In March of 2014, Senator Leahy convened the Senate Judiciary Committee at a field hearing in Rutland, VT. The topic was “Solutions-The Opiate and Heroin Problem’.

The problem of opiates and heroin in Vermont have been widely publicized , from the Governor’s State of the State to articles in national newspapers. The New York Times had a front page article on the drug problems in Rutland, VT.

As a response to this problem, Rutland is receiving a lot of press on the “Vision Project” a collaborative of over 120 community partners.. Their mission is “To make Rutland, one of the safest and healthiest communities in the Country”. We meet twice a month and have had to move our meeting to the Howe Center to accommodate the number of people that are showing up.

We have a tree pronged attack on the drug problem: community policing, prevention and treatment. The Boys & Girls Club is a major partner in the prevention piece. We already teach a program that is called SMART MOVES that is an evidence based drug and alcohol education program that BGCA encourages us to use.

We are asking for support from the Windham Foundation to start this SMART MOVES program at an earlier age. We will expand and incentivize our SMART MOVES program to reach more youth at a younger age. Because of organizational capacity, we have been teaching our SMART MOVES program to 6th and 7th graders. With this grant we will be able to increase staffing hours and that allow us to start teaching our SMART MOVES program to 3rd and 4th graders. We will incentivize the 3rd and 4th graders to complete the 2 separate eight week programs during the school year.

SMART Moves (Skills Mastery and Resistance Training) is a prevention/education program that addresses problems such as drug and alcohol use and premature sexual activity. More than simply using “Say No” this program teaches youth aged 6-12 how to say no by involving them in the discussion and role playing, practicing resistance and refusal skills, strengthening decision-making skills and analyzing media and peer influence. This grant would allow us to meet twice a week. The second class will be for 3rd and 4th graders. There will be incentives for completing the 2 separate eight week courses.