

## **REPORT OF WELLESLEY YOUTH COMMISSION**

### **About the Youth Commission**

The Wellesley Youth Commission provides programs and services designed to ensure that Wellesley's youth feel they are a valued part of the Wellesley community. By providing a wide variety of community-based events, programs and services, the Youth Commission strives to appeal to and meet the needs of a broad spectrum of middle school and high school age youth. Programs range from psycho-educational discussion groups and service learning opportunities to social activities.

The mission of the Wellesley Youth Commission is to ensure that Wellesley's youth feel connected to their community by:

- assessing their needs and concerns;
- advocating on their behalf before town boards, schools and other relevant bodies;
- implementing and promoting educational and extracurricular programs that address and serve their needs;
- promoting a positive image of adolescents within the community by creating opportunities for them to interact with other segments of town;
- availing them of opportunities to use their talents and competencies to serve others;
- advocating for the existence of facilities in which they may interact with one another in a safe and positive social environment and;
- including them in the decision-making process of the Youth Commission.

Youth Commission board members for Fiscal Year 2007 were: Chair: Jill Downing, Members: Lieutenant Paul Delaney, Glen Magpiong, Ellen Prives, Officer Brian Spencer, Dan Vogel, and Fran Whyman. The Youth Commission's professional staff consists of a Youth Director, Maura Renzella. The Youth Director's office is located at the Wellesley Community Center, 219 Washington Street.

### **Programs and Services**

**Programs offered by the Youth Commission in fiscal year 2007 included:**

**Harm reduction programs for Wellesley Public Schools for 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students** are various programs offered through the Health and Fitness courses at Wellesley Middle and High Schools. Internet safety is covered in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, an introduction to the consequences of underage drinking is covered in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and followed up again in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade with a more intensive discussion on how to make healthy choices and direct and indirect consequences regarding underage drinking. All programs are in collaboration with both the Wellesley Police and Fire Departments.

**Wellesley Employment Program** is a program managed by the Wellesley Youth Commission, which provides youth, businesses, and residents a point of contact for connecting employment opportunities within the community. The Employment Program can be accessed online by youth, businesses, and residents at [www.wellesleyma.gov/youth](http://www.wellesleyma.gov/youth).

**Teens Against Drinking and Driving (TADD)** is a Wellesley High School club co-advised by the Wellesley Youth Director and the WHS Outreach Counselor from Human Relations

Service Inc. TADD focuses on raising awareness within the WHS community on issues such as alcohol and the consequences of drinking and driving.

**Wellesley Fire Rescuers Summer Program** is an educational and service learning-based summer program for middle school age youth collaboratively managed by the Wellesley Youth Commission and the Wellesley Fire Department. Participants find out about careers in fire and public safety and learning basic components of first aid and fire prevention. In addition, the program strives to foster positive relationships between fire service personnel and local youth.

**Wellesley Youth Academy** is an educational and learning-based summer program for middle school age youth collaboratively managed by the Wellesley Youth Commission and the Wellesley Police Department. Participants spend a week with Wellesley police personnel where they gain a valuable perspective on the importance of law enforcement with-in their community. While learning about law enforcement careers, Academy attendees will also get to know local police officers.