



### **“MEMBER SPOTLIGHT – JASON VEZINA, Sr.”**

#### ***Contributed by The Franklin Mayor’s Drug Task Force***

The Franklin Mayor’s Drug Task Force is a coalition of individuals and organizations coming together to address a common goal: a healthy environment for the drug and alcohol free development of our youth and families in Franklin and Hill, NH. The Task Force has only one paid staff position and our work relies heavily on volunteer efforts. Task Force members and partners come from all sectors of the community; let us introduce you to one...

Jason Vezina Sr. believes in the power of people working together to make a difference in their community, and that is only one of the reasons he chose to become involved in the Franklin Mayor’s Drug Task Force.

Jason has been a resident of Franklin for 10 years now, after spending his early years in much larger communities in northern Massachusetts and southern New Hampshire. Jason was young when he started his family, only 18, but he knew that living in a community like Lowell, MA was not the atmosphere he wanted to raise children in. He likes the opportunities that living in this region of New Hampshire offers – the quality of life, access to the outdoors and the caring atmosphere. Jason owns a home in Franklin, works locally for SEARS, and has seen his children grow up through the Franklin school system. His youngest child is now in high school.

Jason is no stranger to commitment, hard work and giving back to the community. He has coached just about every youth sport he could over that past 8 years, working to give a positive experience not only to his own children, but to other kids in the community as well. Better than 2 years ago, when the Task Force was just getting started, Jason responded to a meeting notice seeking community members to get involved. When the call came out for Task Force members, Jason knew this was something he could help with. He felt that because of his own experiences, he could bring a different perspective to the group. You see, Jason fought his own battles with drugs and alcohol, and worked hard to turn his life around. “I’m not ashamed of where I’ve been,” says Jason, “I am proud of what I have accomplished. I want to see youth succeed and have positive outcomes; I know all too well what can happen when kids go in the wrong direction.”

The role of the Task Force is an important one according to Jason. “It is bringing people together, bringing the community together in new ways to talk about these things. It is important to have everyone on the same page,” he says. He feels strongly that a big part of what needs to happen in substance abuse prevention is changing people’s perceptions. “For example,” says Vezina, “People think that because prescription drugs come from a doctor they are safer, but they can be just as dangerous and just as deadly as illegal drugs when they are abused. The Mayor’s Drug Task Force is working to change these perceptions, and to educate people and that is a very good thing.”

Task Force Coordinator Traci Fowler says Jason is very dedicated and isn't afraid to speak up and engage people. "I know that it is going to take a whole community to changes things, not just 10 people," says Jason. "I'm just a regular guy that wants to help. Everyone seems to know there is a problem," he says, "they all talk about it, but people need to do more than talk."

There are many opportunities – big and small, for involvement. Indeed, if we want to create lasting community change, it takes a village, not just a Task Force. For more information about the Franklin Mayor's Drug Task Force, click on the Drug Task Force icon at [www.franklinnh.org](http://www.franklinnh.org)

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