

# **Northfield Community Straw Poll on Illegal Use of Drugs**

**Results Published: 7/11/2007**

## **Instructions Provided To Respondents**

This is an informal straw poll (unscientific) designed to better understand the problem of illegal drug use in the Northfield Minnesota area and engage local citizens in helping to work on it. It's authored by Griff Wigley, co-host of Locally Grown ([www.locallygrownorthfield.org](http://www.locallygrownorthfield.org)). Contact: [griffinjay@gmail.com](mailto:griffinjay@gmail.com) or 507-645-8319.

Results of the straw poll including comments will be posted on Locally Grown and made available to interested public officials, community organizations, and members of the media.

## **Respondent Metrics**

Respondents:	82
First Response:	7/9/2007 04:08 PM
Last Response:	7/11/2007 06:48 PM

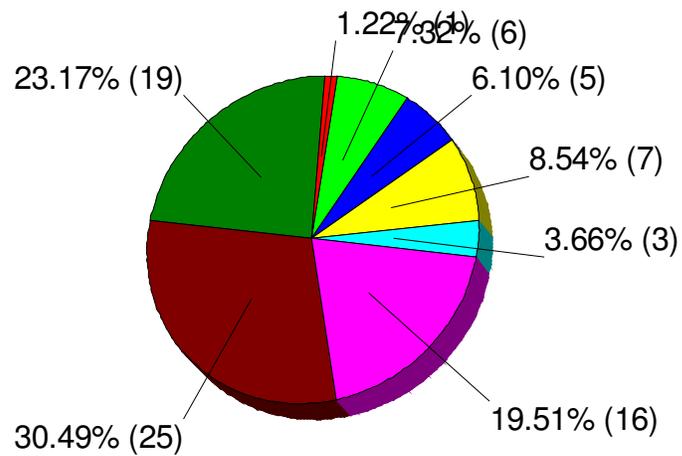
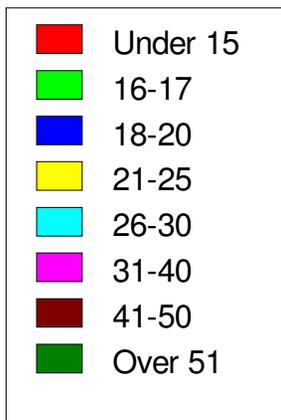
## Survey Results

The following is a graphical depiction of the responses to each survey question. Additional comments provided by respondents, if any, are included after each graph.

### Section - Miscellaneous

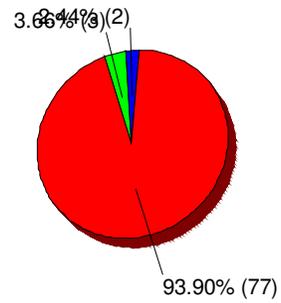
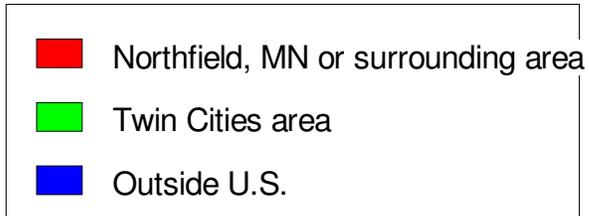
#### 1. How old are you?

Average Choice: 6.02



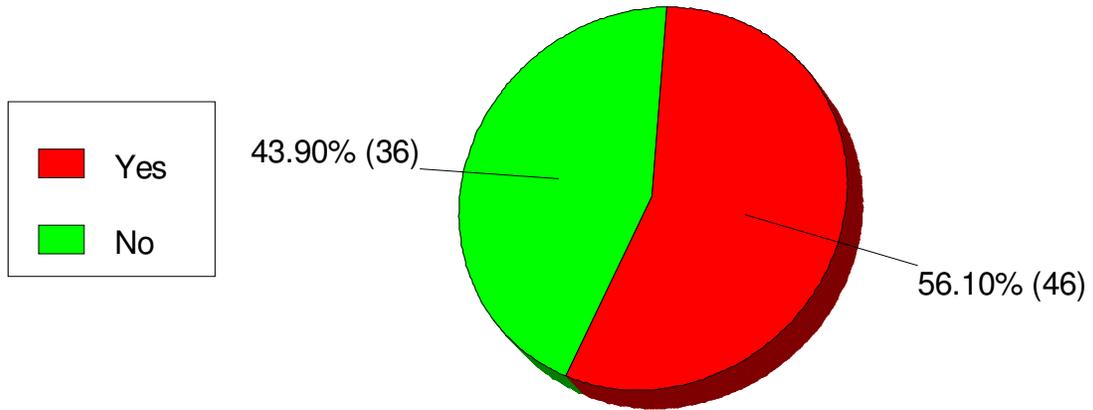
## 2. Where do you live?

Average Choice: 1.20



**3. Are you a parent of children who live in the Northfield area?**

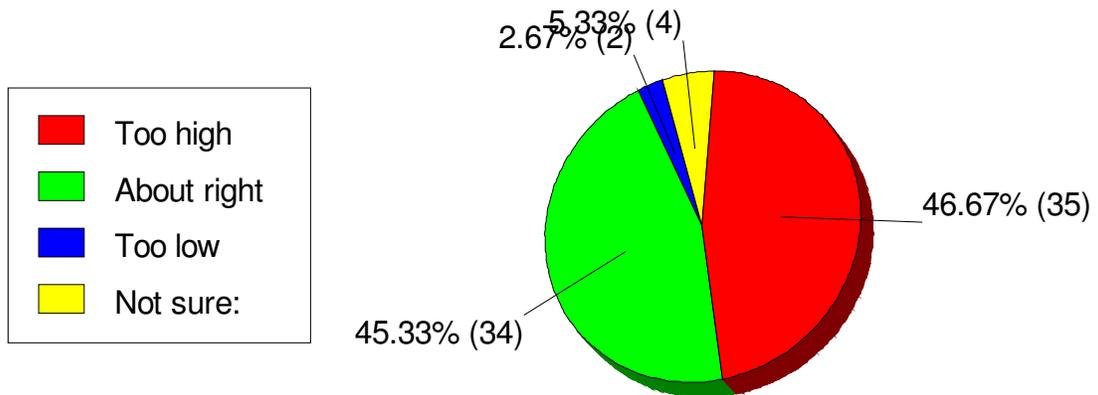
Average Choice: 1.44



**Section - Law enforcement**

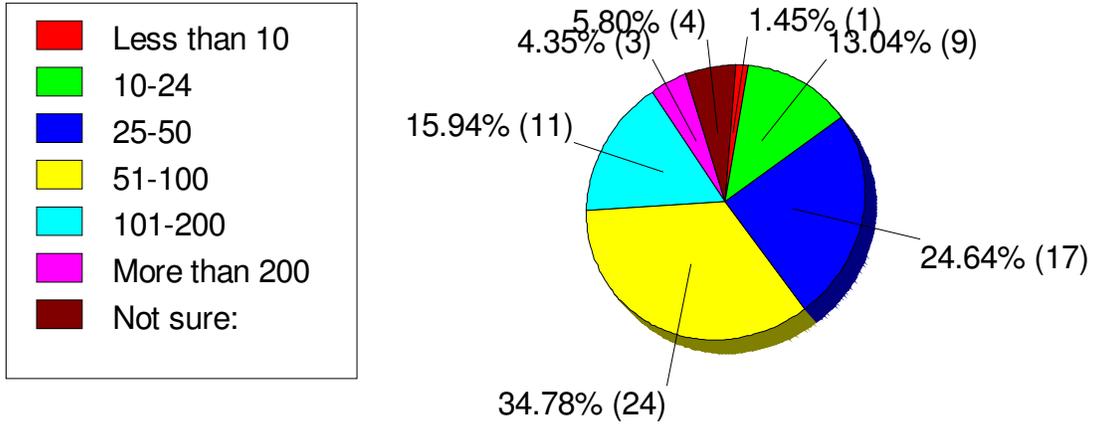
**4. Police estimate that there are 150-250 young people aged 15-23 using some form of heroin or Oxycodone (OxyContin) in the Northfield area. Do you think those numbers are**

Average Choice: 1.67



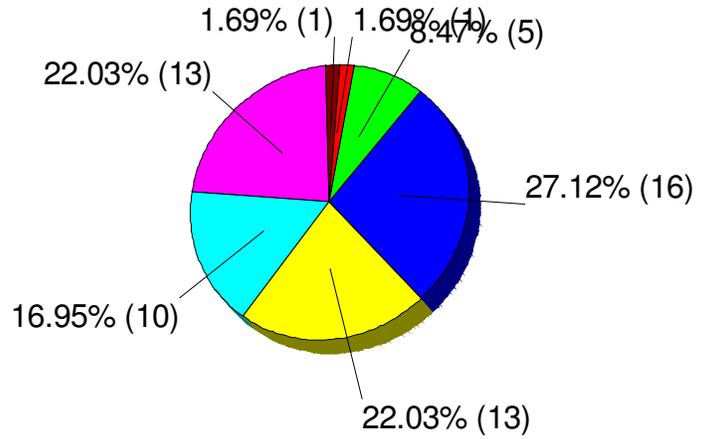
**5. How many Northfield area students (currently enrolled in area district, charter, private, and parochial schools) do you think are using heroin or Oxycodone (OxyContin)?**

Average Choice: 3.87



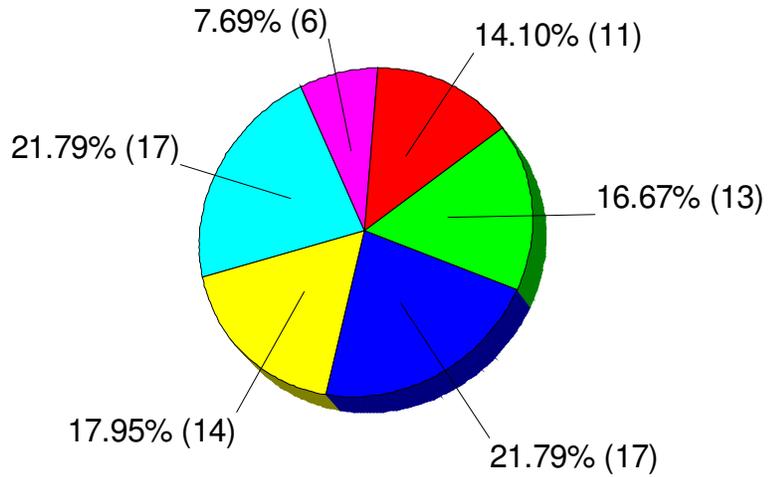
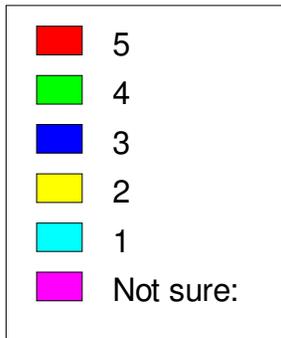
**6. How many Northfield area students (currently enrolled in area district, charter, private, and parochial schools) do you think are illegally using prescription drugs like Vicodin and Adderall?**

Average Choice: 4.17



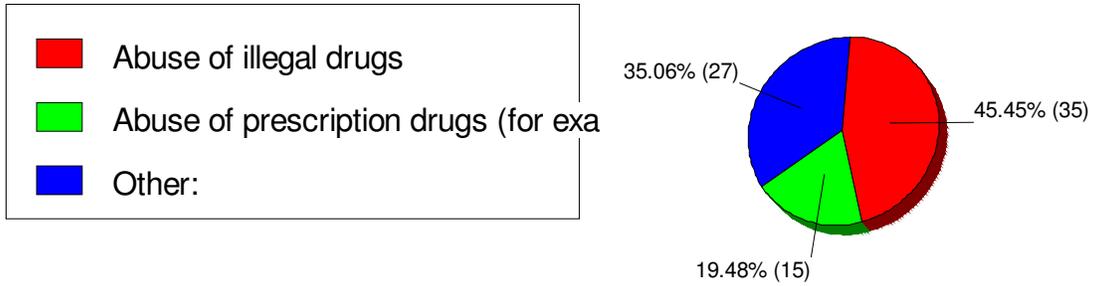
**7. The Northfield police held a news conference last week about the problem of heroin in the area. Rate your level of support for how it was handled. 5=strong support. 1=no support**

Average Choice: 3.40



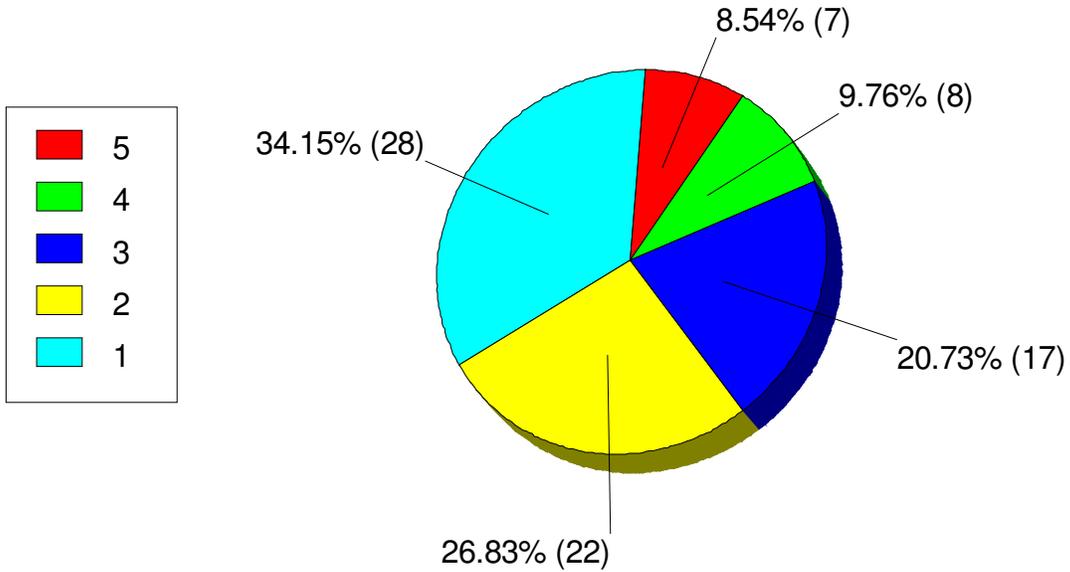
## 8. Which is currently a bigger problem in the Northfield community?

Average Choice: 1.90



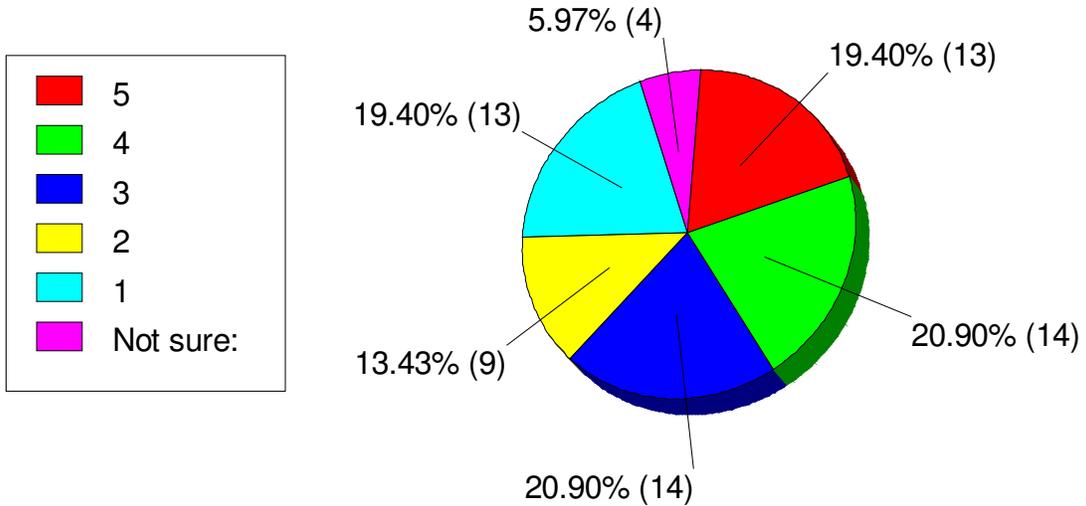
**9. How knowledgeable are you about the Northfield Police Department's enforcement practices related to illegal drugs and illegal use of prescription drugs? 5=Very knowledgeable. 1=Not at all knowledgeable.**

Average Choice: 3.68



**10. Rate your level of support for the Northfield Police Department's enforcement practices related to illegal drugs and illegal use of prescription drugs. 5=strong support. 1=no support.**

Average Choice: 3.10



**11. What comments, concerns, or questions do you have about the Northfield Police Department related to the illegal use of drugs? (Please use a civil tone in your writing to increase the likelihood that your remarks will be read by others.)**

Enforcement must always be connected with efforts to educate. It is a hard job. But the strongest efforts should be made to get users to quit and cause fewer people to start rather than trying to send people off to jail or some type of incarceration.

Get the facts straight. Legalize (and control) pot, and crack down on the hard drugs.

I am glad the Northfield police have named this problem as opposed to sweeping it under the carpet. The more concerned people aware of the problem the more likely there can be an effort and impact to address it.

I am very concerned about the haphazard use of numbers thrown out there at the press conference. The implication of one number (150) or the other (15 , as reported by the school related to heroine) is enormous. It means either the community has basically failed or is basically doing to right thing. The higher number creates panic and distrust, the last thing we need to fight this problem as a community. The police can correct thus by telling us how they reached the conclusion of 150-250 users between the ages of 15-23, and I would like that broken down by age, each single age. I would really appreciate that.

I do not like the way that the publicity was handled. What other police departments make such a public display of this type of problem? And why wasn't it done in cooperation with the school district instead of blindsiding them with the press conferece? Seems to me a better course of action would have been to make them a part of it rather than put them on the defensive. Not good community teamwork. Frankly, though I have great respect for Gary Smith's leadership and knowledge, I think he messed up on how this one was handled...and it reeks of wanting to get some publicity and the name of the police department and its chief in the newspapers and on TV/radio. I don't buy the argument that by making it public the dealers/users will know that we don't tolerate this stuff here.

I feel like they are trying to make a big deal of something that, while it is an issue, would have been better dealt with in a more positive light. I feel that they could have talked with and worked with the school district to discuss options and bring this to the community and broader news with a more optimistic light about how we are going to move forward in our fight on drugs. The way they handled it makes me feel like they were going on a smear campaign on my age group. I know that there are users, and I fully agree that any use is a problem, but I don't think that statewide coverage was the most effective way to deal with a local problem.

I feel there is a large disconnect between the nature of the use of prescription in the area and the police departments perception of the users. The youth who use prescription drugs

are often the ones who no one in the community suspects of illegal drug use. Enforcing drug use at the user level will be nearly useless due to the vast number of 14-20 year old users in the area, this sort of rampant drug use must be addressed at the source of the problem with the dealers and over-prescribers. Most of these drugs are available because doctors willingly handout adderall to any young adult who says they struggle with school due to a short attention span, then they become available to sell to dealers or friends. This use of prescription drugs then leads into the introduction of other drugs such as marijuana, heroin and other Rx drugs. While the argument about gateway drugs always persist, it is undeniable that the casual use of Rx drugs leads into the availability of harder more dangerous drugs in the teenage population. By introducing our teenagers and young adults to these kind of dangers we not only jeopardize their future, but also the future Northfield.

I have two sons who have obtained and used a wide variety of illegal and prescription drugs in the Northfield area, including heroin. One son just had a heroin relapse two days ago. I am a contributing and upstanding citizen, and you would recognize my name. The police and Rice County Law Enforcement have always dealt with my sons in a way that displays their deep concern for people. I commend everyone who is bringing these issues to light, because it is the secrecy and denial around alcohol and drug abuse that allow it to thrive. I do my best to be up front ,openand proactive about alcohol and drug problems in my family. I also think that the medical community, and perhaps the prescription drug companies bear responsibility for the transition to blithely prescribing Vicadin for extremely minor pain. For example, my younger son was prescribed Vicadin for his sore and jammed toe ( which require medical intervention to unjam it) as well as for the removal of his wisdom teeth. Admittedly codeine, which used to be prescribed with Tylenol 3, was also addictive, but it didn't really have the "pleasant glow" effects that Vicadin is reputed to have. I know that Alcoholics Anonymous attempts to educated physicians that it would be helpful if they were more alert to potential problems that they may cause when prescribing pain medications to people with histories of addictions, but I think it could be helpful if more people insisted that M.D.s all took a very serious look at this.

I support the NPD's efforts to deal with drug-related problems. I think the main problem, though, is parents who are not taking appropriate responsibility for raising their children. What is being reported in the news media seems to clearly indicate abdication of or inability to engage in parental responsibility by a number of parents in the Northfield area.

I talked to Monte Nelson, of the regional drug force as well as the Northfield PD, last winter, and was specifically addressing the subject of integrity testing of officers. According to him, there is no system in place, and in fact, in his 12 years with the department, he's never even been tested for drug use.

I think it is common practice to over look the offenders if they are from a prominent family, athelete or wealthy. I know of incidents where students were not held accountable because of a game or other pending important community event.

I think it is important that the information regarding heroin and oxycontin has been made very public. I wonder that the police couldn't do more to expose and arrest those who are selling these drugs. If they know the problem started with a few kids, why can't they find out from those kids, and others who are at various levels of sobriety. Sending the pushers to jail should be a priority.

I think the police officer that works that the high school should be changed. I don't think he is very welcoming to youth. I think he is a good officer but should be in a different area. Thank you.

I think there need to be more people involved other than the police. We need professionals that LISTEN carefully and KNOW WHAT THEY'RE DOING.

I think they are clueless as to how to handle the situation. We need to ask the "big scary cities" how they deal with their drug problems and stop turning our backs pretending we don't have any problems. Get over yourselves Northfielders! Admit your faults and ask for help, at least for the childrens' sake!

I think they need to do more to protect our community. They deal with little petty things when they need to be out busting the big drug dealers. Who really cares about skateboarding and curfew tickets and who goes in the parks past 10 when there are so many drug abusers. Go find those people supplying them, not the minor crap that doesn't make a difference. It seems like they're not doing ANYTHING to make a difference.

I think things have been blown out of proportion. Drug use is, of course, a serious issue--at any level--but thanks to the efforts of the NPD, the image of the entire city and its citizens has unnecessarily been severely damaged.

I was concerned to read comments from Superintendent Chris Richardson indicating that the police had not contacted the school district officials before the press conference. If true, that's wrong and the PD missed a chance to share with the press community responses that are already in place. I suspect that long-term and lasting solutions to these issues will be found through cooperation. Law enforcement clearly has a role - but so does the school system and so does the community and various organizations within it.

I'd like to hear more discussion about the scale of the problem. Yes, even one heroin user is a problem, but size still matters.

I'm pleased that the police are taking a proactive position on the illegal drug use problem. It matters far less to me about the actual numbers of young people involved, than it does to know that the police and others are on top of the issue. I find it frightening to think there are hundreds of parents in this community that are ignoring drug use signs or condoning it.

If they know who the users are, know who the dealers are and know who the fencers are, then isn't the next logical step to make some arrests?

If, as you say you know who the users are---you need to get them help, but also harass and do what you can to make the pushers job more difficult. It is not kids being bored problem--it is an access problem.

keep up the great work

More connections to treatment and prevention programs and honest dialogue needed. Work with the Key, they are a haven in this city.

My impression is that the Northfield police are more concerned about making arrests among the kids who are stealing to support an emerging habit than in busting the dealers selling to them. I turned in a tip of a name, phone number and location where I know heroin deals have occurred and I am not sure that it was ever followed up on. I felt like the officer I turned it in to felt that I was being a bother to him.

Northfield is a microcosm of all of society and cities of all sizes. The "not in my backyard" feeling of the people here is wrong, everything that is good and bad in the US is happening on a smaller scale here. Wake up! We aren't Mayberry and never were.

People should not be judged just because they choose to use a drug which has certain side effects. EVERYONE uses drugs, yet the police aren't trying to go after most people for taking a few acetaminophen, etc. "Illegal drugs" are just what the powers that be see as a threat to their interests. People need to make their own decisions.

Raising awareness and engaging the entire community is what was needed. While the police can do a wonderful job limiting and controlling some aspects of drug trade, trafficking and use, it is ultimately the community's responsibility to see it through. That starts with parental involvement with their children, diligence in providing fewer opportunities for theft, and a willingness to help keep your neighbor as safe as you would like yourself.

Self-reported numbers (estimates of total numbers of users given by users) are almost always higher than objective totals. I have a son in the high school; he says he's seen nothing particularly out of order over the last few years. I am involved in community activities with high school students, and, as a past alcohol / drug educator and social worker, I know what to look for. I've also seen nothing to indicate the numbers bandied about by some local officials.

The Chief of Police is using scare tactics to drive attention to himself and to bring dollars into his department. The problem is real--the numbers are not...this is not an epidemic.

The NPD relies upon drug war money as a source of funding. Any comments about the current levels of drug use are a thinly veiled attempt to attract more money. Also, if the problem is as bad as they say, the Chief should be fired as he did nothing to prevent it.

The police do what they do. They do it about as well as any other police department. The problem is so much bigger than the police, I wonder why this poll only asks about police practices.

There is no doubt in my mind that this could have been prevented. Also, it is not the fault of the Northfield police to prevent this, it is the responsibility of the parents of Northfield High schoolers. This is a tragedy that could have been avoided if parents talked to their children about this more.

They're doing a great service to the community by bringing this to the public's attention. Someone has to tell the truth. I especially like it that Chief Smith sees the solution in treatment and awareness not arrests. It's a civilized, humane approach to a very serious problem.

Unfortunately, the press conference was short on facts and long on hysteria. It seems to have invoked a panic reaction in our community, which serves no useful purpose. It is extremely unlikely that teenagers from our community are roving the hallways of hospitals looking for drugs --- and even less likely that they would receive any if they did so. How credible is the rest of the story?

We have a police officer who is the contact for the NHS. Correct? Why are users not arrested if you know who they are?

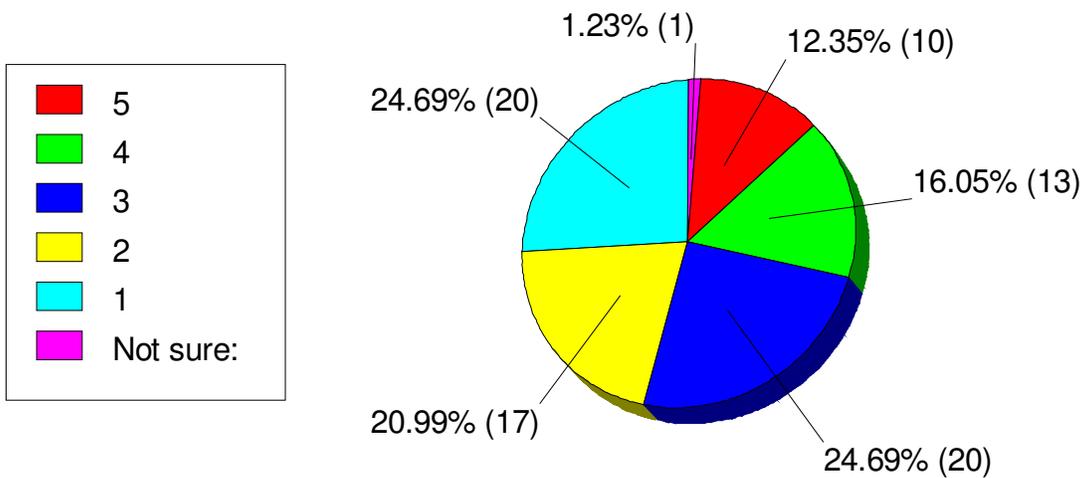
Why the big difference in numbers cited (150 vs. 250) if "we know who these kids are"?

Why the school district wasn't involved in the initial press conference..... they felt the need to respond in the paper to the issue and numbers cited. Why weren't they included in the beginning?

**Section - Community response**

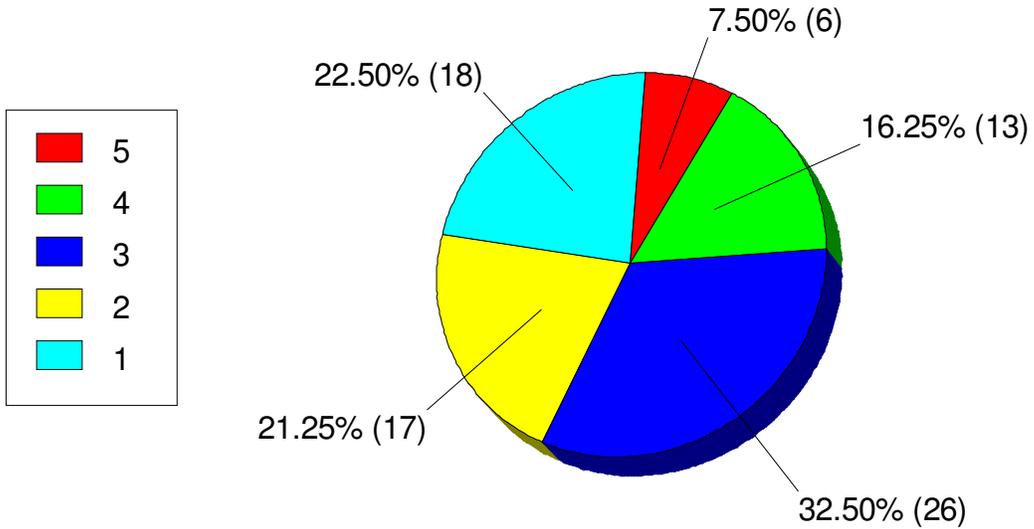
**12. How knowledgeable are you about programs offered by the Northfield area schools (district, charter, private, parochial) to address students' illegal use of drugs? 5=Very knowledgeable. 1=Not at all knowledgeable.**

Average Choice: 3.33



**13. What's your level of satisfaction with the efforts by Northfield area schools (district, charter, private, parochial) to address students' illegal use of drugs? 5=Very satisfied. 1=Very dissatisfied**

Average Choice: 3.35



**14. What comments, concerns, or questions do you have about the Northfield area schools' response related to the illegal use of drugs? (Please use a civil tone in your writing to increase the likelihood that your remarks will be read by others.)**

All programs are good, but they don't get rid of drugs.

Along with the rest of America the anti-drug programs sponsored in the Northfield area are out of date and antiquated. No matter what methods are used, preaching the same message that has been sent out since the 1980's won't work. This anti-drug message seems to have no more impact than alcohol use and premarital sex, which must admittedly be more acceptable for high schoolers. By putting all of these issues at the same level illegal drugs are not seen as anything worse than drinking since the same scare tactics are used to push the message.

Don't know enough to comment.

First of all, underage drinking and drug use is not a school problem, but a community problem. The school has worked very hard in a tough budget climate to create a supportive climate for youth and it has been willing to collaborate with other community groups and agencies. I give it an A Plus

I am more inclined to believe the numbers used by the school (30 drug users total, probably 15 heroine users), than the police numbers, which, I think, are deducted from the number of thefts in the community. I would be fine with the school continuing what it is doing. I have a daughter there, and one graduated in 2006. Yes, 15 users is also too many, and these victims of substance abuse need better access to help locally, but 15 heroine uses in a group of 1300 tells me that basically our programs are working for most of the kids --- it's unrealistic to ever expect 0 use, it would be a new one in 10,000 years of human history. Let's not forget, if it is not drugs, it's alcohol. However, RALLEY has been the laughing stock of the school in this respect for many years. Some of its leaders have included druggies and certainly alcohol consumption has been no problem among it's members. RALLEY at our school stands for hypocrisy and is doing more harm than good because it is considered a hypocritical organization. I recommend it to be disbanded in light of this discussion and to start all over again, different name, different faculty involved (perhaps Mr. Graupman should withdraw as his name is so strongly associated with this failing program).

I am not opposed to using drug dogs in the school. Turns out it is the drug problem is well know to the kids. Lets give them something to worry about.

I am totally ignorant of their response to this issue.

I appreciated their response in the paper.

I dealt with the school district this summer regarding my varsity athlete who was caught using. The counsellor at NHS has been a great resource. The coach and the athletic director basically want to have nothing more to do with her. She was left feeling that there isn't a place on the team for her anymore. As a result, she feels that the High School doesn't have a place for her anymore.

I feel that the schools "responsibilities" has to be limited. The main objective of any school is to teach. It may be in place, but if not I think educators need an outlet for them to express concerns about individual students, or even information that they may have heard pertaining to individuals. It gets old hearing people say that the schools are not doing enough, and then also complain that the kids are not learning enough. The more we tax the teachers with duties not related directly to teaching, the less our students learn.

I hope that this publicity will make the school district add to their list of efforts and also see that they are enforced.

I think it's really scary that they haven't said a word about a problem they were clear we had. They should have their jobs taken away! They are there to help our children, not to uphold some false image of a perfect little town.

I think that the schools are too much bound by privacy concerns when it comes to life-threatening behaviors of children under their watch. I think that the tone of the article in Saturday's paper by the school perpetuated this form of denial and minimization.

I thought the Superintendents comments in the Northfield News seemed to be a classic denial attitude. It doesn't do any good to try and minimize a problem or gloss over it. The student comments seemed to give a much clearer picture about the problem.

I thought they're response to the release of the news last week was defensive and CYA.

I wouldn't complain to the cops if kids in town weren't doing well in math or reading, and I really don't think it's up to the schools to enforce state or federal narcotics laws.

If I were to pick out one group that is most responsible for this problem, it would be Northfield Public Schools by far. I honestly believe that if they had an equitable, comprehensive drug education program that this problem would not be half what it is. It seems ridiculous, but kids genuinely make the rationalization that if they learned in school that drugs (including marijuana) are bad, and later learn marijuana is not (significantly) bad, that all drugs must be not (significantly) bad. What they teach about drugs in health class is more ridiculous than what they teach about sexual abstinence.

In the bible, the shepherd leaves the herd to find the one. In the schools, the shepherds focus on the herd and cultivate a herd mentality.

It does not appear to me that the school has taken a pro-active stance on the drug issue.

It is good for schools to be involved and proactive, but - again - the responsibility for this belongs with the parents and they should be held accountable.

It's obvious that the money spent on D.A.R.E. was completely wasted.

Just work more closely with the police department. It seems clear to me that both departments are functioning independently of each other in solving this problem. Work together! Regular meetings! Teamwork! Unified goals!

keep up the great work

One of the reasons most of us don't know anything about how the drug issue is being handled is because there is a secrecy surrounding it, families feeling shamed, schools not wanting to look like they have problems, etc.

School staff are under tremendous pressures to not only serve in educational roles, but they have become counselors, parents, advocates, and astute observers of all life's ups and downs. While it is easy to think the schools can handle it, they are but one resource. They do a good job when they can identify issues without much doubt. It is very difficult to intervene when evidence of a problem is not as strong or when there are questions.

Schools spend too much time just telling young people what is GOOD and BAD to do. Yes, people should have the information about the side effects ALL drugs have, and choose for themselves to use them or not.

The response by Superintendent Richardson makes it sound like he would rather keep his head in the sand - where it seems, it has been since he began. Too bad the school district couldn't have joined Chief Smith when he called the press conference. However, this situation is so far beyond the political and who cares what the numbers actually are. The fact is, there are school aged kids who are using heroin in Nfld. The bottom line is, as a community, we must get involved at the grass roots level. It probably isn't up to the schools to do something about the problem. I wish the schools would have brought the fact that kids are using these drugs to the attention of the Nfld community when they first learned about it. That they didn't doesn't really mean much now, except that parents and community members AND students need to be involved in dealing with the issue. We need small groups, big groups, information groups, parent forums and discussion groups, kids talking to kids, adults talking with kids, kids talking to adults. Kids need to really know what the consequences are of using these drugs.

The students need to be talked to more, and classes that involve their lives. or taught in that way. The ALC does a wonderful job, but they need more support form the community.

They need to confront the students that they think are using. Not just the ones that are athletes and get good grades, but the ones who don't too. They seem to care more about people who fit into their norms more and that needs to stop.

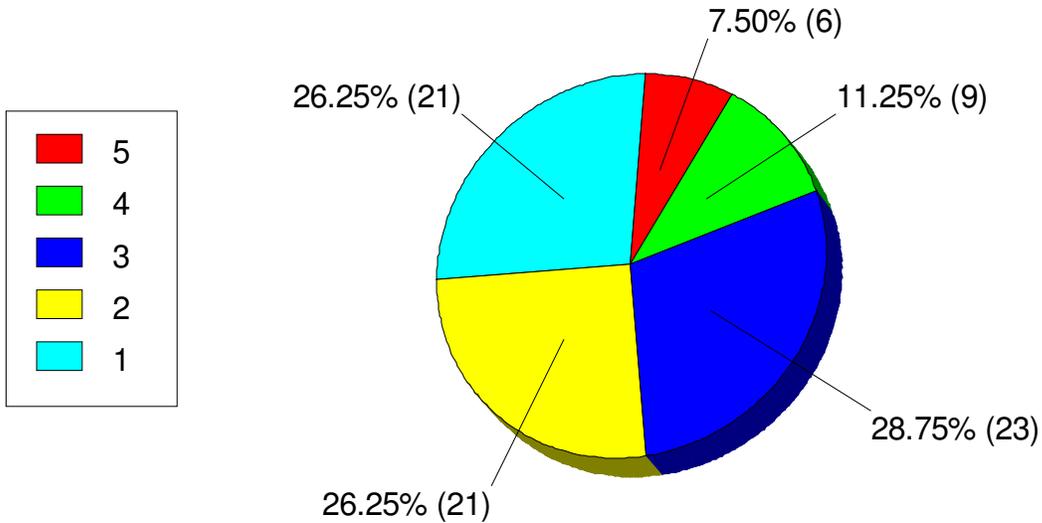
This is not a new problem.

typical response, defensive and backward looking. "We are aware of the problem.....blah  
blah blah

work on the difference between tattling and telling to help others

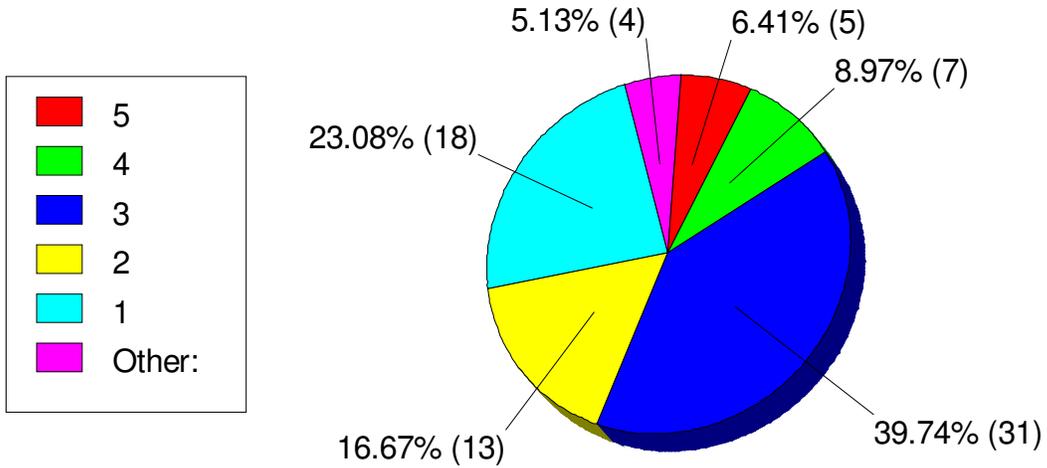
**15. How knowledgeable are you about programs offered by Northfield community organizations and their programs to address the illegal use of drugs by young people ages 15-23? 5=Very knowledgeable. 1=Not at all knowledgeable.**

Average Choice: 3.53



**16. What's your level of satisfaction with the efforts by Northfield community organizations and their programs to address the illegal use of drugs by young people? 5=Very satisfied. 1=Very dissatisfied.**

Average Choice: 3.56



**17. What comments, concerns, or questions do you have about Northfield community programs designed to address the illegal use of drugs by young people? (Please use a civil tone in your writing to increase the likelihood that your remarks will be read by others.)**

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A complete waste

A lot of people want to continue to believe that these kinds of things don't happen in Northfield.

Again, work WITH the schools and WITH the police department. A unified effort among all three areas will offer the best solutions.

Do we have any real programs? Lets face it, if you have a kid who gets into trouble with drugs/alcohol, to the point that they end up in police custody, or in the hospital, they are referred out of Northfield. If your child has a problem with drugs or alcohol, and they are "fortunate" enough not to end up in the back seat of a police car or a hospital guerney, then you have to do all the leg work to find them a place - out side of Northfield. I don't think it does anyone any good to find blame as to why we don't have programs here. Let's put our efforts into figuring out what to do now that we all know there is a problem that needs a solution.

Go Kathy and Zack!

I am really discouraged with the lack of programs for youth. For example Northfielders can't even decide whether or not to have a YMCA in town? Let me guess, it may take away our small town "feel". Come on people, it's time to wake up. We need to get some programs or places for kids in this town. What else is there for them to do? The cities are too far to drive to in order to "do something fun". A YMCA in this town could do wonders. And not some small version either. Give the kids something to do. Either Northfield does something about it or else I guess the people of Dundas with some guts will have to build something.

I am suprised you have to put the comment about being civil. It is not the time to be rude or to argue. It is time to make an honest effort to work together to save our kids. This is serious business. This will change the fabric of our youth emmerging from this community.

I think the Key has a remarkable record of serving as a safe, drug-free environment for a group of young people who otherwise might be disaffected and prone to substance abuse. The HCI has had a somewhat low profile for a few years and I was happy to see that they are continuing to conduct surveys of youth in Northfield. Their "asset-based" approach is an excellent one for the long-term and perhaps they need to be more visible

and pro-active in leading community discussions. Are there still semi-annual HCI community meetings for parents, youth and adult youth leaders? I remember that one about six or four years ago was both very revealing and very helpful.

I would like to see the shroud of secrecy removed - programs posted and talked about before someone needs the services. Right now... I would have to do research to find where to get help if I needed it.

I'm a tad speculative that because a teen hears about some "rad" local band playing at The Key, they're suddenly going to decide they don't want to take OxyContin. I don't have really any thoughts beyond that.

I'm pleased with the programs. Specifically Northfield Union of Youth and the Healthy Community Initiative

It is good for community programs to be involved and proactive, but - again - the responsibility for this belongs with the parents and they should be held accountable.

It seems to me these efforts are not very visible.

Mostly just talk. Lots of meeting and task forces and...talk.

My question is: do these programs have sufficient funding and cooperation? What is the cooperation with healthcare providers in town, can it be better or is it as good as it gets? Does Union of Youth need more resources (money, facility, people) to spread its mission. It is MUCH more effective and honest than RALLEY. When drunk, you are thrown out of the KEY, when drunk, you are celebrated by athletes!

Organizations should be challenging the conception of "illegal" versus "legal" drugs.

Parents need to quit hiding behind their own sense of shame about kids' use.

Supporting (and creating additional) programs related to drug free activities is a tremendous asset to this community. It would be great to see more.

The Key and its programs seems to provide a positive influence on young people.

The Key is an excellent support resource and is stepping up to take a larger role in this issue. More honest dialogue and straightforward facts about these issues will be necessary to treat the roots of these issues and get them out of "your back yard."

The Key is doing very well, and are becoming an even better model for youth, but they can't be there 24/7.

The Key needs more community support, with money or donations (books, art supplies) and also adults that would like to mentor the youth. There are a lot of talented adults in Northfield.

There seems to be disconnect. Who is working together on this? What is the tack force doing? Where are the meeting minutes posted?

They haven't addressed it really until now. And it seems they're not doing it right.

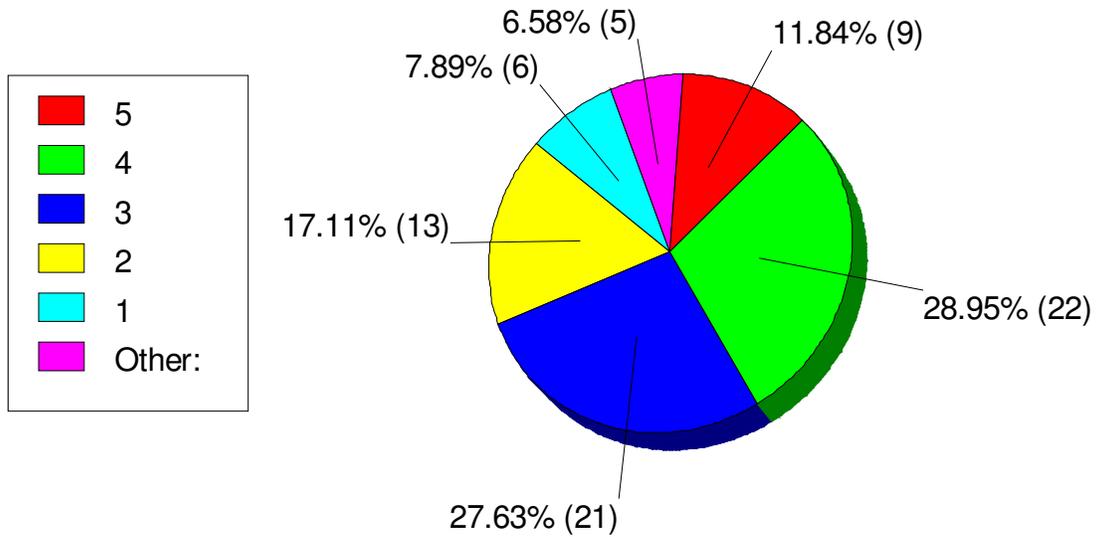
They need more publicity.

To reduce underage use of alcohol and drugs, we need to reinforce positive community and parental norms that make the health and safety of kids our first priority. The Rice County Chemical Health Coalition has made great progress in securing the cooperation of law enforcement, schools, parent groups and chemical dependency and mental health professionals to develop a cohesive prevention strategy.

Youth anti-drug programs typically blend factual warnings with myth or exaggerated anecdotes. This hybrid of pulp fiction and fact does not enhance their credibility. There are serious warnings to convey to our youth. They deserve our respect and they deserve the truth.

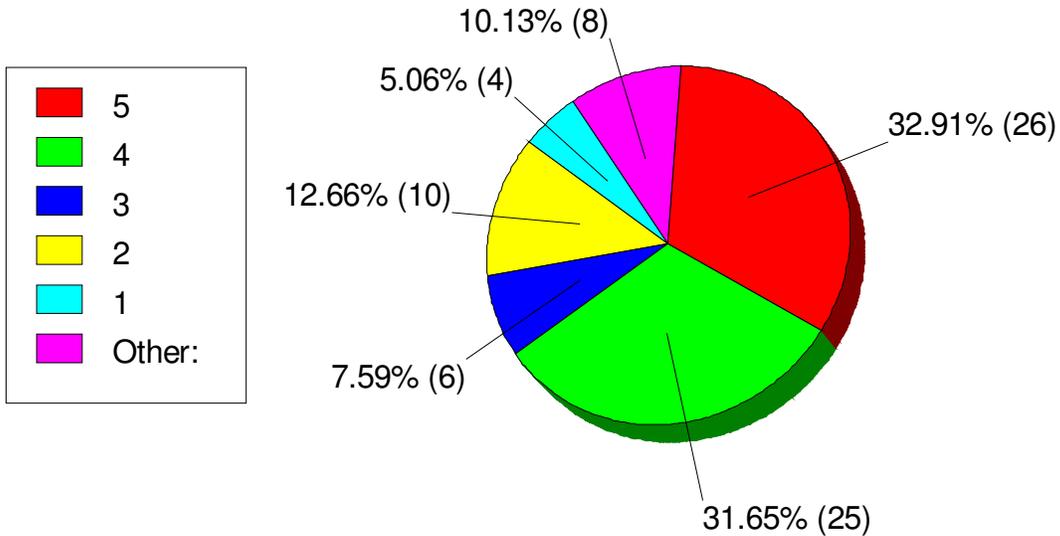
**18. The Northfield heroin problem has been described by some as a problem primarily among white, high-achieving, 'upscale' young people. To what extent do you agree with this assessment? 5=Strongly agree. 1=Strongly disagree**

Average Choice: 3.00



**19. Some people think that high-achieving Northfield students (in sports, academics) are treated more leniently than others when they engage in illegal behavior. To what extent do you agree with this assessment? 5=Strongly agree. 1=Strongly disagree.**

Average Choice: 2.56



## **20. What approaches would you like to see in Northfield's response to the raising of this issue of illegal use of drugs in our community?**

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-continue the dialogue -educate people - really get the facts down to show the reality, not the most sensational or stories that may be true but are outliers. Start with taking a true pulse. Then join together the various community organizations with the school district and the police. Pool resources to develop prevention and treatment policies/procedures.

1) Community meetings, facilitated by HCI. 2) Maybe some coordination (or mutual discussion) of the approaches being taken by the colleges, the PD and the school system. 3) Some straight talk from youth to adults about how they perceive their lives - some of the locallygrown posts and the story in the News were helpful.

As stated with all other comments, ALL departments (schools, police, community organizations) need to work together. The public perception is that all three of these organizations are independently working on the issue. Work together!

Call in a state agency for help (or the Feds if appropriate). Small-town cops really aren't equipped to carry out investigations, which is why the state makes resources available. The problem is, outside agencies usually have to wait to be invited by the locals.

Community forum. Kids teaching Kids. Serious consequences. Finding a safe place for kids to talk about what they see. Empower parents to address the problem in their home. I would start with David Walsh speaking. Author of "Why do they Act That Way" and "Saying No, Why Your Kids Need to Hear It and Parents Need to Say It"

Connected community Changes in practice-- not "here's what we're already doing" Listen to kids Provide counseling and help to users that want it Etc

Continue the community conversations and look to the future. Don't dwell on debate about the scope of the problem but plan actionable items that take the community forward.

Discussion of the wisdom of the prohibition approach; investigate what the Netherlands is doing.

Educate the parents and the children will follow

Education about ALL drugs effects on our bodies, no matter if they are harmful or helpful. Not judging someone just because they choose to use a certain drug or not. Empowering people to make their own educated decisions is what should be the priority!

End the war on drugs.

Forget about how many, who they are, where they live or go to school. Does it really matter if they live in a blue house or a white house? Does it matter if they are a Junior in High School or a recent graduate, or a "drop out"? Just admit that there may be a problem in my back yard, and show the options people have for support. If I found out my neighbors son or daughter had any problems with alcohol, drugs, eating etc...I would not think any differently of the person or family. I ramble,,,,,,,,,We need to keep the conversations going in hopes that some people that may need the support can find the people that are there to give it. The End.

Get the kids involved and LISTEN with out judging... see if they have any ideas.. I am at a loss.

Go after the pushers. No drugs--no users.

Groups of youth talking. I don't think the police should be more harsh, the youth that need help need it from their friends and family. They need to be given more of a chance.

Groups such as Healthy Community Initiative, Project SIGHT and the Parent Communication Network are on the right track. They need additional financial support to sustain their work. The city should dedicate some of its liquor store profits to those groups.

Help kids find stuff to do.

Hold the offenders accountable and treat the addiction. Have unannounced dog searches in the schools.

I feel that the strong racial tension in Northfield has lead to unfair punishments and judgment to the Mexican population. Many believe that the immigrant population in Northfield is to blame for the drug use issues; however, even if it was to be found that the majority of dealers were not originally American citizens, the overwhelming majority of users would be native Northfield residents. Which no matter which way you look at it, the supply of drugs will only exist in an area where there is a demand for them.

I think we should all calm down. Roving bands of zombies are not eating brains in our streets. Yes, some people got hooked on heroin, which is very unfortunate for them and their families. It would be better if they had been just smoking cigarettes, or doing weed, or doing cocaine, or doing mescaline. Heroin is very serious. This is probably why they chose it. But shooting up is pretty hardcore. It's not really going to appeal to a broad population of teens. I am not really worried this appealing to my kids. Here is a question I'd like to ask. How many teens at Northfield High School have done meth? I would bet 10/1 that it is more than the number that have put a needle in their vein, and I would be much more worried about meth. It's affordable, easy, makes you work harder, and completely wrecks you physically. That is some truly bad shit.

I would like there to be a open public meeting with city officials. I would like to be notified when such meeting would take place.

I would like to see a banded approach by all involved (including the use of Northfield blogs.) There would be no "pointing fingers." The mission would be clear. A brainstorm of possible ways that the community could make a difference would be posted before any were deleted. Individual organizations (whether existing or new) could decide which ones they feel they are capable of addressing. It is possible for everyone to work together, yet, still have their own ways of addressing the problem. Those organizations who have similar ideas for action might even work together. The kids in our community also must be involved.

I would like to see an open discussion rather than the pointing of fingers. I think there should be kids involved in this discussion, rather than a large group of parents trying to guess what the best solution would be. The people to talk to are the ones that know it goes on but choose not to use themselves. They would be able to have more insight into how to bring their peers back.

I would like to see more adults on the streets willing to confront quality of life issues with the kids. Talk directly to them when they use bad language. Intervene when they pick fights with each other. Engage them when they are loud and obnoxious and help them become better citizens. Help them develop the sense of being part of a larger community before they become so disaffected that they become problems for themselves and others. Stop expecting the authorities (the police and schools) to raise our kids.

I would like to see the city (government, law enforcement, schools and community organizations) start to enact policies and procedures and penalties that hold the parents of these minor children - in addition to the the minor children themselves - responsible for the behavior of said minor children.

I would like to see the dealers busted. I would like to see our community circle around these young people. Unfortunately, my daughter, who is trying to quit using, feels rejected by her school and her community. I don't feel that she should be able to avoid the consequences of her illegal activities, however, I think that the response by NHS, especially, has been poorly considered and not at all helpful in the recovery process.

Identify those using illegal drugs and get their parents involved in resolving the situation. While the young people are the one using the drugs, it is the parents that we need to reach out to. Where have they been in their child's life?

inspections and monitoring of drugs in lockers at schools. reporting of unusual (drug affected) behavior by teachers to parents and, where appropriate, law enforcement; swift prosecution of dealers and sellers of drugs; visible community resources to assist those addicted to drugs

It definitely should not be ignored. The community does care.

It seems like I'm drilling this in too hard, but don't blame the police: blame the schools and blame the parents.

Keep it up front! Support Josh Hinnenkamp's invitation to become involved in a dialogue. Believe the Northfield Police.

More information would help --- ideally, information compiled and edited by a coalition of groups, including schools, police, and perhaps some other community groups.

More parents involved in the PCN. More public awareness of the the parenting network. Schools (not police--sorry Chief) need more money to address these issues.

No more citizen committees to study the issue! That's for sure. I liked the letter to editor of the Northfield News re this sent by the director of the Key. Probably the best, most accurate thing I've read on this. The kids and police know what's going on. Why not ask the kids what should be done? Have them work out solutions with the police and healthcare professionals and the schools.

open it up, communication and knowledge

Over-estimating leads to over-reacting which leads to over-acting. Over-acting is never fun to watch. It almost always means poor solutions.

Parents paying more attention to the actions of their own children and being open to the possibility that the problem might be in their own house.

See above comments

We can still use this summer for some events no Bridge Square. All kinds of stakeholders can say there thing, police, school, health care providers. All must be accompanied by great music that appeals to young folks, and it would be great to have some former drug users speak, perform, etc. There can be open mic nights. Organizations can be out there with their information tables, or just one leaflet with ALL numbers and names together, if people don't want to go to a specific table. If we have an activities event each late August, we can certainly do this. Do it OFTEN and SOON, really SOON. City, school, hospital, clinics, colleges, should all be donating resources to these events. If we do it NOW, next week, we , adults, are telling the kids: we care about this, we need to get to the bottom of this, we need to network, informally as well as formally, to build the safety nets our children need. The kids in town are buzzing about it, at least were for a few days, but are already getting tired of it I hear, so quick community response is necessary.

You have to train the parents, not the kids.

Zero tolerance

