



**Joseph H. Firth Youth Center**  
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December 1, 2022

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The Joseph H. Firth Youth Center Board of Directors is pleased to announce another federal grant award of \$50,000 per year for four years through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) for a new program, ***STOP! Be Safe & Sober!***, under the direction of the LEAD Phillipsburg Drug-Free Community Coalition for FY2022-2026. In 2019, the Board of Directors announced LEAD Phillipsburg was awarded a FY2019-2024 Drug-Free Communities Support Program grant in the amount of \$125,000 annually to support the Coalition's prevention efforts. ***STOP! Be Safe & Sober!*** is part of the Sober Truth on Preventing Underage Drinking (STOP) Act and will further expand upon LEAD Phillipsburg's focus on integrating prevention and environmental strategies to decrease underage drinking to the area's most underserved youth and young adults.

"The Board of Directors is thrilled to announce these new funds and know the work of LEAD Phillipsburg will have a lasting impact on youth by helping to decrease underage drinking in Phillipsburg and the surrounding communities. The STOP Act grant application opens once every three years and is awarded to approximately 40 coalitions nationwide, so the Board acknowledges the incredible work put forth to become selected. The Board and Leadership Team were very excited to compete for these funds, as we believe prevention is the key to inspire our youth to pursue fulfilling, substance-free lives. We have to do this work collaboratively, as a community, and are grateful to be able to bring these initiatives to Phillipsburg. We thank the LEAD Phillipsburg Coalition and the dedicated leadership of Kelly Post-Sheedy, Executive Director of the Joseph H. Firth Youth Center. Also, Project Coordinator, Keely Rehman, Superintendent Dr. Gregory Troxell, Chief of Police Robert Stettner, Bill Benz, Robyn Coe-Donaldson, Yvette Day, Pastor Rich Gelson, April Poretta, and Brooke Renkens. These individuals are the driving forces who brought this funding opportunity from a vision to a reality," stated Jeff Russo, President of the Joseph H. Firth Youth Center.

The Firth Youth Center is a private 501(c)(3) charitable organization devoted to serving the vulnerable youth of Phillipsburg, NJ since 1954 through a wide variety of educational, recreational, and athletic opportunities.

The Firth Youth Center is committed to building the resiliency of our most underserved populations while continuously promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion for the betterment of our children and community.