



"Building a Community Without Drugs"

Newsletter - May 2005

## Don't Let Alcohol or Marijuana Steal Your Child/Teen's Summer

### Alcohol and Youth Facts

**Alcohol is a drug. It alters your mind, body and emotions. It is also our nation's largest youth drug problem, killing 6.5 times as many young people as all illicit drugs combined**

- Alcohol is a leading cause of death among youth, particularly teenagers. It contributes substantially to adolescent motor vehicle crashes, other traumatic injuries, suicide, date rape, and family and school problems.
- Every day, on average, 11,318 American youth (12 to 20 years of age) try alcohol for the first time, compared with 6,488 for marijuana; 2,786 for cocaine; and 386 for heroin.
- Alcohol is by far the most used and abused drug among America's teenagers. According to a national survey, nearly one third (31.5%) of all high school students reported hazardous drinking (5+ drinks in one setting) during the 30 days preceding the survey.
- Young people who begin drinking before age 15 are four times more likely to develop alcoholism than those who begin drinking at 21.
- 1,400 (3.84 a day) college students in the U.S. are killed each year as a result of alcohol-related injuries.  
Source: Marin Institute
- As a parent or caregiver, you play a vital role in influencing your child. You serve as a role model on the use of alcohol, control the availability of alcohol in your home, and help set your child's expectations concerning drinking behaviors.
- Get to know your children's friends and discuss ways your children can avoid drinking when they are feeling pressured by peers.
- Talk to other parents about ways to send a consistent, clear message that underage drinking is not acceptable behavior or a "rite of passage."
- Encourage your children to participate in supervised activities and events that are challenging, fun, and alcohol free.
- Learn the warning signs that indicate your children may be drinking and act promptly to get help.
- Make sure you're home for all your children's parties and be sure those parties are alcohol free.  
Source: Excerpted from Leadership to Keep Children Alcohol Free

## Don't Let Your Teen Go To Pot

Any time of the year can be risky when it comes to teens and marijuana but the warm weather months may be the worst. Forty percent more teens try marijuana for the first time during these months than at any other time of the year. The National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign offers a checklist to help parents reduce the risk:

1. **Set rules:** Have you set clear rules and let your teen know that marijuana use is unacceptable? Two-thirds of kids say that upsetting their parents or losing the respect of family and friends is one of the main reasons they don't use drugs. Set limits with clear consequences for breaking them.
2. **Understand and communicate:** Have you talked to your teen in the past month about the harmful physical, mental and social effects of illicit drugs on young users? Young people who learn about the risks of drugs at home are up to 50 percent less likely to try drugs than their peers who learn nothing from their parents.
3. **Monitor your teen's activities and behaviors:** Have you checked to see where your teen is, who he is with and what he is doing? Teens not regularly monitored are four times more likely to use drugs.
4. **Engage your teen in vacation activities:** Have you helped plan activities to keep your teen busy? Research shows that teens who are involved in constructive and adult-supervised activities are less likely to use drugs.
5. **Reserve time for family:** Have you planned a family activity with your teen in the coming weeks, such as going to the movies, taking a walk or sharing a meal? Teens who have a close relationship with their parents are much less likely to drink, take drugs or have sex. Source: [www.TheAntiDrug.com](http://www.TheAntiDrug.com)