



For Immediate Release

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### **TEEN CLIMBING WALL PROGRAM OFFERED BY HEALTHY ACADIA AND CAMP BEECH CLIFF**

Mt. Desert. For many years, Camp Beech Cliff (CBC) has offered families the opportunity to use their 30-foot climbing wall on Fridays during the off season. Especially during the cold winter months, 30-40 kids of all ages use the wall and other gym facilities. This fall, a determined group of high school students decided they wanted to carve out their own night where they could focus on their love of climbing.

MDI High School student Mia Sawyer recruited several classmates and some of their parents and approached CBC about hosting a separate teen climbing night on Wednesdays. CBC granted their request, and the response to the program was immediate. In fact, the program became so popular that an additional teen climbing night was added. Now on any given Wednesday or Saturday night, 10 – 24 teens from MDI and area schools can be found challenging themselves on the wall. Debra Deal, CBC Executive Director, said that if CBC had initiated this teen climbing program, “It would never fly. It took a group of students leading the way, and we want to do what we can to support that.”

To continue offering the program at no cost to participants, CBC has partnered with Healthy Acadia to sponsor teen climbing nights through its Hancock County Drug-Free Communities (DFC) Coalition Program. The DFC Coalition is an alliance of community members and local organizations who are dedicated to empowering youth and reducing underage use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs across Hancock County.

“Teen brains are hard-wired to take risks, which is one factor that makes young people susceptible to trying alcohol, nicotine or other drugs,” said Healthy Acadia’s Drug Free Communities Coordinator, Tara Young. “However, there are many risks which are not only good but promote healthy neurological development and growth during the critical adolescent period. Healthy risk-taking is linked to developmental changes in the brain that serve to help teens become independent, analytical adults. Daring activities, such as rock climbing, give teens the risk and challenge they seek.”

Youth substance use and addiction are serious concerns in our communities, and the DFC Coalition is working on a variety of initiatives to prevent the initiation of substance use by youth and young adults and to help children and youth thrive. Through the DFC program, Healthy Acadia supports schools, organizations, and programs to carry out community-level change. As



a result, we all work together toward a common goal of building a safe, healthy, and drug-free Hancock County.

In the fall of 2018, CBC began offering a six-day-a-week winter/spring recreational schedule to provide community members with activities year-round. Pickleball is offered Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9:00-11:00am, and Tuesday and Thursday from 5:00-7:00pm. The climbing wall is open for adults (18+) on Mondays from 5:30-8:30pm, for families (3+) on Fridays from 5:00-8:00pm, and for teens on Wednesdays (5:30-8:30pm) and Saturdays (6:00-9:00pm). For more information, visit [www.campbeechcliff.org](http://www.campbeechcliff.org) or call 244-0365.

Camp Beech Cliff MDI seeks to enrich the lives of people of all ages by offering summer camps and year-round outdoor education, leadership, and recreational programs. Their mission is to inspire personal growth, interpersonal connection, and a deep appreciation of the natural world. Learn more at [www.campbeechcliff.org](http://www.campbeechcliff.org).

Healthy Acadia is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit community health organization serving Hancock and Washington counties. Healthy Acadia works on a broad range of community health initiatives that help the citizens of our counties to thrive. Learn more at [www.healthyacadia.org](http://www.healthyacadia.org).

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