The Youth Advisory and Advocacy Council (YAAC) was formed by CADI as a vehicle to give youth of the Pemi-Baker and Newfound regions a means of taking positive action to impact their environments and be part of the solution to problems relating to substance abuse. The YAAC’s were honored with The New Futures, statewide “2015 Youth-In-Action” award on October 8, 2015 for outstanding youth advocacy and leadership.

The YAAC utilizes the Youth-to-Youth Empowerment Model, which includes three core steps:

1. **Education/Information**: Youth leaders are mentored and provided with the background information needed to develop and understand pertinent issues. This provides the inspiration to act.

2. **Skills**: Youth are provided with the skills needed to take action and create change. This includes skill sets such as working effectively with media tools, providing a youth voice in the development of local prevention initiatives, and learning how to speak so people will listen.

3. **Action**: Youth are provided the opportunity to use their leadership skills in the real world. They are given the chance to mentor younger students, produce videos and PSAs for YouTube and local Cable Access TV, and participate in local and statewide advocacy projects.

Taking action and effecting change is when the empowerment process is complete!

“Tomorrow’s Leaders—Leading Today!”

www.cadyinc.org
We are examples of why and how prevention works. Involvement with Cady has raised our awareness on the risks and dangers of substance abuse. We have learned not only how substances affect our brains and bodies, but how detrimental it is to our health, our relationships, our future success; and it has empowered us to be drug free and lead by example. Prevention programs provide an alternative to following the crowd. We debunk myths and are empowered to be part of the solution. It gives youth a choice based on facts. We are better able to weigh our options when we are better informed.” ~ Nora Doyle, 2015

“We are always told “don’t do drugs,” and “just say no.” Prevention programs work because they explain WHY, and not “just because I said so.” Speaking as a teenager, it is confusing – there are a lot conflicting messages in the media and in school, and it can be really hard to say, “No.” Prevention increases out knowledge and understanding. It empowers us to own our decision making, empowers us to ask questions, and really think about issues and know WHY we shouldn’t mess with drugs.” ~ Nic Titus, 2015

“Some kids are lucky enough to have parents that talk to them about not using drugs and alcohol—but many don’t have that strong support at home. Prevention is not just a feel-good method of providing information—it answers important real-life questions in a very confusing world. Being part of these programs helps us better educate ourselves and our community and keep the focus on what is really important.” ~ Mollie Brown, 2015

“New Futures 2015 Youth-In-Action Award Recipients”