



Summer 2008 Issue

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**MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR
2008 MEETINGS**

MAY 22

JUNE 26

AUGUST 28

8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

**District 207 Admin. Board Room
(at Maine South High School)
1131 S. Dee Rd., Park Ridge**

Member of:



Maine Source

Mission: A collaborative community effort to increase overall community capacity for advocacy, education, guidance, and resources for families to promote drug- and alcohol-free youth

Does Your Teen's Energy Drink Contain Alcohol? Find Out at Des Plaines Town Hall Meeting, May 6

What will they pull next? How about alcoholic drinks packaged to look like energy drinks to attract teens and make enforcement difficult? Find out the facts at the Des Plaines Town Hall Meeting on Underage Drinking at 7 p.m. on May 6 in the Council Chambers at Des Plaines City Hall, 1420 Miner Street.

This meeting is one of 58 being organized across the state by the Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Community Health and Prevention. It is sponsored by Maine Community Youth Assistance Foundation (MCYAF), the Illinois Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Association, and the Des Plaines Police Department.

We will discuss the new alcoholic drinks that look like energy drinks. According to James Mosher, Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation, "Alcohol producers are taking advantage of the popularity of non-alcoholic energy drinks to sell their products to youth. They package their products so that they are

indistinguishable from non-alcoholic energy drinks, confusing consumers, retailers, parents, law enforcement officers, & others who can't tell which drinks contain alcohol and which do not."

We will also discuss how to meet the needs of Des Plaines residents for prevention, treatment and recovery in today's broken healthcare system and what we can do to keep drugs and alcohol from threatening our community in the first place.

"We hope parents will join other residents, law enforcement professionals, public officials, and service providers, to share your views and find out how you make an impact in our community," says Margaret Polovchak, MCYAF's executive director. "You'll learn about laws that affect both adults and drinking teens, about the new education campaign being launched by the Des Plaines Police, and how to beat deceptive labeling and ID which energy drinks contain alcohol." To register for this free event, call MCYAF at (847) 696-1570 x312.

Marijuana: Increased Use, Increased Risk

Many parents are surprised to learn that teens use marijuana more than ecstasy, cocaine, heroin and all other illicit drugs combined. In fact, among kids who use drugs, nearly 60 percent use marijuana only. And today's marijuana is much stronger and more destructive than the Woodstock generation's. In addition to the cognitive and physical reactions that impair academic, sports and driving performance, marijuana's effects on the lungs are equivalent to smoking 22 cigarettes. What's more, marijuana, like alcohol, is a "gateway" drug: Teens who, sober, never intend to try heroin, cocaine or ecstasy, do so when high on alcohol or marijuana.

A recent study by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University in New York found that one in four 9th grade girls who were sexually active reported using alcohol or drugs at the time they last had sex. With marijuana by far the most widely used illicit drug among teens

today, parents of teen girls should take note of the widely underestimated risks of using marijuana.

Marijuana and alcohol can cloud judgment and decision-making, increasing girls' vulnerability to sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy. In fact, one study found that teens who have used marijuana are four times more likely to have gotten pregnant or to have gotten someone pregnant than teens who have never smoked pot. In addition, girls under the influence are likelier to find themselves in situations where their own wishes are ignored. At any age, girls who want to freely choose what happens to them need to stay clear of marijuana as well as alcohol.

What can parents do? Be aware of the warning signs: Bloodshot eyes or clothes that smell of smoke; isolation, depression, fatigue or anxiety; decline in school performance or attendance; change in sleeping or eating habits; and use of incense or room deodorizer. And warn your teens about the risks of using marijuana as well as alcohol. The sooner, the better: Statistics show that 16.5% of 9th grade

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Marijuana: Increased Risk—*cont'd from page 1*

girls and more than 20% of 12th grade girls report marijuana use in the past month.

Talk to your kids about how taking drugs puts them in risky situations and may lead to decisions they will later regret – or even situations where they won't be able to make the decision, if things get out of hand and they're impaired can let your daughters and sons know that in your household there is a firm rule of no marijuana or other drug use, and that there are clear consequences if the rule is broken. Perhaps most

importantly, parents should stay involved in their kids' lives. Know who she's with, what she's doing, where your teen is and when she'll be home. Ask who, what, where, when. Keep the lines of communication open. It may be your child's lifeline. For more information, visit www.theantidrug.com, the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign's online parenting resource. The site also offers a brochure called "Keeping Your Kids Drug-Free: A How-To Guide for Parents and Caregivers." The brochure can also be ordered by calling 1-800-788-2800.

What Do Teens Drink When Out with Friends?

The ads show one thing, but what do teens really drink? There's good news in the most recent annual Use and Perception Survey of students which asks them about their own use or non-use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs and about their perception of what other students in their school do.

Students were asked, "When hanging out or socializing with friends, what do you typically drink?" Ninety percent (90%) of students said they drink something other than alcohol. However, their perception was that "the typical student" is drinking alcohol.

So, what are students drinking when hanging out with friends? This is what they told us: 47% drink pop/soda, 21% drink bottled water, 9% drink sports drinks, 3% drink coffee, 3% drink juice, 3% drink tea, 3% drink other unspecified drinks, and 1% drink milk.

When having conversations with your teens, find out what their perception is of teen alcohol use at their school and talk about what is real and what is perception.

The Who Knew? project promotes the positive, healthy behaviors of most Maine Township High School students. For more information on this project, please contact Tricia Williams at socialnorms@sbcglobal.net or 847-696-1570 x356.

Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment Saves More than It Costs

We all know alcohol and other drugs cause enormous suffering and damage to individuals, families and communities. Yet Illinois spends less than one-tenth of 1% of its budget on substance abuse prevention and treatment. In contrast, Illinois spends 12% of its budget, nearly \$3 billion, dealing with the consequences of substance abuse: increased crime, domestic violence, emergency department expenditures, health insurance premiums, etc.

- Recent data show that the publicly-funded substance abuse treatment system serves less than 7% of the need and private insurance, where it exists at all, has been reduced to a scant level. Rising costs of maintaining day-to-day operations forces many providers to place people in need of treatment on waiting lists. Nearly 6,500 Illinois citizens are there right now, when every day counts.

With all the expenses the state is coping with, why should we make substance abuse prevention and treatment a priority? Because not doing so costs even more. For every dollar invested in prevention services, Illinois saves up to \$10 in treatment costs. For every dollar spent on treatment, Illinois saves \$7 on primary and emergency healthcare costs, criminal justice costs, and child welfare expenses. The average cost to incarcerate one individual for one year is approx. \$20,000. By comparison, the average cost to provide one course of substance abuse treatment for one individual is \$2,700.

What can citizens do? Contact their Illinois elected officials to support SB 2886, which would increase funding for substance abuse services. It would provide \$17.5 million for a six percent (6%) cost of doing business (CODB) increase for prevention and treatment providers, \$20.6 million to eliminate the statewide substance abuse treatment waiting list, and \$3.4 million to expand capacity in the substance abuse prevention system.

We appreciate your interest in the fight to protect our youth and provide them the quality of life they deserve. If you are interested in making a financial or in-kind donation or supporting our efforts by volunteering your time and talent, please contact us. You can visit us at www.mcyaf.com.

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