

# Teens respond to adult perceptions

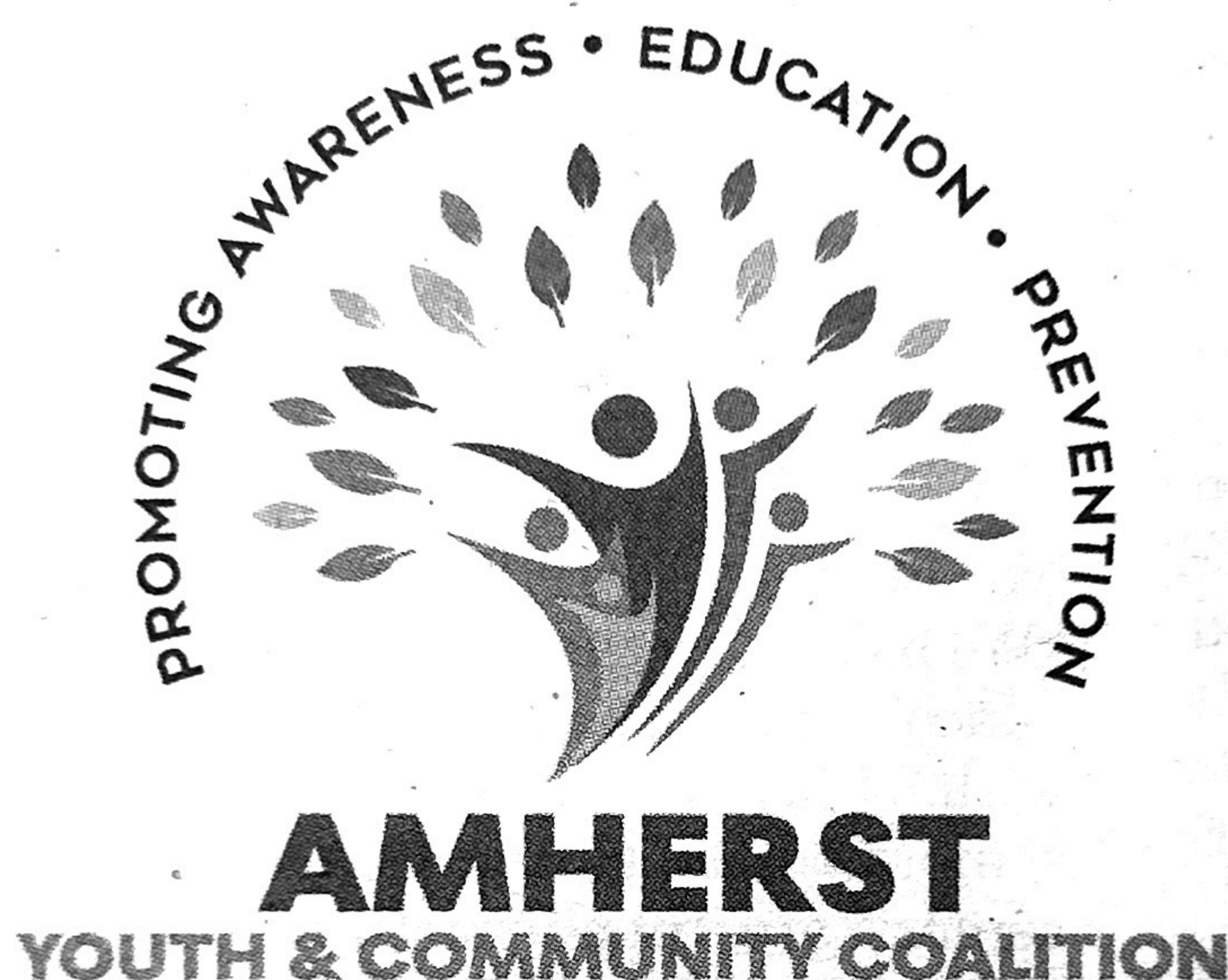
In the spring of 2022, the Amherst Youth & Community Coalition conducted an adult community survey regarding adult perceptions of youth access to and use of alcohol and marijuana. Roughly 433 adults responded to the survey.

Recently, young people from the Town of Amherst were given the opportunity to read the adult perceptions and to make comments on the same questions.

Question two of the survey: At least 50% of the adult respondents believe that it can be easy for Amherst youth to find substances and places to use.

High school student, age 17: "It think it is pretty easy for teenagers to get alcohol right from their homes. When talking about places to use, I think, outside drinking in one's home, they are drinking at a friend's house and in a car. More than alcohol and marijuana, I think the most apparent substance teens are using are vapes. High school students have become so comfortable vap-

ing that they will openly use them in school bathrooms, crowding one stall



and holding everyone else up."

High school student, age 15: "I believe that it is very easy for minors to find substances such as marijuana and alcohol. There are many underage people at my school that have hangovers on Saturday mornings all of the time. Also, I know of students at my high school using pot and having ways to get it."

Question five of the survey: 86% of the adult respondents feel that youth caught using alcohol should face disciplinary consequences over legal consequences. And 79% feel this way for marijuana.

High school student, age

15: "I agree with most adults who say that disciplinary action is better than legal action when it comes to minors using alcohol and marijuana. Legal action, if taken, can be harsher and have more long term negative effects on the kid than disciplinary action. I think it's better to focus on steering the kid back onto the right track instead of trying to be overbearing on them."

College student, age 20: "I honestly found

it surprising that the majority of adult respondents believe that disciplinary actions should be put in place instead of legal action. However, I think this is beneficial for the youth. While it is important to understand that when one makes a mistake or does something they shouldn't be doing, it still shouldn't be what determines their success later. Legal action could potentially mean that a minor infraction in one's youth could hinder their success later in life. This is unfair. Youth should understand that mistakes are meant to be learned from and not punished for years to come."