



# NOFIRES ANNUAL REPORT 2014



**NOFIRES**

Northwestern Juvenile Fire Intervention  
Response, Education and Safety  
Partnership

*A Community Response to Youth-Set Fires*

**NOFIRES, INC.**

[www.NoFIRESjfis.com](http://www.NoFIRESjfis.com)

## MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends of NoFIRES,

It is truly an honor to represent the NoFIRES program.

The core mission of NoFIRES is to protect our youth, their families, and the communities in which they live, from the dangerous and sometimes fatal act of setting fires.

NoFIRES is proud to offer fire safety education to Hampshire County, Franklin County, the North Quabbin area, and The City of Holyoke. In the three years that our program has been in operation, we have received more than 150 referrals for youth that have misused fire.

NoFIRES is one of the only programs statewide available for young people that have engaged in fire-related behavior. Our model of utilizing licensed clinical social workers for screenings and specialized fire educators for classes makes this program an invaluable asset to the 51 communities it serves.

We have been contacted by half a dozen departments and agencies from around New England to learn more about our program and request our help in creating a similar program in their area. We look forward to leading the way and sharing our materials to ensure that all families have access to fire safety education if they need it.

Please visit us at: [www.NoFIRESjfis.com](http://www.NoFIRESjfis.com) to learn more about our program, download our referral form, and find upcoming training opportunities.

Sincerely,



## FIRE SAFETY EDUCATION

According to the National Fire and Protection Association, fires started by youth accounted for an average of 49,300 fires with associated losses of 80 civilian deaths, 860 civilian injuries, and \$235 million in direct property damage per year between 2007-2011. Fire safety education is effective in reducing recidivism. Educating as many youth as possible will reduce risk and expense for the community.

A collaboration of fire, law enforcement, mental healthcare providers and social service agencies; NoFIRES is committed to providing a consistent, coordinated and appropriate response to youths ages 5-17, who set fires or engage in fire-related behavior.

The components of this approach include intervention, education and prevention, and referrals for clinical treatment and counseling and/or to service agencies.



## HOW IT WORKS

When there is a fire-related incident involving a juvenile, the child is referred to the NoFIRES program. It is not required that charges be pending for a child to participate in the program. NoFIRES is a referral-based program, and accepts referrals from the following sources:

- \* State and local police departments
- \* District Attorneys' Offices
- \* Fire departments
- \* Schools
- \* Court personnel
- \* Department of Children and Families
- \* Department of Mental Health
- \* Medical & Mental Health Providers
- \* Other social service agencies
- \* Parent/Guardian/Foster Parent



A screening interview of the youth and the youth's family will be conducted and a determination will follow as to whether the child is an appropriate candidate for the program. In addition, a Life Safety Inspection is conducted in the home to ensure the safety of the family. If the child is determined to be suitable for the program, a fire safety educational intervention program will be recommended. Referrals may also be made to social services agencies and/or for clinical mental health counseling and treatment.

The NoFIRES Fire Safety School usually includes 5 classes which run approximately 2 hours each, depending on the program and needs of the child. The program focuses on preventing further fire-related incidents by encouraging the youth to adopt safe and healthy behaviors associated with fire. There is a program fee of \$350.00. Waivers are available based on family income and no one will be refused services for inability to pay.

## HOW TO MAKE A REFERRAL

1. Visit our website: [www.NoFIRESjfis.com](http://www.NoFIRESjfis.com)
2. Print and complete our Referral Form
3. Return form to:

[NoFIRESjfis@gmail.com](mailto:NoFIRESjfis@gmail.com)

-OR-

NoFIRES

P.O. Box 241

Easthampton, MA 01027

The family will be contacted by NoFIRES to schedule a screening appointment. The screening team will gather more information and determine if our fire safety course would be appropriate intervention. The family will receive an enrollment letter with the dates and location of the classes. The child must attend all 5 classes to earn a certificate of completion. Upon completion, the referral source will also receive a certificate of completion for their records.

## OUR PARTNERS

The NoFIRES program is based on collaboration between different disciplines. Our strength is grounded in the participation of the following agencies:

Amherst Fire Department, Amherst Police Department, Amherst Regional Schools, Athol Fire Department, Chesterfield Fire Department, Clinical and Support Options, Department of Children & Families, Easthampton Fire Department, Easthampton Police Department, Franklin Clinical Liaison, Holyoke Fire Department, Granby Fire Department, Greenfield Fire Department, Greenfield Police Department, Montague Police Department, Northeast Center for Youth and Families, Northampton Fire Department, Northampton Police Department, Northwestern District Attorney's Office, Springfield Fire Department, Turners Falls Fire Department, Ware Police Department and the MA State Fire Marshall's Office

## TRAININGS

In addition to offering fire safety education, NoFIRES has worked hard to provide high quality low-cost trainings to prosecutors, police, and firefighters from around the Commonwealth. We sponsor an annual 2-day conference on Arson Investigation and Prosecution, and have organized trainings on leadership, interviewing techniques, explosives, and fire education.

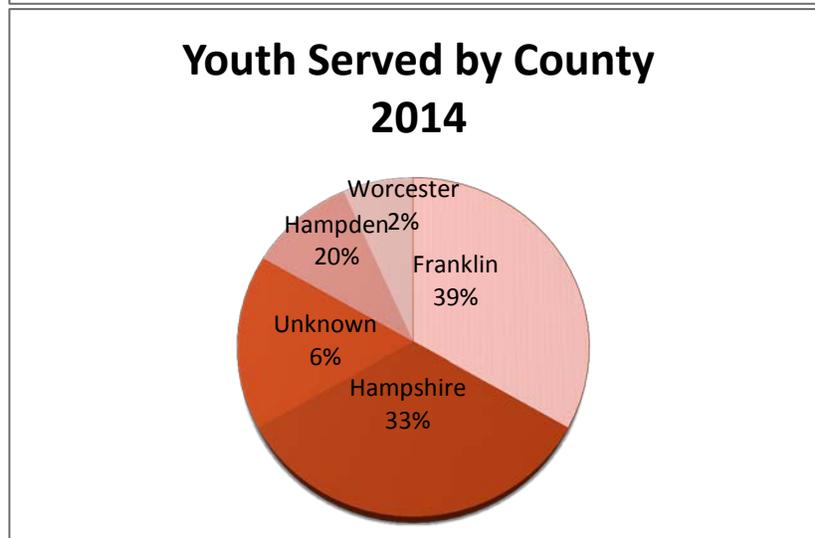
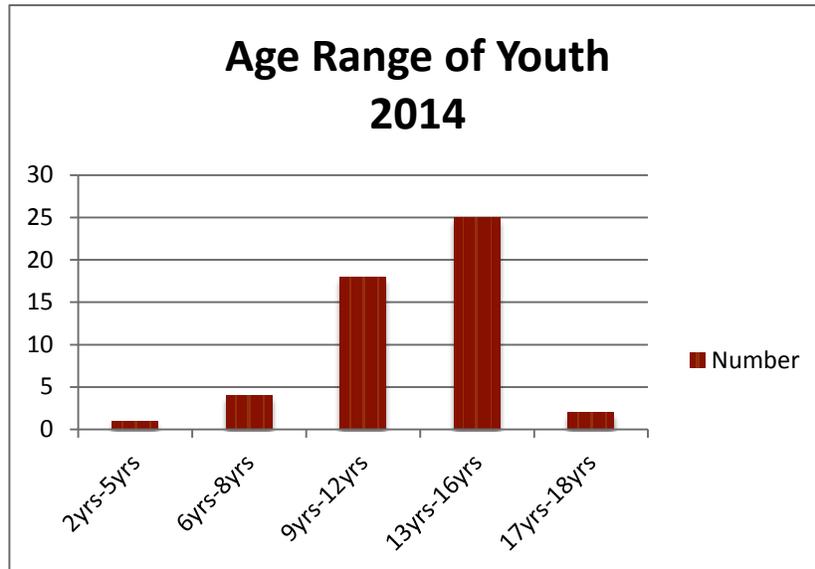
On October 27-28, 2015, our annual conference will focus specifically on explosives. The Boston Marathon Bombing will be used as a case study. We hope to have a full house and the proceeds will help to make it possible to continue this important program.

**DATA**

In 2014, we received 50 referrals for young people that have misused fire. Although we have seen an increase in the number of referrals, we do not believe that juveniles are setting more fires than in previous years. Instead, we think that more agencies have become aware of the NoFIRES program and the services we offer. Our hope is that we can continue to work to better understand this serious issue and continue to offer our services to families in need of help.

In January 2015, we created an extensive database to organize data and track information about the kinds of referrals we receive. This new system will help us record additional information that may be helpful in learning more about juvenile firesetting. Among other things, we have added categories to track estimated damages, the nature of the fire, household makeup, location of fire, ignition source, and previous incidents.

A follow-up survey has also been instituted to evaluate program satisfaction and fire setting behavior after program participation. To date, we were able to contact most of the participants (80%) all respondents felt that the NoFIRES program was valuable. We have received 100% positive feedback about NoFIRES and have not received any reports of additional fire setting behavior after program completion. We will be conducting follow-up surveys again in the fall of 2015 to survey our most recent referrals.



## FUNDING

Our program costs approximately \$70,000 per year to remain in operation. NoFIRES has raised 25% of its own funds through fundraisers, an annual Arson Investigation Conference, private donations, and fees. In addition, we have received some state funds to help the program remain in operation while we work to become sustainable. NoFIRES was initiated and operated through April 1, 2014 through a Community Innovation Challenge grant. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, through the CIC has funded NoFIRES in the amount of \$47,000 for FY 2014.



August 2015--NoFIRES awarded \$5,000 from Columbia Gas for Fire Safety Education & Intervention

## Meet Our Board of Directors

**President:** Chief David Hewes, *Chesterfield Fire Department*

**Vice President:** Martha Murphy Kane, *Northwestern District Attorney's Office*

**Treasurer:** Robert Sacco, *Lyon & Fitzpatrick, LLP*

**Clerk:** Ellen Brower Gately, *Juvenile Court Clinic*

Chief David Keefe, *South Hadley Fire District #2*

Captain Wayne Hennemann, *Easthampton Fire Department*

**CONTACT US**

P.O. Box 241  
Easthampton, MA 01027

Phone: (413) 977-2673

Website: [www.NoFIRESjfis.com](http://www.NoFIRESjfis.com)

Email: [NoFIRESjfis@gmail.com](mailto:NoFIRESjfis@gmail.com)

**Friends of NoFIRES, Inc.**

Become a friend of NoFIRES and consider contributing to our program

- Serve on our Board of Directors or Friends of NoFIRES Advisory Team
- Help with fundraising efforts
- Donate a tax-deductible raffle item
- Make a tax-deductible donation

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

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