



June 1, 2018

John T. Bottomley, Executive Director  
The Fuller Foundation, Inc.  
P.O. Box 479  
Rye Beach, NH 03871

Dear Mr. Bottomley,

Enclosed please find the requested report for The Fuller Foundation's \$2,500 grant to Robert F. Kennedy's Children's Action Corps' Children of Alcoholism & Substance Abuse Program (COASA).

Like The Fuller Foundation, we are committed to helping prevent youth from experiencing the detrimental effects caused by the use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs through the early education of youth and parents. Your support in 2017 helped make possible COASA's expansion to two additional Boston schools. In addition, Camp COASA attracted a greater number of participants this past year and we are looking forward to another successful camp session next month.

We are grateful for your support of COASA as we work to provide addiction education and prevention for at-risk children in Boston.

Sincerely,

Jane Baker  
Director, Corporate & Foundation Relations

Edward P. Kelley  
Chief Executive Officer

Alan J. Klein  
President

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• Administration  
• Children of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse  
• Detention Diversion Advocacy Program  
• High Risk Youth Network  
• National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice

Lancaster Campus  
220 Old Common Road  
Lancaster, MA 01523  
t 978-365-2803  
f 978-706-1281  
• Residential Treatment Programs  
• Robert F. Kennedy Lancaster School

Cape Cod Adolescent Treatment Center  
137 Run Pond Road  
South Yarmouth, MA 02664  
t 508-760-5181  
f 508-760-5187

Bright Futures Adoption Center & Adoption Community of New England  
2352 Main St, Suite 206  
Concord, MA 01742  
t 978-274-2144  
f 978-266-1909

Robert F. Kennedy School  
Northeast Youth Service Center  
33 Gregory Street  
Middleton, MA 01949  
t 978-716-1164  
f 978-777-3028

Experiment With Travel School  
15 Papineau Street  
Holyoke, MA 01040  
t 413-533-5800  
f 413-533-5282

South Hadley Girls Program  
87 Canal Street  
South Hadley, MA 01075  
t 413-536-5519  
f 413-536-9927  
• Residential Treatment Program  
• Transitional Independent Living Program

Western Massachusetts Office  
225 High St, Suite 601  
Holyoke, MA 01040  
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• Detention Diversion Advocacy Program



## **Report on COASA (Children of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse) Program Activities Supported by The Fuller Foundation, Inc.**

COASA is a community-based program with a mission to "eliminate the adverse impact of alcohol and drug use on our children and families." It is one of forty two affiliates of the National Association for Children of Addiction (NACoA) and serves Boston communities. COASA has worked within the Charlestown community for over 16 years with staff from the Charlestown Health Center serving as a resource for children from families with alcohol and other substance-use disorders, and within the Clarence Edwards Middle School in Charlestown for the past nine years providing intervention and supportive education. It is also providing ongoing support, program development, direct clinical service, training and supervision within community-based programs in the City of Boston. It is a service specifically designed to meet the needs of the one out of every four children in the city affected by alcohol and/or other drug-use disorders. COASA Director Maureen McGlame is a member of the Charlestown Family Service Task Force representing and advocating for this group of children. COASA, as a NACoA affiliate, has access to resources specifically developed and designed to meet the needs of children impacted by familial alcohol and/or other substance-use disorders, resources which are proven effective by the ACE Study (Adverse Childhood Experiences Study).

The funding we received from The Fuller Foundation was used to continue the services we provide within Charlestown and to expand services to other schools within the City of Boston. Specifically, your generous \$2,500 grant helped support the provision of learning materials for our school-based support groups and Camp COASA.

COASA has, over the past year, been a weekly provider of groups in two more Boston schools as a result of working with the school guidance departments in a charter high school in Dorchester and a pilot high school in Allston. The ultimate goal of the work is to bring children together in ongoing supportive education groups where they learn how they are impacted by familial substance use disorders and learn, clearly, that it is not their fault. They learn that they didn't cause it, can't control it and can't cure it. They learn that they have rights to rich, full lives of their own, that they need to learn about the illness and how to take care of themselves, get support, and learn how to talk, trust and truly feel their feelings regardless of what anyone else does or does not do. We teach them that they are at 4x greater risk than other children to become chemically dependent. They learn that they are not alone, can get the support they need and can have full, rich, productive, happy lives. They learn to develop the skills they need to break the cycle of dependence within their families.

The group at the Boston Collegiate Charter School in Dorchester has met every week – it has been a group of high school students, all girls, who have been impacted by parental alcohol and/or substance-use disorders at home. It has been a safe place for the girls to



focus on taking care of themselves and understand the impact this chronic illness has had on their lives and the lives of those they love at home. Learning to talk about this shame-based, out-of-control "secret", learning they are not alone, as well as about safety and safe people, and how the coping mechanisms they have developed to survive can backfire on them as they plan for their future lives are all part of the group experience. Understanding that they need help to develop a grounded knowledge base to replace the roles they've been in living with this illness at home, and understanding how critical it is for them to not use substances to change the way they feel, are parts of the group experience they've had. Learning to use community resources to support them is also part of the group experience. In order for them to move forward with their own lives it is critical that they understand that the guilt and shame they carry is part of the family illness they have coped with and lived with. Affirming their rights is critical for them to be able to move forward with their own lives. Issues of loss and abandonment can be understood and worked on through the transition process.

The group at the Mary Lyons Pilot High School has met all year as well. It is comprised of boys and girls from families with parental alcohol and/or substance-use disorders. A COASA group facilitator as co-led this group with a school-guidance dean of attendance every week. The impact of trauma, including the development of learning disabilities, the development of dysfunctional coping mechanisms, depression and anxiety, becoming parentified children, missing their own healthy development have all been issues in this as well as in the other groups. Learning that recovery for them is an ongoing process, not an event, is very useful. Providing resources to utilize to help lessen anxiety, relax, become mindful and compassionate help the students realize that developing their own "life toolkits" can make all the difference for them. Realizing that the illnesses their family members have is not who they are helps the students care and let go of the blame and shame that serve only to immobilize them and their families. So much happens for these children through the experience of having a safe place where they can learn to tell the truth, break the fear and isolation they live with and realize their own potential with ongoing guidance, support and safe people.

Camp COASA , our week-long day camp for children between the ages of 7 and 17, takes place annually for a week in mid-July in South Boston. It utilizes the resources developed by NACoA for its affiliates. It is held at the Laboure Center in South Boston and is a collaboration between COASA and Laboure with COASA taking the administrative and developmental lead. Last year, seventeen children attended Camp COASA. It is an intense, focused, action-packed and supportive educational experience for children from families with alcohol and/or other substance-use disorders. The attached flyer describes the Camp which offers follow-up groups every month with dinner and groups for the adults as well as for the children. It is an opportunity to learn how to have fun, tell the truth, connect, heal and grow together.

Another event COASA sponsored this past year was a celebration of Children of Addictions Week (the week of Valentine's Day) at the Steriti Skating Rink in the North End. The theme of the party was "celebrating being ourselves." Having fun, being together, being ourselves, falling down and getting back up again were all part of the day. This may become an annual event for children of addiction in Boston (the only one of its kind). The flyer for this event is attached as well.

By being a support, a teacher and a voice for these children, by teaching them how they are being impacted by this disease in their families, by bringing recognition to this silenced population we can provide them with the validation, education, prevention of mental health problems, and prevention of substance use disorders they are at risk for developing.

Moving from shame and stigma to hope, courage and self-worth is the goal of COASA. The freedom to become themselves is possible when the disease of addiction no longer controls the children and they are no longer the collateral damage they are at risk to become.

Thank you again for your contribution to this important program. Given the explosion in opioid use and addiction, it is even more critical that we help children of addiction identify a positive path forward so that they can live healthy and happy lives.



# Camp COASA

## Join us for a week of learning, healing and fun!



COASA (Children of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse) at Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps and the Laboure Center in South Boston are co-hosting a week-long summer program for children living with the stress of alcohol and/or other substance use disorders at home or within the family.

**July 16 - July 20, 2018**  
**Laboure Center**  
**275 West Broadway, South Boston, MA 02127**  
**Children, ages 8-16**

Morning session includes meditation and reflection and educational support groups teaching children about addiction, how to express and deal with their feelings, and how to develop coping skills. Afternoons will be spent on fun surprise adventures. Breakfast and lunch will be provided.

*\* There is a required Family Night registration on Wednesday, June 20, 2018 at 6:00 pm, at the Laboure Center for all those who wish to participate in the program. Pizza will be served.*

For more information or to sign up for the program, please contact Maureen McGlame at (617) 272-5039 or [mmcglame@rfkchildren.org](mailto:mmcglame@rfkchildren.org) ASAP. There is no cost to attend this program.







# Program Schedule



**July 16 - July 20, 2018**

**Laboure Center**

**275 West Broadway, South Boston, MA 02127**

- 8:30** Arrive, meditation, breakfast
- 9:00** Fitness session
- 9:30** Yoga
- 10:00** Discussion group and game or film
- 11:00** Group and special project
- 11:50** Break
- 12:00** Lunch
- 12:30** Afternoon adventure
- 2:45** Debrief
- 3:00** End the day

Afternoon adventures will be different every day.  
A good time is guaranteed!