicators.

- ❖ children treated for drug or alcohol use
- ❖ juvenile drug possession
- ❖ deaths caused by drugs or alcohol
- ❖ injuries from drinking driver crashes
- ❖ number of liquor outlets

For more information on these and other indicators, and how they were collected, analyzed and reported, contact Tasha Jenkins at Milwaukee Fighting Back, (414) 270-2880.

## Fighting Back Sites Announce New Project Directors

**Washington, DC.** Marshall Heights Community Development Organization in Washington, DC welcomes **Dr. Byron Raysor** as the new project director for the Fighting Back strategy. Raysor comes to the position from a distinguished medical career with over 16 years experience in psychiatry, ophthalmology and family medicine. His experiences in the military and community health are enhanced by his expertise in planning and management. In the early 1990's Raysor was the Associate Director for Health and Substance Abuse Prevention at MHCDO, where he assisted in the development of the original Fighting Back proposal. **Loretta Tate** has assumed the position of President of Marshall Heights

Community Development Organization. Tate was the project director for the Fighting Back Initiative under the leadership of Lloyd Smith, who preceded Tate in the role of President of MHCDO.

**San Antonio, TX.** **Jennifer Richardson** has been named project director of the Fighting Back strategy in San Antonio. Formerly the Deputy Director of San Antonio Fighting Back of the United Way, Richardson will provide organization and support to the strategy and direction for the Fighting Back management board. **Beverly Watts Davis** has taken on a senior role with the San Antonio Fighting Back organization that focuses on development and fund raising. ❖

"One of our strong allies in the war against drug abuse is Washington's Fighting Back Initiative. I applaud the Marshall Heights Community Development Organization, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and all of the dedicated citizens who have made the initiative a success. We will win the fight against drugs, but only if we can harness the energy and innovation of community organizations like Washington's Fighting Back Initiative."

– Mayor Anthony A. Williams, Washington, DC