



Annual Report  
2016

  
**PREVENTION FIRST**  
*Building community capacity to prevent substance abuse*



## *Who We Are*

Prevention First is dedicated to preventing teen drug use before it starts. Founded in 1980, we reach thousands of youth, parents, educators and others each year through our specialized services. We provide information, education and support to those working to keep our communities healthy and our children drug-free.

### **Our Purpose**

Prevention First's purpose is to inspire, motivate and prepare communities to create healthy environments.

### **Our Vision**

Healthy communities that encourage drug-free youth.

### **Our Mission**

To build community capacity to prevent substance abuse by providing training and technical assistance and raising public awareness.

### **Core Values**

*Respect:* We are sensitive to and appreciate the differences of individuals we encounter in our work.

*Integrity:* We are committed to honorable behavior in our work, even at the sacrifice of personal advantage. (IAODAPCA Code Ethics)

*Collaboration:* We honor and recognize the power of the collective.

*Effectiveness:* We are dedicated to professionalism, quality and responsiveness in performing rewarding and purposeful work.



*Board* of Directors

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**Fausto Lopez**

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**Julie Love**

Director, People Services

Prairie Cardiovascular Consulting Group

**Karel Homrig**

Executive Director, Prevention First

## *A Message* from our Board Chair, James McLean



Dear Friends:

On behalf of Prevention First's board of directors, I am pleased to present this year's annual report that highlights our accomplishments over the past year. As the report shows, the board and staff remain dedicated to fulfilling Prevention First's mission to provide communities with the tools they need to prevent substance abuse and related issues.

As we continue to see the devastation of the heroin and prescription drug crisis, it is clear our work is not done. But as you will see in the report, Prevention First has helped many schools and communities obtain the knowledge, skills and tools they need in order to be effective in their efforts to prevent youth substance abuse.

We are making a difference.

As efforts to address substance abuse intensify, Prevention First's expertise, programs and services are increasingly important for those who are new to substance abuse prevention. We work to ensure that those efforts are using the best available research, science and strategies in working with youth, families, schools and communities in addressing this most important issue.

We appreciate your continued support.

Sincerely,

Jim McLean  
Board Chairperson

## *A Message* from our Executive Director, Karel Homrig

Dear Friends:

I am pleased to present this year's annual report that shows our reach and impact in helping schools and communities across the state prevent substance abuse. We may be small in number, but we are tireless and mighty in our commitment to providing the highest quality training, technical assistance and informational resources possible given our resources.

This past fiscal year was not kind to the nonprofit community in Illinois. Our hearts go out to several organizations that we have served or partnered with over the years that had to close their doors or significantly reduce their programs and staff due to the state budget impasse. We made every effort to continue to operate two of our programs in spite of receiving no payments from our state contracts. We are most fortunate that we were able to do so.

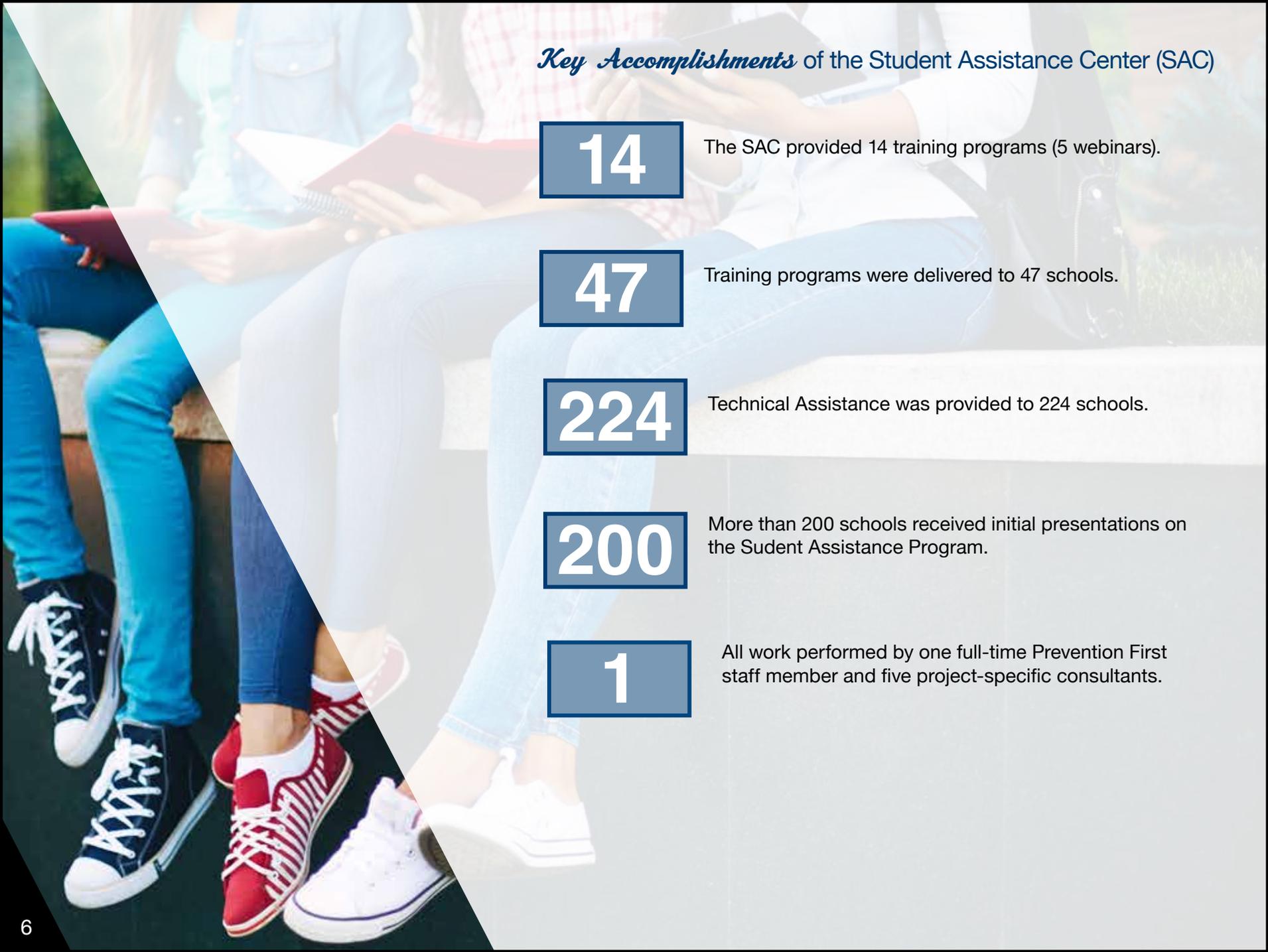
In the year to come, we are excited to develop and test new, creative approaches to reach and serve as many schools and community organizations as possible by maximizing our use of prevailing technology and social media. We are also revising existing training and technical assistance models to better meet the needs of the community-based organizations and schools with limited time and opportunities to travel. We will be unveiling a new web site that adapts to a variety of electronic devices, and creates a more user-friendly experience in tapping our extensive programs and free resource materials.

We remain fully committed to providing the resources and support schools and communities need to be successful in their substance abuse prevention efforts. We invite you to join us on Facebook and visit our web site to stay abreast of the latest issues and trends in substance abuse prevention or to make a donation.

Sincerely,

Karel Homrig  
Executive Director





*Key Accomplishments* of the Student Assistance Center (SAC)

14

The SAC provided 14 training programs (5 webinars).

47

Training programs were delivered to 47 schools.

224

Technical Assistance was provided to 224 schools.

200

More than 200 schools received initial presentations on the Student Assistance Program.

1

All work performed by one full-time Prevention First staff member and five project-specific consultants.

A background image of a young woman with dark hair, wearing a red shirt, smiling broadly and resting her chin on her hand. The image is partially obscured by a white diagonal shape in the top right corner.

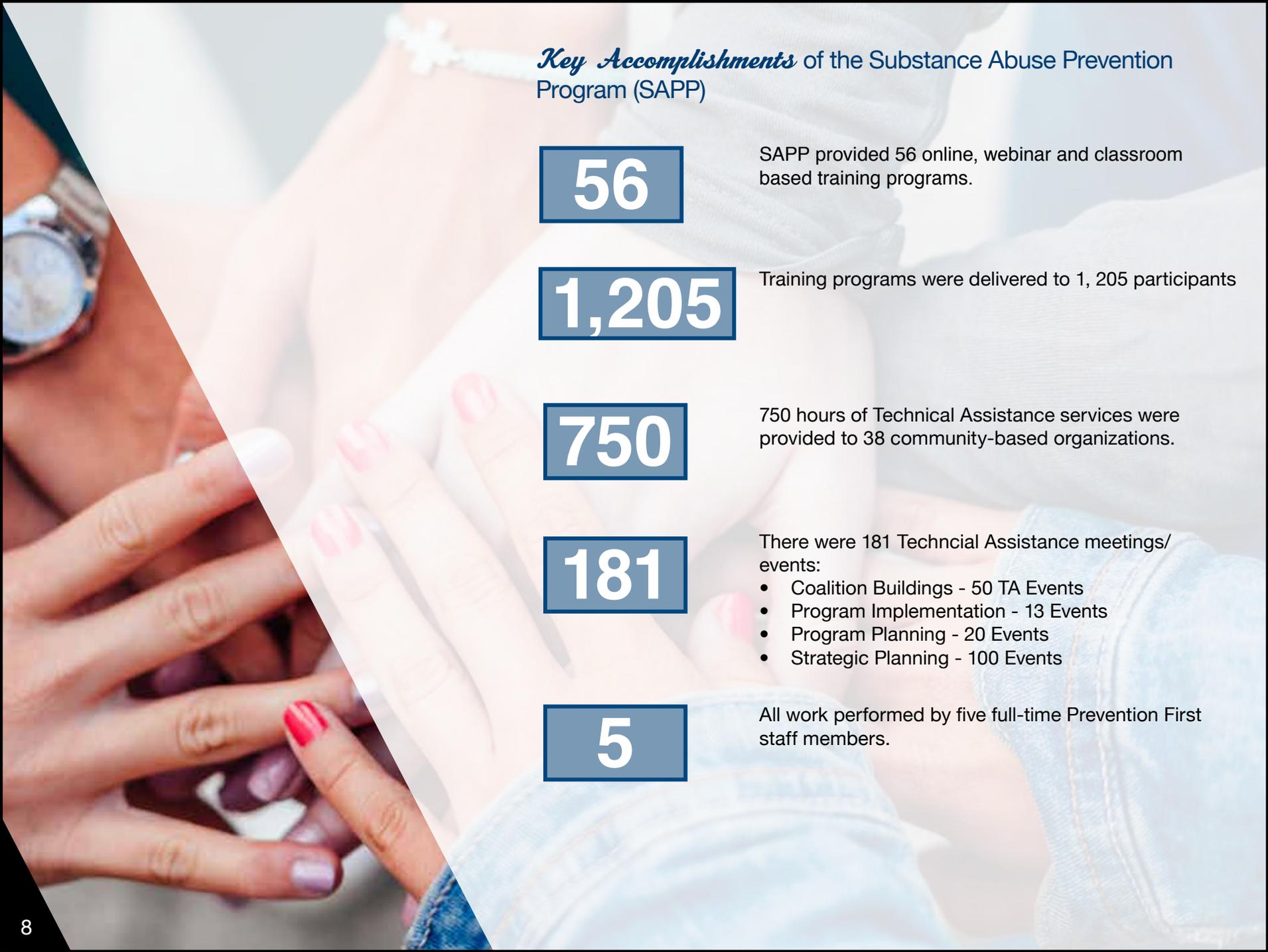
*In Their Own Words....* Chelsea Wesselmann, Unified Support Specialist, ROE 45, Waterloo, IL

Monroe/Randolph Regional Office of Education's program, Right Track Truancy Prevention, is designed to diminish and prevent chronic truancy and dropout by providing practical and appropriate interventions and support for high-risk students.

*Our partnership with the Student Assistance Center at Prevention First has been a vital part of our success in maximizing the number of students that we are able to reach. This partnership has facilitated organized methods of identifying and assisting students who struggle with truancy and are potential dropouts.*

The Student Assistance Program trainings, delivered by Dale Gasparovic, provide our teams a solid foundation of theory and research-based practice. They not only help solidify the connection between external risk-factors and truancy, but offer strategic methods to prevent future chronic truancy and dropout. The SAP trainings assist us in identifying status predictors and understanding the at-risk students' hierarchy of needs, choosing appropriate intervention strategies, speaking effectively to parents, and in reviewing data and developing a structured meeting and intervention process. The connection to social emotional learning, goal setting and identification of learning barriers is a seamless fit for us to proactively prevent truancy and school dropout all while combating the truancy issues that are in full bloom.

Our school-based 360 Teams (Truancy Intervention/Student Assistance Teams) consist of administrators, counselors, social workers and teacher-mentors. Through the Student Assistance Center's trainings, we have come to a common understanding of the at-risk student and the multiple scenarios around which truancy becomes a factor. With this common understanding and host of procedural solutions offered, our schools are armed with concrete strategies which lead to truancy and dropout prevention. The mid-year team assessment training, ongoing needs assessments, and targeted technical assistance makes the Student Assistance Center a much relied upon resource for improving our truancy intervention practices.



*Key Accomplishments* of the Substance Abuse Prevention Program (SAPP)

56

SAPP provided 56 online, webinar and classroom based training programs.

1,205

Training programs were delivered to 1, 205 participants

750

750 hours of Technical Assistance services were provided to 38 community-based organizations.

181

There were 181 Technical Assistance meetings/ events:

- Coalition Buildings - 50 TA Events
- Program Implementation - 13 Events
- Program Planning - 20 Events
- Strategic Planning - 100 Events

5

All work performed by five full-time Prevention First staff members.



*In Their Own Words....*Nadia Klekamp, Community Prevention Communications Specialist, Chestnut Health Systems, Normal, IL

In my work as a community prevention communications specialist at Chestnut Health Systems, I found the technical support provided by Prevention First to be useful in my work with my local coalitions. The real life coalition experience by the staff has proven to be valuable when providing me with feedback about either a concern or a way to address a challenge within the coalitions. Knowing that they have been in my position has helped to build a foundation of understanding unique to prevention staff. They are timely in their responses and have proven to be a hub of important resources. Over the years I have seen a great improvement of information sharing within Prevention First, such as the UConnect training account and the PF group site. These have been beneficial to supporting my coalitions' growth along with supporting my professional development and networking.

*I recently completed the pilot group of the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) Training of Facilitators program. This was a tremendous training program and really was one of the most comprehensive programs on the SPF that I've ever been a part of. This program enhanced what I already knew about the strategic prevention framework and expanded my knowledge on the SPF.*

The impact of working through this program with my coalition has been invaluable. An early result of going through this program was using the data compiled for the community needs assessment, part of the training program, in what we hope to be a successful grant application. Having the data already compiled and the community needs identified really streamlined the grant application process. We were able to say with certainty these are the issues addressing the community and as an agency/coalition this is what we plan to do to address them. Had it not been for Prevention First and the SPF Training of Facilitators program, the application process would have taken much longer, and would not have been as succinct.

*Key Accomplishments* of Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD)

66

The Students Against Destructive Decisions program provided 66 presentations and trainings

8,600

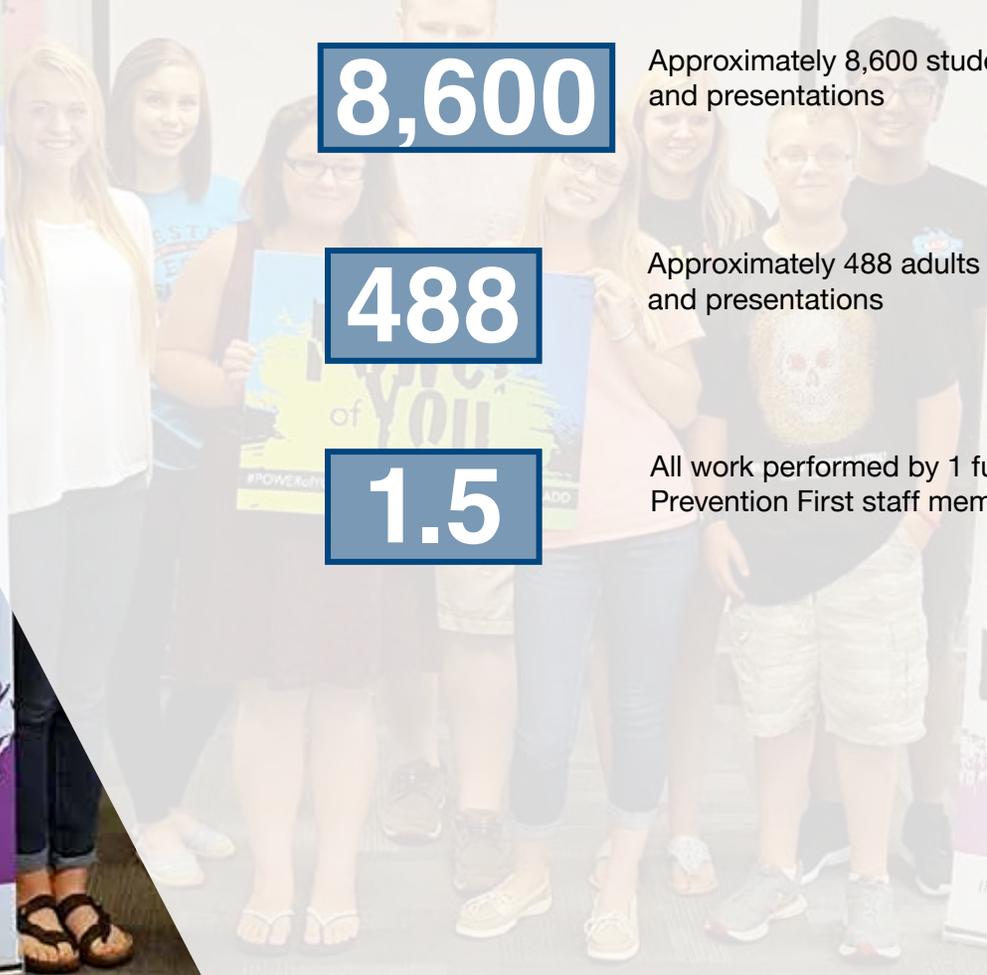
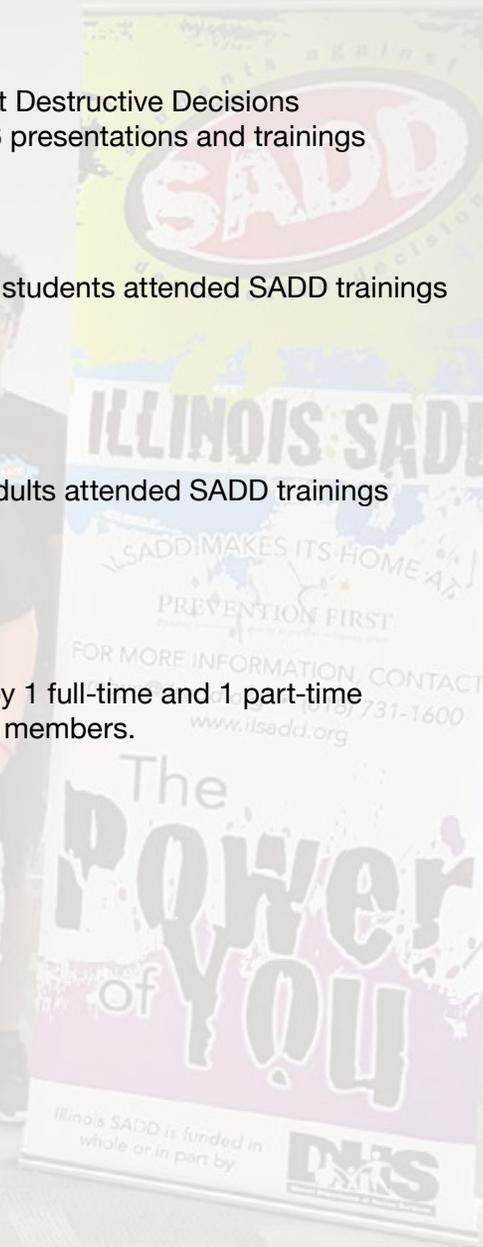
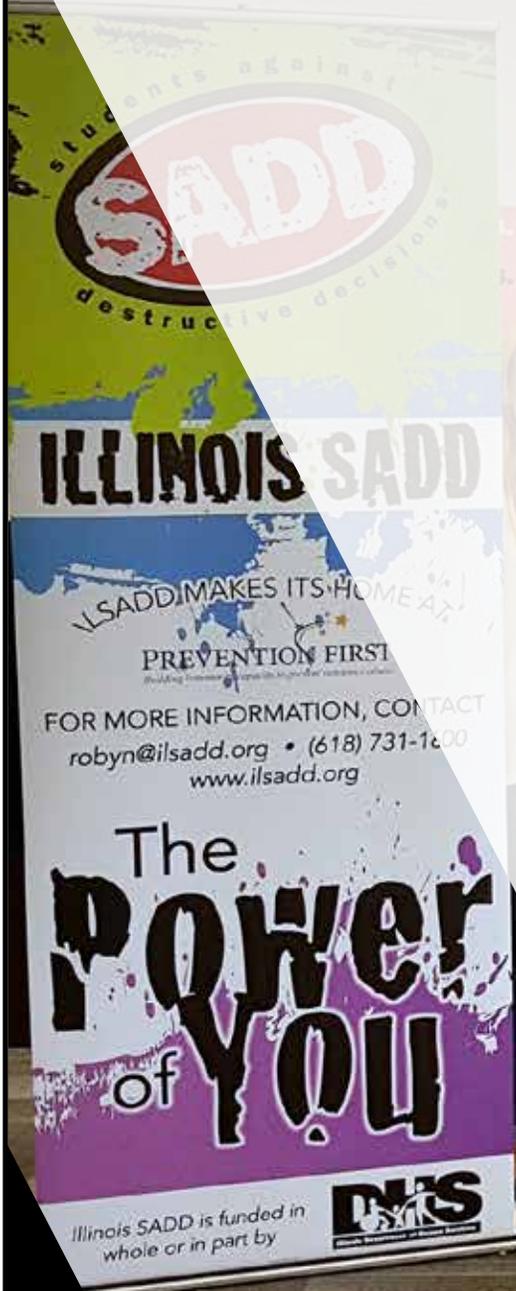
Approximately 8,600 students attended SADD trainings and presentations

488

Approximately 488 adults attended SADD trainings and presentations

1.5

All work performed by 1 full-time and 1 part-time Prevention First staff members.



*In Their Own Words....*Luigi Miguel Cabantog, Junior, Proviso West High School, ILSADD Student Advisory Board Member



**What high school do you attend, and where in Illinois is it?** *I go to Proviso West High School, a public school in Hillside IL. It is approximately 10 miles west from the City of Chicago.*

**Why do you think it's important for your high school to have a SADD program?** *Underage drinking, distracted driving, and substance abuse are some of the problems that we face in our community. SADD helps with making my peers realize the problems we have in our community, and teaches them to be a solution to these problems.*

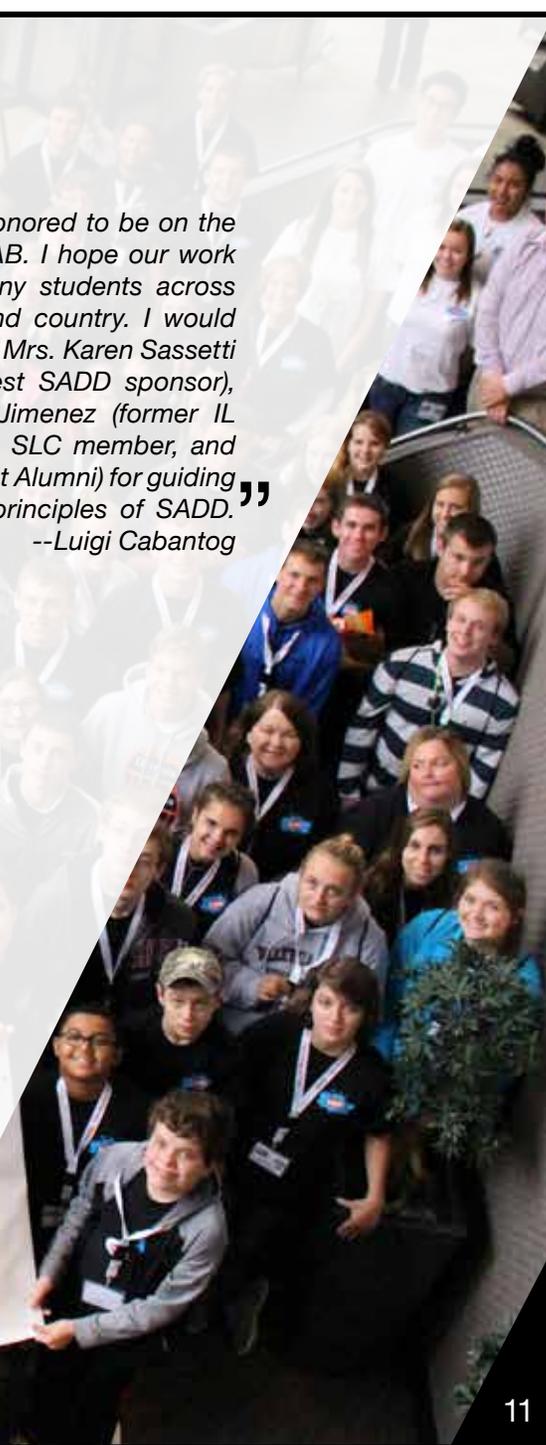
*Having a SADD chapter in my school is one step to a better and safer community.*

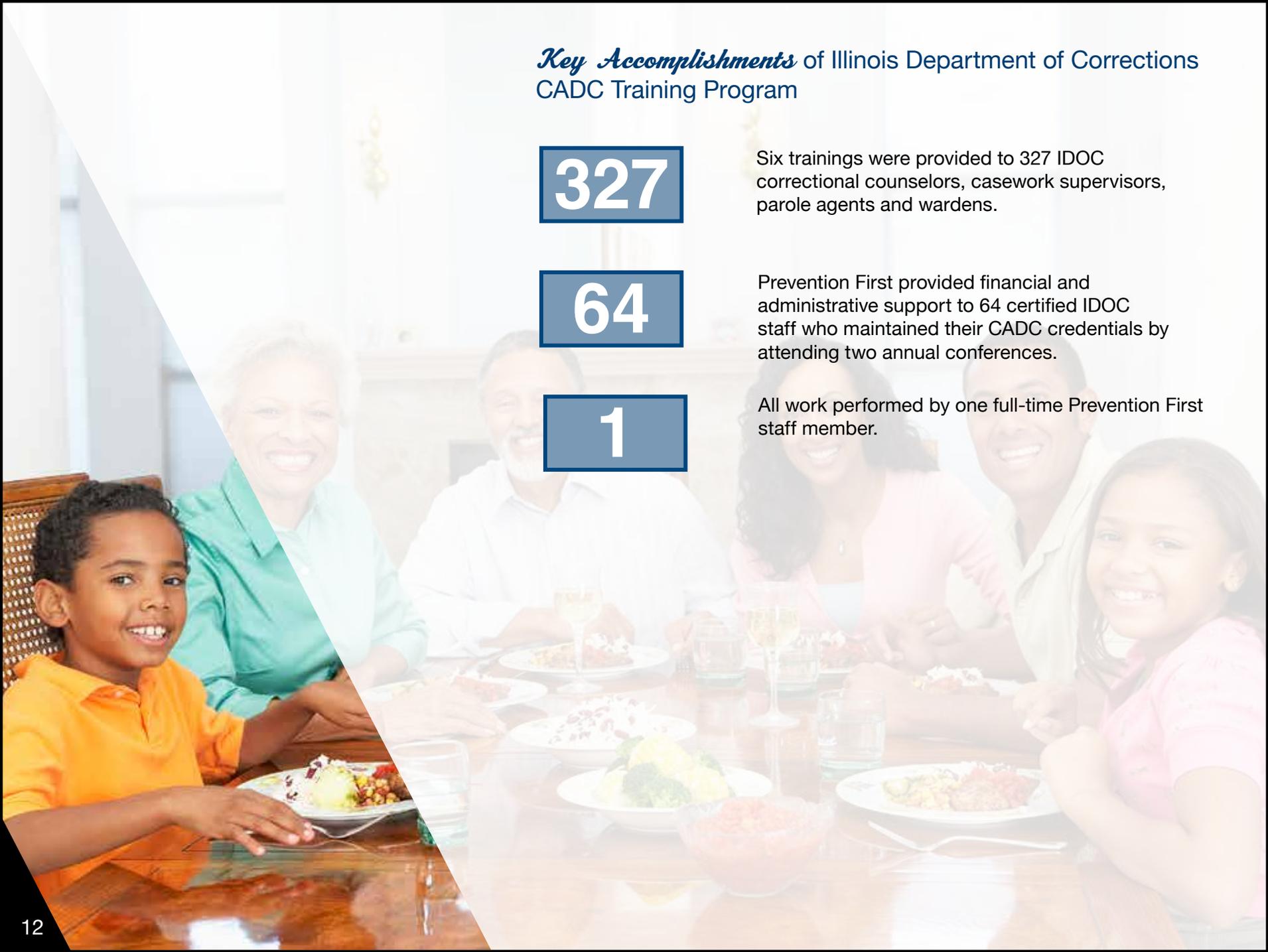
**Why did you want to belong to SADD?** *When I was a high school freshman, I had a difficult time adjusting emotionally. I was sad so I joined SADD. Our SADD chapter had a lot to offer. They did not just help me earn my community service hours, they also helped me cope with my problems, meet new people, and do good to my community. Now, I help others, especially the incoming freshmen, in our school adjust and not make destructive decisions.*

**Why did you want to be on the Student Advisory Board (SAB)?** *As I helped other people within my SADD chapter, I told myself that I wanted to do more. Now that I am on the SAB, I have the opportunity to do more and help more people by lobbying at the state capitol, forming new and effective ways in preventing destructive decisions, and inspire my peers that they have other ways to cope with their problems.*

**What do you hope to accomplish while on the SAB?** *While on the SAB, I hope to help organize a regional SADD fair in my area. I live in Cook County, the biggest county in Illinois, and I want SADD chapters in the area to come together and show what SADD is really about. Hopefully this will inspire students who have never heard of SADD before. In addition, I also look forward in working with the board to make sure next year's DomeShift even better than before.*

**“** *I am very honored to be on the IL SADD SAB. I hope our work inspires many students across the state and country. I would like to thank Mrs. Karen Sassetti (Proviso West SADD sponsor), and Limni Jimenez (former IL SADD SAB, SLC member, and Proviso West Alumni) for guiding me to the principles of SADD.* **”**  
--Luigi Cabantog





*Key Accomplishments* of Illinois Department of Corrections  
CADC Training Program

327

Six trainings were provided to 327 IDOC correctional counselors, casework supervisors, parole agents and wardens.

64

Prevention First provided financial and administrative support to 64 certified IDOC staff who maintained their CADC credentials by attending two annual conferences.

1

All work performed by one full-time Prevention First staff member.

*In Their Own Words*...Bradley Burrell, BS, CADC, Parole Agent,  
Illinois Department of Corrections, Peoria, IL

Prevention First impacts my work in so many ways. I've climbed through the social work field and joined the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) approximately 20 years ago. My training background is extensive, and includes a Psychology degree from Bradley University. I compare the training that Prevention First has offered me to the training I received from the DEA. Both have stuck with me and what I learned has been used in my current position of Senior Corrections Parole Agent, a position I've held for 16 years.

*I believe every parole agent who works with the criminal population, which is made up of 60-70 percent substance abuse clients, should be required to undergo what was offered to me.*

I use the knowledge I gained from Prevention First trainings every day to assist substance abusers into recovery. I also attend a conference which Prevention First pays for to stay updated on new/old approaches in the substance abuse field, and this just goes on and on. Prevention First provides literature at any time to aid in my understanding of the substance abuse field.

Coming from a psychology degree background, I thought I would have known how to present and understand the many models used in the substance abuse field. Undergoing Prevention First's CADC training shocked me. What I learned in college became useful language in the field after undergoing the two-year program. I worked with thousands of clients before the training, but after I obtained the CADC and all the information Prevention First provided, I became much better at directing clients to treatment.

I contact Lisa Link, who in my opinion can never get the credit she deserves for her passion and investment to this field, early every year to check if the CADC conference is still going to happen; that's how important it is that I attend for a refresher, even after approximately eight years of conferences. This training not only updates me to assist parolees with substance abuse and mental health issues, but it puts me into a week that motivates me to be better in this field.

## Key Accomplishments of the Communications Department



In response to reports that alcohol is the drug of choice for youth in Illinois as well as the United States, the Communications Department created an interactive infographic, found on the organization's website. The infographic has also been separated with vignettes used in social media.

2614

The infographic vignettes reached 2,614 people on Facebook.

2696

A post announcing Drug Take Back Day reached nearly 2,700 people on Facebook.

173k

The Prevention First home page, [prevention.org](http://prevention.org), hosted more than 173,000 page views.

35k

Prevention First tweets earned more than 35,000 impressions.

1

All work performed by one full-time Prevention First staff member.

## Financial Highlights

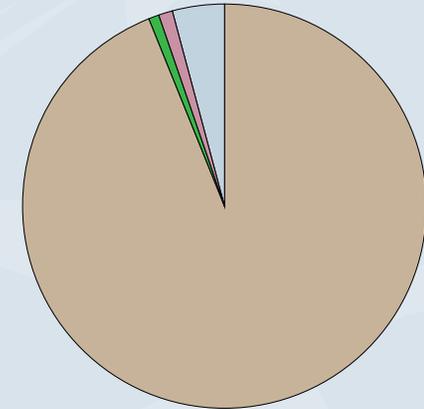
Prevention First is dedicated to providing the highest quality services while remaining fiscally responsible for the funds that we receive from both the private and public sectors. We are committed to balancing the needed services with prudent spending and leveraging limited resources.

During FY2016, Prevention First spent \$2,457,133 preventing alcohol and drug abuse in Illinois. Eighty three cents of every dollar spent, or \$2,044,472, went towards program services, while the remainder was accounted for by management and general expenses of \$313,752, fundraising costs of \$6,864, and cost for other supporting activities of \$92,045.

Approximately 93 percent of these expenditures were funded by the government, with the remaining funding provided by private grants, public support and other revenue sources. Approximately one percent of these expenditures (\$35,168) were funded by a private grant from State Farm.

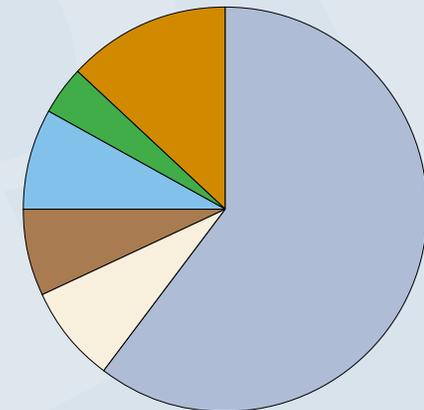
## Income

Government Funds	\$ 2,385,145	93%
Private Grants	\$ 35,168	1%
Direct Public Support	\$ 35,331	1%
Other Revenue	\$ 106,266	4%
	\$ 2,561,910	



## Expenses

Substance Abuse Prevention Program Training and Technical Assistance	\$ 1,496,436	61%
Student Assistance Center	\$ 187,613	8%
Substance Abuse Training to Dept. of Corrections	\$ 161,987	7%
Illinois Students Against Destructive Decisions	\$ 198,436	8%
Fundraising	\$ 6,864	0%
Other Supporting Activities	\$ 92,045	4%
Management and General	\$ 313,752	13%
	\$ 2,457,133	



## *The History of Prevention First*

Prevention First was first known as the Illinois Prevention Resource Center, created in 1980 to address the alarming increase in youth drug use occurring at the time. In 1987, PRC incorporated as a non-profit organization and changed its name to Prevention First in 1994.

Since then, Prevention First has trained hundreds of schools and community groups in use of effective substance abuse prevention programs and practices, opened the state's first training and resource center to help schools establish effective Student Assistance Programs, and became the fiscal agent for Illinois' Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD). We have also trained hundreds of healthcare professionals in educating women regarding the dangers of drinking alcohol while pregnant.

Today, Prevention First is Illinois' ONLY nonprofit resource center specializing in preventing alcohol and other drug use among youth and pregnant women.

## *Why Prevention*

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, research has demonstrated that research-based drug abuse prevention programs are cost-effective. Each dollar invested in prevention achieves a savings of up to \$7 in areas such as substance abuse treatment and criminal justice system costs, not to mention their wider impact on the trajectory of young lives and their families. Each year, drug abuse and addiction cost taxpayers nearly \$534 billion in preventable health care, law enforcement, crime, and other costs.

Over 20 years of research demonstrates that prevention interventions designed and tested to reduce risk and enhance protective factors can help children at every step along their developmental path, from early childhood into young adulthood.



Headquarters  
2800 Montvale Drive  
Springfield, IL 62704  
p: 217.793.7353  
f: 217.793.7354  
toll-free: 800.252.8951

Branch Office  
33 W. Grand Avenue, Ste 300  
Chicago, IL 60654  
p: 312.988.4646  
f: 312.988.7069  
toll-free: 800.252.8951

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