
Parenting for Prevention

Student Assistance Services Corp., 660 White Plains Road, Tarrytown, New York, 10591, March, 2009

Spring Is Coming



I cannot remember a time that spring will be more welcome than this year. This has been a challenging winter given the uncertainty in the world and the

weather was colder and snowier than it has been in the past few years.

A bright spot in the winter for many of the coalition leaders in Westchester was a trip to Washington, DC for the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) conference. Not only was the weather warm but the conference itself was informative and renewing. We all felt energized and excited when we returned from this trip.

Spring also gives us a sense of renewal and rebirth. Right now we all need that and a more hopeful attitude that we will get through this challenging time. The warmth of the first sunny day, the sight of the first daffodil or the singing of the first robin helps our heart to soar and be more optimistic.

Patricia Murphy Warble, LSCW, CPP, Editor

Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America

Congresswoman Lowey is honored at national conference

In mid-February, coalition leaders from Westchester County traveled to Washington for the 19th annual Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) conference. This conference provides a wonderful opportunity to learn the latest information about trends, new research findings, and concerns.



Westchester Coalition Leaders with Nita Lowey

LR: Bhavana Pahwa, White Plains; Patty Warble, Westchester Coalition for Drug and Alcohol Free Youth; Janet Buchbinder, Mamaroneck; Nita Lowey; Alice De-Normandie, Pelham; Pat Tomassi; Westchester Coalition for Drug and Alcohol Free Youth; Alice Joselow, Ossining; Ellen Morehouse, Student Assistance Services; and Jennifer Myers, Port Chester.

This year the trip to CADCA was special because Congresswoman Nita Lowey, who represents many communities with active coalitions, was being honored by CADCA for her commitment and leadership in the substance abuse prevention field. In addition to the people in the picture, representatives also attended from the Cortlandt, Eastchester, Mt. Vernon, New Rochelle, and Peekskill coalitions. It was an exciting moment and her constituents from Westchester were cheering loudly as she reached the podium to accept the leadership award !!

Once again, one of the primary concerns expressed throughout the CADCA conference was teen use of over-the-counter and prescription drugs to get high. In fact, the first keynote speaker was Congresswoman Mary Bono Mack from California who was elected to fill the seat left vacant by her late husband, Sonny Bono.

She began her presentation by documenting her commitment to helping us receive and keep the funding that enables so many of our Westchester communities to address underage drinking and drug use. She also reported that she would be introducing legislation that day to keep the drinking age at 21.

When she told us that she was also with us at the CADCA conference because she was a mom struggling with a son addicted to prescription drugs, we became even more engaged in her message. The People Magazine issue that was published the week of the conference contained an article about her son's addiction and the challenges their family was facing.

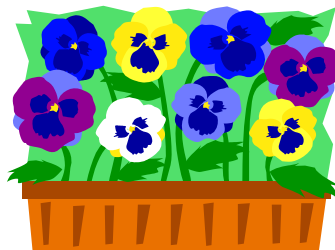
Her late husband was also addicted to prescription drugs. She told us about their experiences and her co-dependency issues. She also said that when she went to her son's rehabilitation center for family week, she unexpectedly met a neighbor who was there with her son because he was also addicted to prescription drugs.

Representative Bono Mack told us that her son said that he thought prescription drugs were "safe" and not as bad as some of the other drugs his friends were using. This is a story that many teens tell when confronted with their addiction to over-the-counter or prescription drugs.

A recently released study by the Partnership For A Drug Free America found that only 24% of teens reported that their parents discussed the risks of prescription drug abuse with them.

The honesty and commitment of Mary Bono Mack was an inspiration to everyone at the conference. Her personal story gave us an insight into the seriousness of this problem in a very special way.

In addition to the concerns about prescription and over-the-counter drugs expressed in the keynote addresses and workshops, it was continually stressed that the longer teens can be kept away from drugs and alcohol, the more likely it is that they will not become addicted to drugs and alcohol. In addition, that their lives will not be negatively impacted by drug and alcohol use.



Drug Facts Chat Day

One of the most interesting workshops at the CADCA conference was entitled *The Real Inside Scoop on What Teens Want to Know About Drug Abuse*. This workshop described an initiative started two years ago by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA).

NIDA held a Drug Facts Chat Day in October 2007 and 2008, a youth-friendly online chat between NIDA scientists and teens. More than 30,000 teens from diverse backgrounds participated in this project and had the opportunity to ask the most knowledgeable scientists in the country their questions about drugs and alcohol.

As would be expected, some of the questions were silly but others were serious and poignant. The NIDA website (<http://www.nida.nih.gov/>) has information about the day and the questions that the students ask most frequently.

The scientists felt that overall teens want facts about drugs and alcohol and that many of the teens did not have correct information. The panelists reported that many of the questions were about which drugs were the most dangerous and how much of a certain drug or drink one could use before they died.

The two Drug Facts Chat Days have been such a great success that NIDA plans to do it again in the fall. Schools can sign up to be

part of this initiative and are accepted on a first come first serve basis. The panelists reported that most schools do it as a health class project and need to have a bank of computers in the school available to the students who are participating.

If your school wants to be part of this day, please monitor the NIDA site so that you can sign up right away. Put Drug Chat Day in their search bar and information will come up about this project. At the moment there is nothing posted yet about the 2009, Drug Chat Day

Pressures on Teens

Gloomy global news, restricted budgets, and a long way to go until summer; it's no wonder parents are feeling stressed. But teens are feeling the strain, too, and have additional stressors to face each day, including the burdens of achieving academic success, the rush of hormones, and the pressure to fit in.

It is important to talk to your teens and provide proper guidance to help them avoid the pitfalls of stress which may, in some cases, lead to drug and/or alcohol abuse as a way to escape. Monitor your teen's behavior and become familiar with issues like depression, anxiety, eating disorders, fighting, gambling, substance abuse, and other harmful changes that might indicate your teen is unable to deal with stress in a healthy way.

But Mom, You Don't Understand!"

Teens sometimes feel that no one understands what they are going through. Although the pressures teens face today are very different from those faced 20 years ago, parents can still be instrumental in the solution.

Demonstrate your interest in communicating with your children, respect their point-of-view, and provide tips on how to manage everyday pressures. Take an active role and learn more about "What Parents Can Do." <http://www.theantidrug.com/advice/teens-today/navigating-the-teen-years/pressures-on-todays-teens.aspx>

Not sure how to put yourself in your teen's shoes while setting clear rules and expectations?

Follow these simple steps:

1. Validate their feelings. Begin conversations by saying, "I understand," and follow through with a solution to help overcome the challenge.
2. Provide real-life examples. Talk about ways in which you were stressed in the past, how you successfully managed it, and lessons you learned.
3. Be a good role model. Model and teach positive stress management and coping skills.
4. Hold them accountable. Let your teens know that they are responsible for their actions - and that there will be consequences for not following the rules, such as a loss of privileges.

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Recent Study Finds Link Between Alcohol-Branded Apparel and Underage Drinking

Teens who own merchandise promoting alcoholic beverages are more likely to start drinking and become binge drinkers, a new study asserts. The study conducted by researchers at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center surveyed 6,522 youths aged 10 to 14 about their drinking behaviors and drinking susceptibility, including peer pressure and other indicators.

The number of these adolescents who owned alcohol-branded merchandise ranged from 11 percent at the 8-month survey to 20 percent at the 24-month survey. The most common products were clothing (64 percent), hats (24 percent) and other items such as jewelry, key chains, shot glasses, posters, and pens. Seventy-five percent of the brands featured were beer. The report is published in the March, 2009 issue of the "Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine".

Results from the Super Bowl Survey

There was a wonderful response to the super bowl survey that was done in early February. Over 300 students took the survey, representing 15 public and private middle and high schools throughout Westchester County.

The Westchester results were the same as the national survey. Students liked the Doritos advertisements the best and the next three favorite commercials were beer commercials.

A nurse from one of the schools who took the survey reported that the faculty used the survey as a "teachable" moment and involved the students in a very thoughtful discussion about the power of the media. The students discussed ways commercials can effect decisions they make about healthy lifestyle choices because of what is depicted in the media.

Upcoming Events

March 30 7:15pm
Louis M Klein Middle School,
Harrison
Peer Pressure In Middle School
Abby Wasserman, MD, St. Vincent's Hospital
Contact: 835-7500 (pre-registration appreciated.)

March 31 7:30pm
Walter Panas High School
Ten Seconds That Can Change Your Life
Bobby Petrocelli
Contact: 257-5869

March 31 7:30pm
Pelham
Parents Who Host, Lose The Most
Contact: 738-0530

April 1 7:00pm
Rye Middle School
Discipline Deficit Disorder: Why Kids of All Ages Need to Hear "No" and Ways Parents Can Say It
Dr David Walsh, PhD
Contact: www.heardinrye.org

April 2 7:00pm
Byram Hills High School
"Self-discipline is twice as strong a predictor of school and career success as intelligence"
Dr. David Walsh, PhD

Contact: 273-9200X4943

April 21 7:00pm
Croton Harmon High School
Parenting Workshop
Anthony Wolf, PhD
Contact: 271-3285

April 22 7:00pm
Peekskill High School
Teens, Parents, Alcohol, Drugs, and the Law,
District Attorney Janet DiFiore
Contact: 737-2550

April 27 5:45pm
New Rochelle High School
Family U
Contact: 632-5000X4728

April 29 9:30am
Katonah Village Library
What Every 21st Century Parent Needs to Know
Debra Haffner, Contact: 234-3227

April 30 7:30pm
Fox Lane High School
Teens, Parents. Alcohol, Drugs and the Law
District Attorney Janet Difiore,
Contact: 241-6064

May 14 TBA
County Center
Parenting for Prevention,
Milton Creagh