



# Maine Community Youth Assistance Foundation

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## Stars Shine at Nelson School

With so much emphasis in schools on reading and math and less on subjects like health, Nelson School in Niles, part of East Maine School District 63, invested in the future of its sixth grade students by putting the *All Stars* program into action.

*All Stars* is an evidence-based prevention program that promotes positive behaviors with interactive activities, games, group discussions and art projects. It encourages youth to adopt a healthy lifestyle free of risky behaviors, such as alcohol and drug use, bullying and premature sexual activity.

Paul McNulty, social worker and co-leader of one of three *All Stars* groups at Nelson, said, "There's not a separate health class anymore, which means we didn't have an opportunity to talk to our kids about alcohol and drugs. *All Stars* filled that void."

McNulty said it's a good curriculum and well worth doing. "We had some great discussions with students about positive choices and how they connect to a healthy future," he added. McNulty also said he hopes the kids will postpone using alcohol until the legal age of 21 and avoid destructive decisions as a result of their experience with *All Stars*.

A celebration was held December 13<sup>th</sup> when 90 students stated their commitment to make healthy choices in the presence of their parents or guardians, teachers, and peers, followed by cookies and ice cream as a reward for completing the 13 *All Stars* sessions.

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