



Community in Conversation Community Assessment: 2023 Findings

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Key Takeaways

- Anxiety and stress remain parents' top concerns for their children, and social media is more concerning to parents than peer pressure to use substances.
- An important protective factor against substance use within parents' control is engaging in an ongoing dialogue with their child about the harms of substance use starting before the kids must choose whether to try substances. This year, fewer parents reported talking to their kids about substance use often or a lot.
- The perceived risk of vaping nicotine, binge drinking, and marijuana use has increased. This is encouraging, especially for marijuana use, which was legalized in 2021.
- Parents' concerns about their teens using substances have decreased since 2022.
- Parents need support developing parenting strategies to keep their teens who have already used substances safe.
- More parents report observing their peers using marijuana edibles socially.
- Most marijuana users in the Somerset Hills do not currently lock their substances to prevent youth access.

Community in Conversation methods

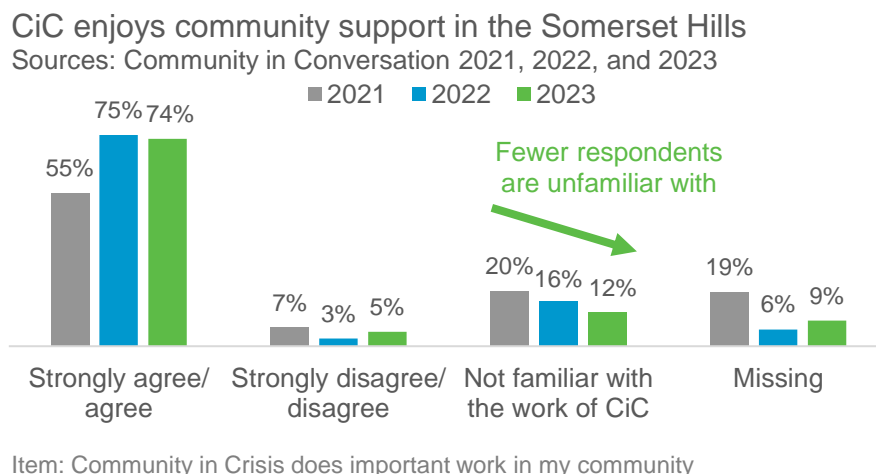
The Community in Conversation community assessment of the Somerset Hills is a comprehensive mixed-methods [assessment of adults regarding youth substance use attitudes, usage, and prevailing cultural and social norms](#). Funded by a SAMHSA Strategic Prevention Framework – Partnerships for Success grant, this annual community assessment is the third of a series funded for five years. Data in this report are based on the online survey of Community in Conversation 2023 unless otherwise noted.

The Community in Conversation survey was briefly launched online from January 5, 2023 to January 9, 2023 for a special early data collection to pilot a new young adult recruiting method, then fully launched for data collection from January 24, 2023 to March 15, 2023. A total of 898 adults took the survey, and [176 responses were eligible for analysis](#).

As in the previous two years of data collection, the sample is not fully representative of the residents of the Somerset Hills towns. A majority (88%) of respondents live in Bernards Township (Basking Ridge) or Bernardsville, were in their 40s (36%) or 50s (33%), were women (80%), had college (36%) or graduate degrees (46%), were parents of children under 21 years old (68%), identified as white (82%), and earned a household income over \$88,000 annually (81%). Please see [Appendix A](#) for the full demographics of the online survey sample. Special recruiting efforts to recruit young adults and Latino community members are described in [Appendix B](#). Due to the convenience sampling method used to recruit participants, sampling bias may have created a sample of respondents who are more supportive of youth substance use prevention efforts and less likely to use substances themselves.

As efforts to publicize the annual assessment have been consistent over three years, fewer online survey respondents are unfamiliar with the work of CiC. See Figure 1.

Figure 1



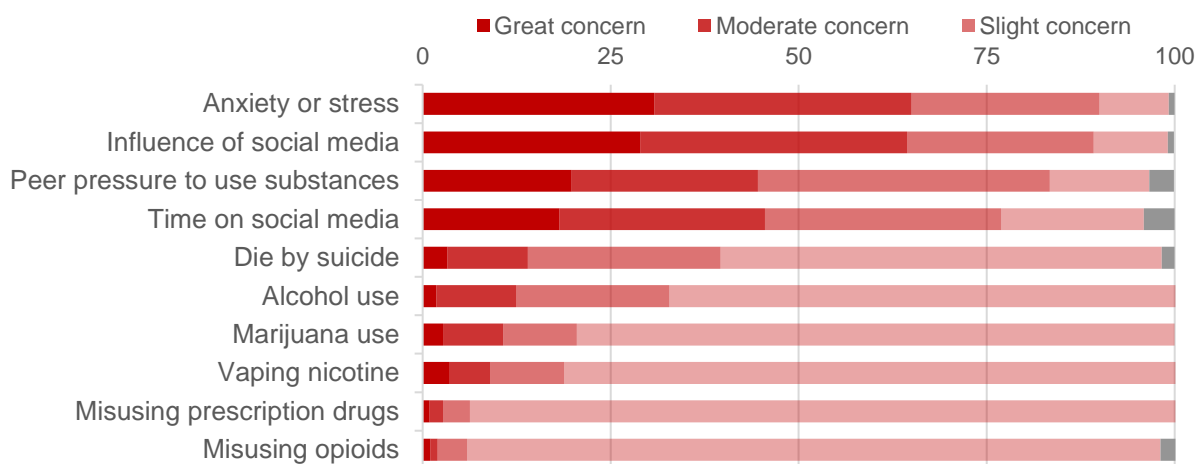
Mental health continues to recover post-pandemic

Anxiety and stress remain parents' top concerns for their children, and social media is more concerning to parents than peer pressure to use substances, a change from last year. See Figure 2. This year, 68% of parents surveyed reported 'moderate' or 'great' concern about their child's anxiety or stress, which is the same as last year. 63% reported 'moderate' or 'great' concern about the influence of social media on their child.

Figure 2

Anxiety & stress tops parents' concerns for their children ages 11-22

Source: Community in Conversation online survey 2023



Item: I am concerned that my child <is using substance/ spends too much time on social media/ is anxious or feels stressed/ etc.> Ranked by mean.

A glimmer of hope is that the most critical mental health concerns are showing signs of waning. In 2022, their child dying by suicide was in parents' top 4 concerns for their children, and **this year fewer parents have 'great concern' that their child will die by suicide across every age group and more parents have 'no concern.'** Last year, 21% of parents expressed 'moderate or great concern that their child would die by suicide. This year, that number fell to 14%. Of specific concern last year that the parents of 11- to 13-year-olds, who had the highest percentage of parents who were greatly concerned that their tween would die by suicide. In 2021, 0% of tween parents expressed 'great concern,' in 2022 that number jumped to 19%, and this year it dropped to 5%. See Figure 3. A recent graduate of Bernards High School [died by suicide](#)¹ in November 2021, only a few months before 2022 data was collected. The loss of this popular young man may have increased parents' concerns about suicide. Atlantic Health System, a large healthcare system with hospitals and health practices in New Jersey and New York, including several locations serving the Somerset Hills, reported a [20%](#)

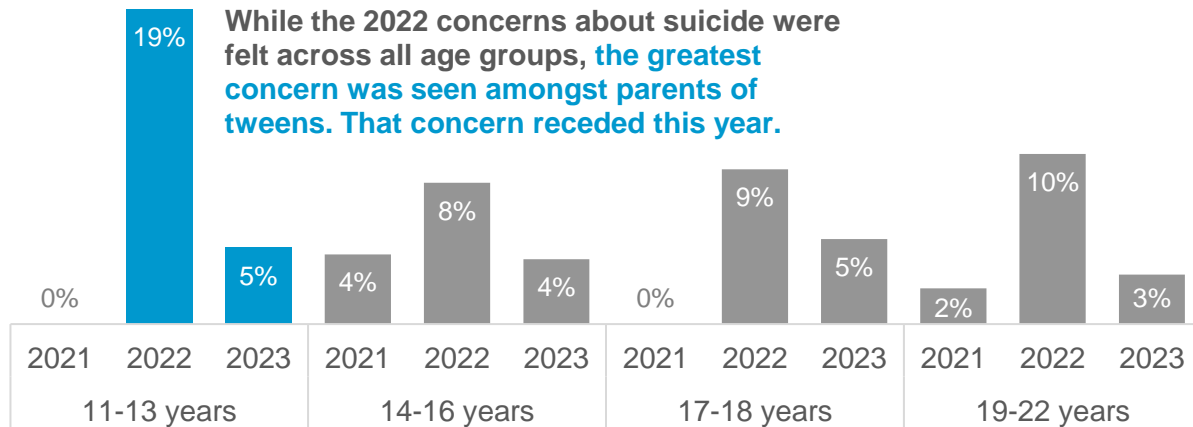
¹ <https://patch.com/new-jersey/baskingridge/brilliant-soul-19-year-old-bernards-graduates-death-mourned>

[increase²](#) in pediatric mental health ER visits in 2022. Unlike the 2022 assessment, there was no association between parents' concerns about their children using marijuana and their concerns about their children dying by suicide.

Figure 3

The percentage of parents with 'great concern' of their child dying by suicide spiked in 2022, but has decreased this year.

Sources: Community in Conversation Online Survey 2021, 2022, 2023



Item: "I am concerned that my child will try to commit suicide" Chart showing responses: 'Great concern'

Youth in the Somerset Hills towns are very involved in extracurricular activities, which serves as a protective factor against risky behaviors including substance use. 81% of parents report that their child participates in extracurricular activities 'often' or 'a lot.' Parents of 14- to 16-year-olds reported the least participation in extracurricular activities. 62% of those parents said their teens participated in extracurriculars 'often' or 'a lot.' One parent who recently moved to the Somerset Hills from New York City noted the difference in values between the two communities. "Here, at this school, what makes you cool is if you're a really good student, you get along with the teachers, you have a nice family, and you're an athlete..."

While we know that many youth in the Somerset Hills are involved in sports and extracurricular activities, we do not currently measure school connectedness,³ a student's belief that adults and youth at their school care about them and their learning.

² <https://www.nj.com/healthfit/2023/02/suicidal-teens-flooded-nj-ers-again-in-2022-its-a-crisis-situation.html>

³ School connectedness was measured using a strongly agree to strongly disagree scale for "Do you agree or disagree that you feel close to people at your school?"

School connectedness is associated with positive educational, behavioral, and health outcomes for youth, including mental health and substance use.⁴

Parenting in the Somerset Hills

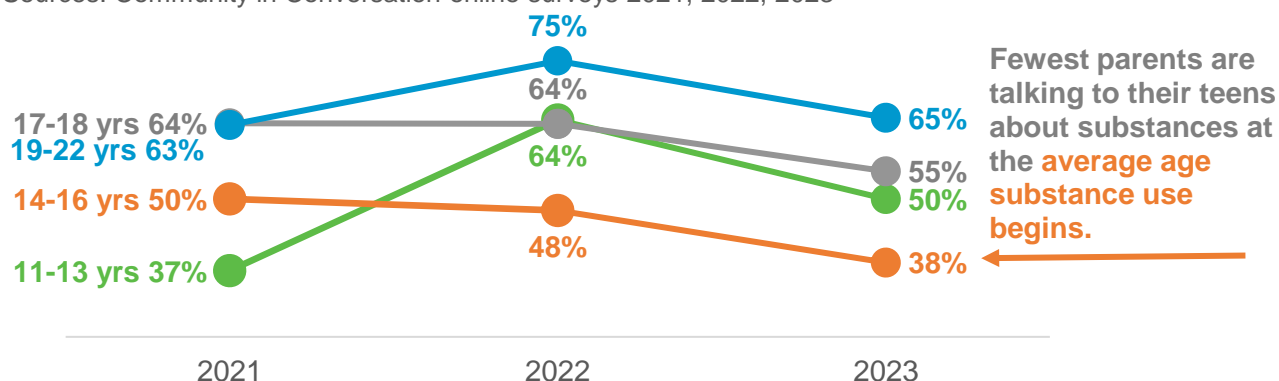
Parents expressed anxiety about the perceived culture of achievement in the Somerset Hills. One parent in the Somerset Hills explained, “Our lives as parents are very stressful. . . keep your kid off social media, keep your kid from this, keep your kid from that, but make sure they play every sport, make sure they take every elective they can possibly take because even though you’re in second grade, you have to start thinking of college now. So all of that, on top of the fact that everything’s expensive, so everybody’s working as much as they possibly can... My husband and I try to be pretty normal with our kids, but then I feel like, **if we’re the only normal ones, then our kids are going to be left behind.**”

An important protective factor against substance use within parents’ control is engaging in an ongoing dialogue with their child about the harms of substance use starting before the kids must choose whether to try substances. **This year, fewer parents reported talking to their kids about substance use often or a lot across all kids’ age groups.** In the Somerset Hills, the average age of initiation for many substances is 14 or 15 years old.⁵ Only 38% of the parents of teens 14 to 16 years old talk to their teens about substance use “often” or “a lot.” See Figure 4. When kids are between 11 and 13 years old, the majority have not yet tried substances. This makes those years a crucial time for parents to prevent substance use in later years, however, only half of local parents talked to their tweens about the dangers of substance use.

Figure 4

Fewer parents of kids at all ages are regularly talking to their kids about substances this year compared to last year.

Sources: Community in Conversation online surveys 2021, 2022, 2023



Item: "Do you talk to your child about the problems of tobacco, alcohol, and drug use?" Responses: "Often" and "A lot"

⁴ Wilkins NJ, Krause KH, Verlenden JV, et al. School Connectedness and Risk Behaviors and Experiences Among High School Students — Youth Risk Behavior Survey, United States, 2021. MMWR Suppl 2023;72(Suppl-1):13–21.

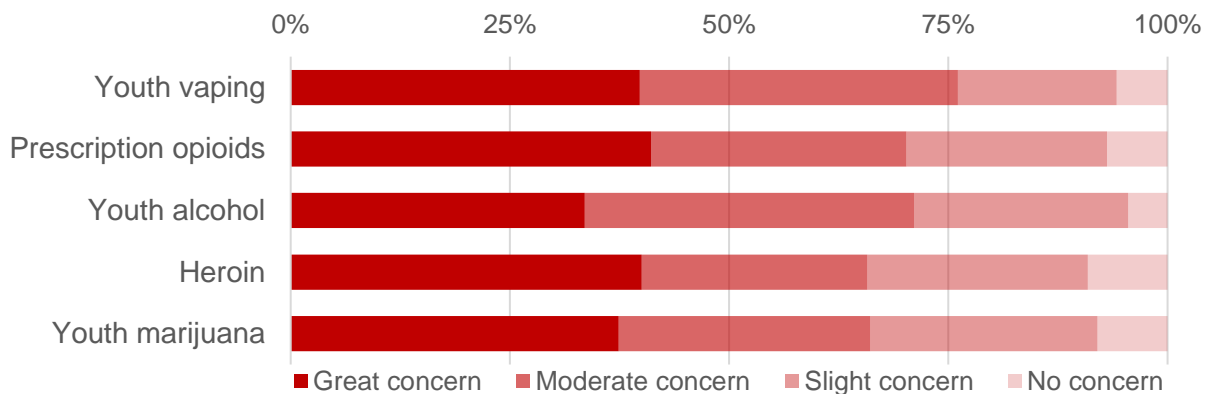
⁵ Pride Survey, BTSD, 2019.

Community-level concerns have not changed substantially since last year. Youth vaping is community members' top substance-related concern about the Somerset Hills, followed by prescription opioid misuse. While levels of concern were similar across all topics, community members are least concerned about youth marijuana use. See Figure 5. Based on the increasing THC levels in marijuana products and the dangers they pose to youth, [education on high-potency marijuana is necessary in the Somerset Hills.](#)

Figure 5

Youth vaping tops concerns about substance use in the Somerset Hills

Source: Community in Conversation Online Survey 2023



Item: I am concerned about Youth <substance> use in the community. Ranked according to mean.

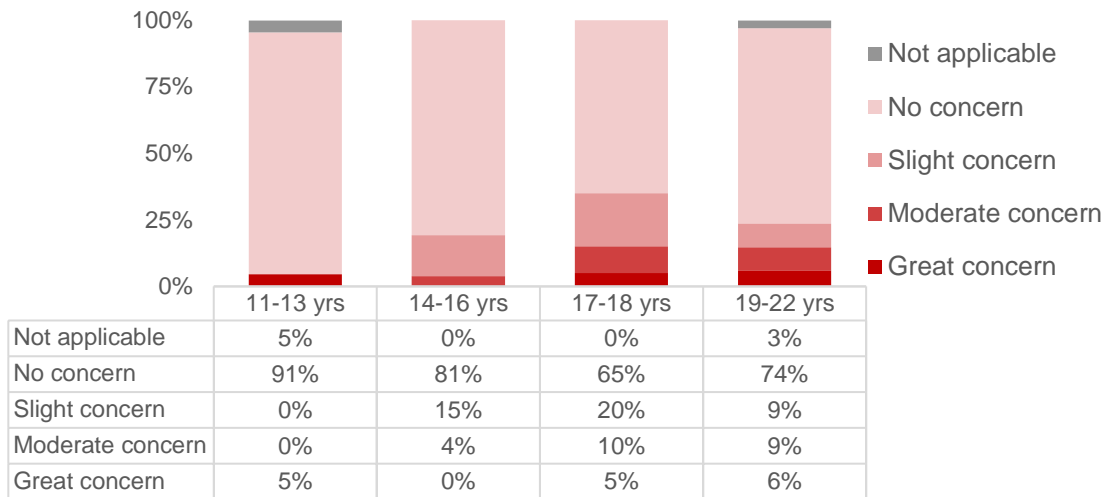
Vaping nicotine is less worrisome to parents than it was last year

Parents are less concerned about *their* children vaping nicotine this year than they were last year. Among parents of 14- to 16-year-olds, the number of parents “moderately” or “greatly concerned” about their teen vaping fell from 8% to 4%. See Figure 6 on the following page. Parents of 17- to 18-year-olds expressing elevated concerns fell from 23% last year to 15% this year. The parents of middle school students we spoke to agreed that vaping is not happening in the middle school bathrooms right now, but said they hear parents complaining of students vaping in the high school bathrooms.

One parent explained that older siblings can be a source of vape pens for younger kids. Her middle school-aged daughter told her, “I saw a Snapchat where ‘so and so’ was using his brother’s vape pen.”

Figure 6

The majority of parents are not concerned that their child is vaping nicotine
 Source: Community in Conversation Online Survey 2023

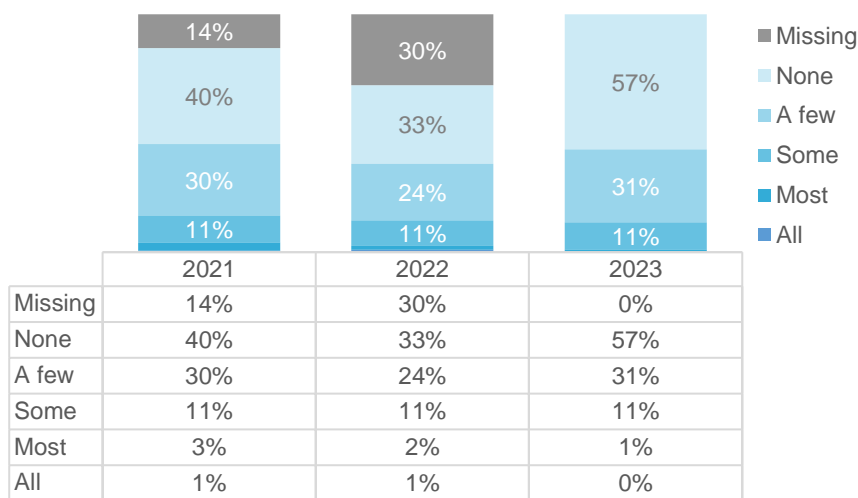


Item: I am concerned that my child is vaping nicotine.

Adults' perceptions of their peers vaping nicotine decreased compared to last year. In 2022, a third of adults did not know anyone who vaped, compared to 57% of respondents this year. Also, the number of adults who say "most" or "all" of the people they know vape has decreased steadily from 4% in 2021 to 1% in 2023. See Figure 7.

Figure 7

Fewer adults know people who vape now compared to 2022
 Source: Community in Conversation Online Survey 2021, 2022, 2023



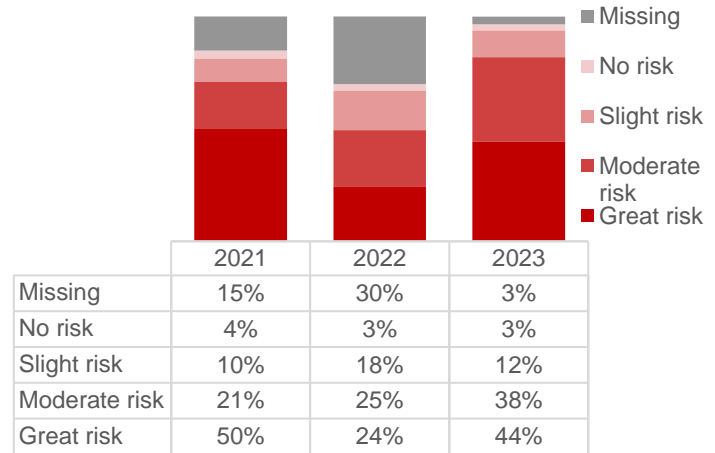
Item: Currently, how many adults do you know personally who use an e-cigarette, vape pen, e-liquid rig (JUUL, N2, Joytech, etc.) excluding marijuana

The perceived risk of vaping nicotine has increased. This year, 82% of respondents reported vaping as “great” or “moderate risk.” In 2022, we saw a concerning dip in perceived risk that may have been explained by missing data; only 49% of adults perceived vaping as “great” or “moderate risk.” See Figure 8. It is encouraging to see the perceived risk of vaping return to 2021 levels.

Figure 8

More adults considering vaping nicotine a great risk compared to last year

Source: Community in Conversation Online Survey 2021,



Item: How much do you think people risk harming themselves physically or in other ways if they use an e-cigarette, vape pen, e-liquid rig, (JUUL, N2, Joytech, etc.) excluding marijuana

Alcohol use concerns fall among parents

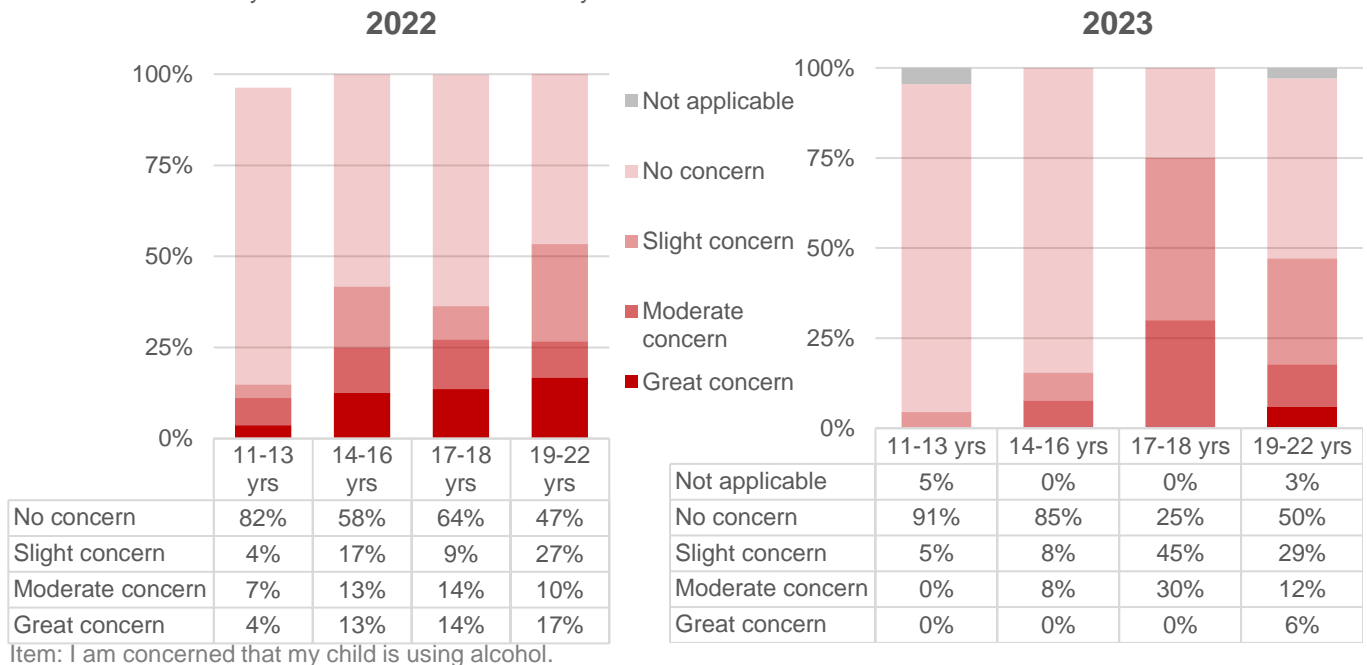
Parents' concerns about their teens drinking alcohol have eased since 2022.

Interestingly, no parents of children under the age of 19 years expressed “great concern” that their child was using alcohol. Parents of 14- to 16-year-olds who have *no concern* about their teen drinking alcohol jumped from 58% last year to 85% this year. See Figure 9. This is the average age range teens begin to drink alcohol.

Figure 9

More parents are unconcerned about their teen using alcohol compared to last year.

Source: Community in Conversation Online Surveys 2022 and 2023



Limiting access to alcohol is an important tool to prevent youth alcohol use. One parent expressed it this way, “We will never be having parties and supplying alcohol. We need to make it as difficult as possible for our kids to a) have sex. . . and also to drink. . .” Like vaping, some kids are introduced to alcohol through older siblings. A parent explained her experience with her son and alcohol like this: “At the end of 8th grade when the siblings who are seniors go to their graduation parties. The younger sibling gets to invite a few friends, and that’s where drinking starts for the 8th graders.”

Parents want their teens to trust them as a source of help and information about substances while staying safe. “I know my son is going to drink. He’s not going to get in trouble. He’s not going to get grounded. We’re going to talk to him, we’re going to talk about the situation and have an open conversation, and then set up boundaries. . . Does he want to be an athlete, or does he want to be someone who is a partier and doesn’t treat their body with respect? There’s a way that you can have drinks and still

respect your body.” Several parents expressed the desire to help their teens navigate substance use and protect them from serious harm that can happen under the influence. One parent explained that she would prefer her teens try alcohol before they leave for college, “I’d rather them make the mistakes and take the missteps under our watch so that when they do go off to college they are, you know, they know what their tolerance is, they’re aware. It’s not as exciting.”

Parents try to minimize the harm from alcohol use by putting measures in place when they allow youth alcohol use. These efforts range from looking the other way when alcohol is brought to a party to allowing only lower-proof alcohol. One parent described what she said was an unusual situation in which a neighbor hired a “bouncer” to supervise a party for teens going into 9th grade. At the party, they served beer and White Claw, but if a teen had hard alcohol or marijuana, the “bouncer” sent them home.

Attitudes about driving under the influence of alcohol are showing early signs of change. Several parents described teens using ride-sharing apps, such as Uber if they need a ride home from a party because they were drinking or their parents were unable to pick them up because the parents were drinking alcohol. The use of ridesharing may increase with the introduction of teen accounts on [Uber](#),⁶ which allow Uber accounts to be shared among family members. Teens over the age of 13 can take an Uber with additional safety requirements for drivers and enhanced tracking for parents. Concerningly, one parent said that her teens have mentioned friends driving after a few drinks, “not drunk but not dry driving.” One report is not enough to declare a trend, but substance use and driving are very dangerous, so we will continue to monitor this in future assessments.

Marijuana edibles becoming more commonplace

Marijuana was legalized in New Jersey in 2021 and dispensaries have been open for business since 2022. The community assessment tracks the perceived peer use of adult residents in the Somerset Hills. Most adults in the Somerset Hills (71%) know a few or some people who use marijuana. Only 24% of adults do not know a person who uses marijuana. Young adults are more likely to know people who use marijuana and significantly more likely to know people who use marijuana with a vaping device. This is about the same as it’s been in the past two years, so there has not been a significant increase in the perception of peer use since legalization based on the online survey.

As opposed to the online survey, many of the parents we interviewed noticed more of their peers using marijuana edibles. One adult resident of the Somerset Hills described the use of edibles among their friends with children, “gummies are a big thing. . . [before legalization] it was probably happening, but now people are more open about it.”

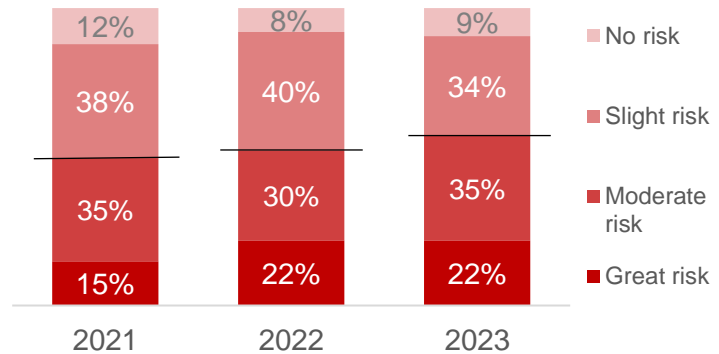
⁶ <https://www.uber.com/us/en/ride/teens/>

Another parent expressed surprise at the rise in marijuana use. She said, “Adults I never would have thought would touch it are doing the gummies and edibles... They say, ‘Oh, this is the only way I can sleep.’”

Figure 10

The perception of harm of regular marijuana use is increasing slowly

Source: Community in Conversation Online Survey 2023



Item: How much do you think people risk harming themselves physically or in other ways if they smoke marijuana once or twice a week?

Despite the gradual increase in the acceptance of marijuana use among adults that was described by interview participants, their perception of the risk of marijuana use is slowly shifting to more harmful. The percentage of adults who considered regular marijuana use a “moderate” or “great risk” has increased from 50% in 2021 to 52% in 2022 to 57% in 2023. See Figure 10.

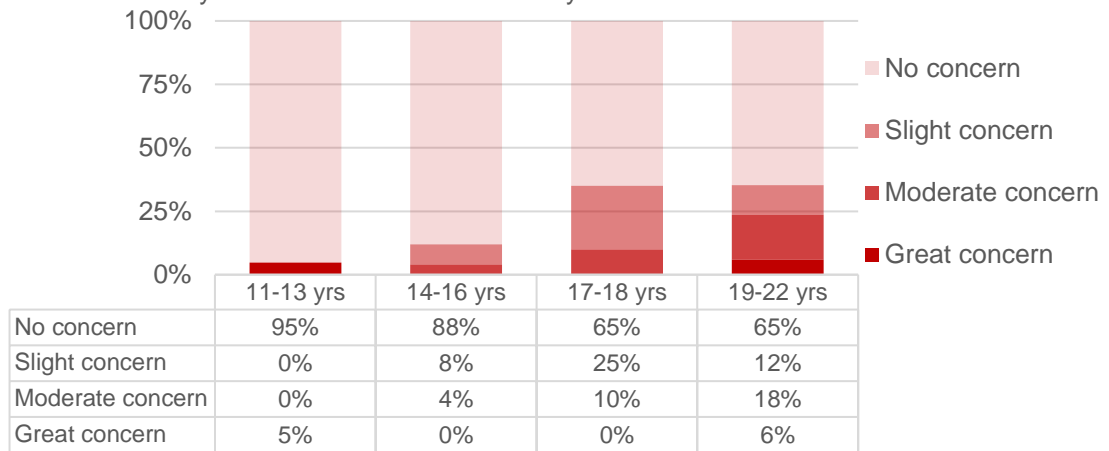
Most parents of teens surveyed in the Somerset Hills are unconcerned about their teens using marijuana. The percentage

of parents who said they are not concerned increased compared to last year for parents of teens in every age group. See Figure 11 on the following page. While the online survey does not ask whether the lack of concern is due to parents trusting that their child is not using marijuana or if parents are unconcerned about marijuana use in general, parents we interviewed expressed high levels of trust that their teens were not using substances.

Figure 11

Majority of parents are unconcerned about their child using marijuana

Source: Community in Conversation Online Survey 2023



Item: I am concerned that my child is using marijuana.

The legalization of recreational marijuana in New Jersey may affect the availability of the substance for youth and social norms. None of the parents interviewed reported parents giving marijuana to their teenagers, however, one parent described a scenario where parents using marijuana increases availability for youth. “My son has a group of friends who are athletes who smoke pot all the time. They’re vaping marijuana and using edibles. . . People steal the edibles from the parents. They show up at Cotillion or an event and say oh ‘I’m so stoned. I’m so baked.’” As the use of marijuana increases among adults, marijuana could become more easily available to youth. The best way to prevent youth from accessing marijuana or other substances kept at home is to lock it up securely. **Currently, only 45% of people who keep marijuana at home in the Somerset Hills lock it up.**

Once parents have discovered their teen used substances, they often struggle with how to manage the teen’s behavior. Telling teens to stop using substances is sometimes ineffective, so managing the behavior to minimize risk is the second-best option. Parents expressed concerns that their teenagers would expose younger siblings to substance use. One family told their teen about marijuana, “You can’t bring it into the house because you have two younger siblings.” **Guidance to help parents manage steps they can take once their teen has used substances is needed in the community.**

Opioid overdoses decrease slightly and naloxone availability increases

In the Somerset Hills, evidence shows a slight decrease in the perceived misuse of opioids. In 2023, 15% of online survey respondents knew someone who misuses

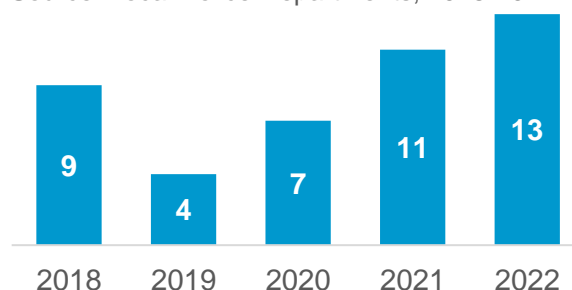
opioids, down from 18% in 2022. The number of respondents who know someone who used heroin also decreased to 4% in 2023 from 12% in 2022.

Overdose deaths in Somerset County have decreased from the pandemic’s peak of 63 deaths in 2020 to 50 deaths in 2022. Part of this decrease in deaths is due to naloxone (Narcan), the lifesaving opioid overdose reversal drug. Naloxone is available at local drug stores and police and EMTs carry naloxone and administer it to suspected overdose patients. Last year, local police departments administered naloxone 13 times in the Somerset Hills. See Figures 12 and 13. The majority of naloxone administrations occurred in Bedminster and Bernards Township (Basking Ridge). Note: the three naloxone administrations in Bedminster shown in Figure 13 in January were the same person.

Figure 12

Naloxone deployments in the Somerset Hills have increased since 2018

Source: Local Police Departments, 2018-2022

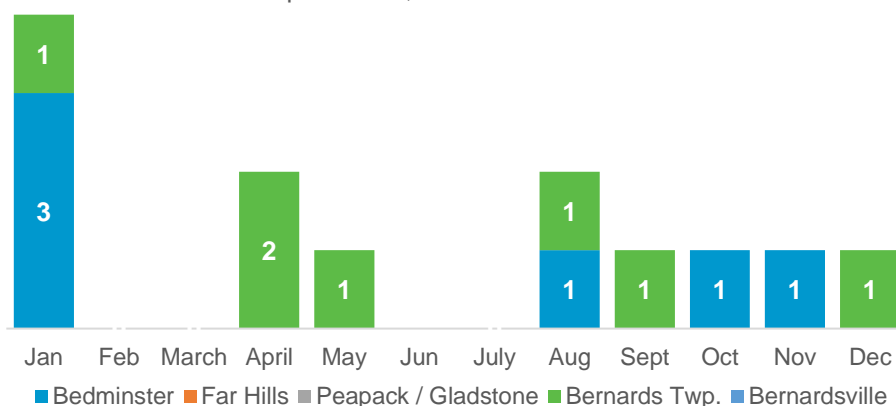


Emergency overdose boxes containing naloxone were installed at all Bernards Township Schools in the district in the spring of 2023. Finally, the availability of prescription opioid medications continues to decline. The number of opioid prescriptions continues to decrease in the Somerset County according to NJ Cares.

Figure 13

Naloxone deployments in the Somerset Hills in 2022 by month

Source: Local Police Departments, 2022



Fentanyl has permeated the illicit drug market nationwide. In 2022 in Somerset County, 98% of suspected heroin submissions to New Jersey State Police Office of Forensic Science labs contained fentanyl. The rise of fentanyl happened quickly. Five years ago, in 2017, 31% of heroin submissions in the county contained fentanyl. The other rising

threat in our region is the sedative xylazine, or “tranq,” a veterinarian tranquilizer that is more powerful than fentanyl that increases the risk of overdose deaths and severe necrotic wounds. Up and down the East Coast, xylazine is being added to cocaine and illicit opioids. Xylazine was found in 37% of fentanyl-related submissions in New Jersey last year.⁷ Because xylazine is a sedative, rather than an opioid, it does not respond to naloxone to reverse an overdose. Additionally, it induces a blackout stupor that lasts hours, leaving users vulnerable to sexual assault and robbery.

⁷ Office of Drug Monitoring & Analysis Fentanyl Trends in New Jersey. Drug Monitoring Initiative. January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2022. ROIC 202302-04125D

Bernardsville's growing immigrant community

The Somerset Hills is home to a Latine community of established immigrants. Last year's community assessment focused on this group of assimilated residents from Paraguay who are in need of CiC programs and services. Latine community leaders have worked with CiC to develop programs specifically to serve established Latine residents, called Yerba Mate. This section provides information on the growing community of new immigrants in the Somerset Hills.

A large number of people immigrating from Central America are settling in Bernardsville. The Somerset Hills School District enrolls fifty to sixty newly immigrated students per year, primarily from Guatemala and Honduras. To respond to the needs of these students, they have increased the number of teachers for Multiple Language Learners (MLL) from one to six since 2017. The needs of the students vary greatly depending on their age and family support structure upon arrival.

Elementary school-aged students typically come to Bernardsville with their families. Parents or caregivers will attend programs and events and request assistance from the Spanish-speaking PTO liaison when needed. The PTO liaison at Bedwell Elementary has a What's App chat with over 100 Spanish-speaking parents where she reminds them about school events, deadlines, and important dates.

Parents work long hours, which is important for their financial security, but limits the children's ability to participate in extracurriculars and after-school programs. **Until their basic needs are met for housing, food, and financial security, immigrant parents do not have the time and energy to attend substance use prevention programs.** There are simply not enough hours in the day for even the best-intentioned parents to participate in parent education. This is different than established Latino families who are more involved in school activities.

New immigrant parents face barriers to enrolling their children in school, such as hesitancy in asking the school how to register because of deportation fears or needing a lease agreement to show residency when they are staying with a family member or friend and do not have their name on a lease agreement. Many of the immigrants come from very rural communities, so they are learning to navigate a more suburban community in a new country. Most of the immigrants speak or understand some Spanish, and very few speak only Mam. Literacy rates vary, and many parents are not comfortable filling out the required forms for school registration.

When teenagers come to Bernardsville from Central America, their experience is very different from the younger kids. They often come as unaccompanied minors and stay with friends or relatives. They change addresses and phone numbers frequently and are expected to work and contribute to the household rent. Their primary focus is on fulfilling

their responsibilities at school to move ahead in their immigration process. These teens do not participate in extracurricular activities because after school they go immediately to work at a restaurant or country club.

Immigrant students in the Somerset Hills attend a high-achieving school in a new country with new customs and a new language. Many youth from rural Guatemala have limited schooling. According to one SHSD school staff member, it is not uncommon for high school immigrant students to have only kindergarten or first-grade-level math proficiency. In Guatemala, daily school fees are required to attend, so by 2nd grade, families cannot afford additional school fees and need the child to help at home.

SHSD developed a 1-year basic course for new immigrants, then starts high school-aged students in 9th-grade classes. The classes are taught in English and MLL students have an MLL teacher to help work through assignments as needed. Meeting the needs of this growing population presents new challenges to the schools. The district has 160 MLL students district-wide. Newly immigrated students have a higher dropout rate, which is hard to estimate because many students change addresses and phone numbers frequently, so the school cannot contact them to determine if their absence is because they changed schools or dropped out. Those who stay enrolled sometimes fall behind in classes and must repeat a course, increasing their risk of dropping out.

Few immigrant students enroll in post-high school education. The school district works with Middle Earth to support the students in applying for post-high school education. Like the adults who immigrate to Bernardsville, these young people are focused on their immediate needs and are not preparing for the SAT and visiting colleges. Many immigrant youth who choose to enroll at a college do not complete their schooling because they lack the support to keep them attending classes. Logistical challenges, such as transportation to campus, become major hurdles to completing a degree.

Recommendations

- Consider adding a school connectedness question to the Pride Survey.
- Continue to monitor attitudes about drinking alcohol and driving.
- Guidance to help parents manage steps they can take once their teen has used substances is needed in the community.
- Opportunities exist to increase the percentage of parents who lock their alcohol and marijuana supplies to prevent youth access.
- Continue educating parents on how to keep children safe on social media and minimize the negative influence of social media.
- Continue education efforts on the dangers associated with high-THC marijuana to continue to increase the perceived risk of marijuana use.
- Continue efforts to encourage parents to talk to their children and teens about the dangers of substance use (Talk While They Still Listen) to increase the number of parents who talk to their children often about substance use.
- Many needs exist for the new immigrant community, including the need for educational support, childcare, transportation, health care, and mental health care. While these services do not fall within the mission of CiC, understanding these needs is critical in understanding the immigrant community. Continuing to listen and partner with those who have the resources and relationships to serve the community's current needs will allow CiC to provide support when the community is more established and expresses interest in substance use prevention services.

Appendix A: Sample demographics

Variable	Response	Frequency	Percent
Town n=176 Missing=0	Bernards Township	71	40
	Bernardsville	84	48
	Peapack-Gladstone	8	4
	Bedminster	10	6
	Far Hills	3	2
Age <i>Missing=10</i>	18-21	7	4
	25-29	5	3
	30-34	6	4
	35-39	7	4
	40-49	59	36
	50-59	55	33
	60-64	15	9
	65-74	11	7
	75 or older	1	1
Sex <i>Missing=14</i>	Male	29	18
	Female	130	80
	Transgender	1	1
	Other	2	1
Education <i>Missing=13</i>	Less than HS	2	1
	Some HS	3	2
	HS diploma or GED	11	7
	Assoc degree	13	8
	College degree	59	36
	Graduate degree	75	46
Parent <i>Missing=0</i>	Parent	122	68
	Not a parent	58	32
Race/Ethnicity <i>Missing=25</i>	White	124	82
	Hispanic	12	8
	Asian/South Asian	9	6
	Two or more races	6	4
Income <i>Missing=18</i>	Greater than \$88,000	128	81
	Less than \$88,000	27	17
	I don't know	3	2

Appendix B: Recruiting special populations

CiC used digital and print media to increase awareness of the online survey to recruit adults to participate. The most effective efforts were digital, linked posts in local Facebook groups (60 responses), CiC’s Constant Contact email newsletter (31 responses), and local schools’ Friday Folders (29 responses). The least effective recruiting tactics used included Shoprite video ads (1 response), posting on the CiC website (3 responses), and mailing postcards (4 responses). Recruiting tactics should be evaluated in consideration of the resources required to facilitate them. Posting the link on the CiC website, for example, may be ineffective, but it requires little time and effort. The Shoprite videos, on the other hand, require graphic design effort and dedicated advertising dollars. Sending out the link through the Bernardsville Recreation Department email required minimal effort and recruited 4 participants.

Recruiting Medium	Number of Participants
Facebook	60
CiC Constant Contact email	31
School Friday Folders	29
Word of Mouth	16
QR codes (unspecified source)	13
Local newspaper	10
Instagram	9
Postcard mailer	4
Bernardsville Recreation email	4
Post on community website	3
Shoprite video	1

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Social media

Distinct SurveyMonkey collectors should be used to identify the recruiting medium from which participants originated. For example, participants who clicked on a link to the survey from a social media post were more likely to be fraudulent than respondents invited to participate from CiC’s email lists.

Social media posts should not be “boosted” through paid promotions through the social media site for targeted recruiting, as it attracts ineligible people taking the survey solely for the incentive.

Young adults

Special recruiting efforts to recruit more people under 35 included an early launch of the survey while college students were home for winter break with paid social media boosts targeted toward that age group. That effort resulted in over 800 responses from people

who were taking the survey fraudulently, and those responses had to be excluded from the analysis.

In previous years, personal contacts of CiC staff had been contacted to reach respondents under 35 years. This year, CiC staff left postcards with QR codes at local coffee shops and doctors' offices where young people may be waiting and would have time to fill out a survey. The printed QR codes resulted in 13 responses, 2 of which were under 35 years old. Based on this experience, **the expense of boosting social media posts and printing postcards to be displayed at community businesses is not recommended for future survey recruiting because it does not generate sufficient responses from young adults.** Due to the low number of young adults taking the survey, the sample size of the questions asked only of young adults, including what substances they used in the past year, is too small to be analyzed

Spanish speakers

Efforts to recruit more Spanish speakers included several visits to the train station with a Spanish-speaking staff member to encourage day laborers to participate in the survey. The effort was time-consuming because many of the participants have limited literacy, so the survey was conducted orally. While the effort garnered responses from a difficult-to-reach population, the method is not scalable without a team of Spanish-speaking staff members to reach a meaningful sample size. CiC mailed postcards including the QR code to areas with high concentrations of Latino populations. These efforts resulted in eight out of the ten (8 of 10) Spanish language responses.

Spanish language community leaders were the focus of the qualitative data collection. Using Facebook to reach out to school PTO leaders was a successful way to schedule parent interviews and to be introduced to Spanish liaisons working with the PTO. The Spanish-speaking parent liaison at Bedwell Elementary was a critical introduction to school and district-level faculty and parents who work with the Spanish-speaking community and provided critical insight into the current immigration situation in the Somerset Hills.

When a rapport had been established between the evaluator and the Spanish-speaking community leader being interviewed, the evaluator asked several community members to share the link to their survey with their parishioners, What's App parent list, or social media communities. Despite agreeing to share the information and link, yet, to our knowledge, none of them sent a message to their contact lists. **A currently unknown barrier to information dissemination exists among CiC's Spanish-speaking community partners.**

Appendix C: Working with the new immigrant community

Newly immigrated parents of elementary school-aged children are more likely to attend programs than parents or guardians of older students. Based on the experience of a staff member in Bernardsville's schools, weekend events attract both parents and Saturday morning events have been successful, whereas evening events bring the mothers only. Events are most successful when food (preferably barbecued meats) and babysitting are provided and a less structured format is used, for example, a tabling event works better than a presentation.

The neighborhood around Maple Street and Bernards Avenue is home to new immigrants. A hub of the immigrant community is the Sacred Heart Chapel, as seen in the photo to the right. Commonly referred to as "the chapel," it is a part of the Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church. The parking lot in front of the chapel is a common gathering place for meetings and casual chats with neighbors. The Kiwanis Park at Pine Street is a great location that has a playground for the kids.

Maria, the owner of Maria's Corner Bodega has been identified as a trusted leader in the Spanish-speaking immigrant community. Her shop is in the heart of the immigrant neighborhood, which is not far from CiC. See the map for the location of Maria's Corner Bodega in relation to CiC.

