

March 2006



Prevention Perspective

Self-Medication... The Norm for Some Young Adults

A growing number of young Americans are self-medicating with various prescription drugs, whether or not the drugs were actually prescribed to them. Some use the ADHD drug Ritalin as a stimulant when they need an after-work boost before a night on the town; others give tranquilizers like Ativan to friends based on a distinctly nonprofessional diagnosis of “anxiety disorder.”

New York resident Katherine K., who did not want her full name used, says she gave Ativan to a friend after trading some Vicodin to her boyfriend for the pills. “I acquire quite a few medications and then dispense them to my friends as needed; I usually know what I’m talking about,” she said. Such self-medication is becoming common practice among young people in their 20s and 30s, who see the value in antidepressants and other medications but are skeptical of doctors’ exclusive right to prescribe the drugs.

Many find the drugs on the Internet; others lie to doctors to get the drugs they want. In many cases, experts say, such

abuse of prescription drugs differs from use of substances like marijuana or cocaine in that users are often looking to feel better, not get high. Users are often very familiar with the drugs they take, having been prescribed medications for ADHD, depressions, or other problems from their teenage years forward. But health experts worry that such users may not be aware of problems caused by drug interaction, dosage limitations, and other risks.

“There’s this increasingly widespread attitude that we are our own best pharmacists,” said Bessie Oster, director of Facts on Tap, a prevention program for college students. “You’ll take something, and if it’s not quite right, you’ll take a little more or a little less, and there’s no notion that you need a doctor to do that.” Many self-medicators say they feel empowered by their choices and deny that their behavior is abusive or unethical. “It’s not like we’re passing out Oxycontin, crushing it up or snorting it,” said Katherine. “I don’t think it’s unethical when I have the medication that someone clearly needs to make them feel better to give them a pill or two.”

Teens Continue to Obtain Alcohol from Adults at House Parties

The American Medical Association (AMA), in an August 2005 nationwide poll of teens aged 13-18, found that teens can easily access alcohol from their homes, from adults at house parties, or from their own parents. The AMA highlights the need for parents to understand the health risks associated with alcohol use and the importance of policies that restrict access to minors. Highlights from this report included:

- 50% of teens reported having obtained alcohol.
- 66.6% reported it was easy to obtain alcohol from their homes without their parents knowledge.
- 33.3% reported it was easy to knowingly obtain alcohol from their parents.
- 25% attended a party where minors were drinking in front of parents.

“From a public standpoint, these findings are frankly disturbing...it is alarming to know that legal-age adults, even parents, are supplying the alcohol,” commented J. Edward Hill, MD, President of AMA. The AMA also polled parents and found that 25% of parents with children aged 12-20 agree that teens should be able to drink at home with their parents present.

By allowing underage drinking, parents send the wrong message to teens. “Injuries and car accidents after such parent-hosted parties remind us that no parent can completely control the actions of intoxicated youth, during or after a party. And the message children hear is that drinking illegally is okay,” said Dr. Hill.



“Top Secret”
Clues Inside!

A Message from Brad Finn, Executive Director

There just isn't time during the course of the year when projects, programming and activities of the agency have a lull period. This high level of intensity is a result of the true and valid immediacy to the preventative work we do.



Some truths about prevention are: the population is always changing, the drugs are forever expanding in effects, and resurfacing in varying forms. Budgets fluctuate annually and the community suffers losses and

negative consequences in spite of everyone's best efforts. It seems, at times, the only consistency is the staff's caring desire to positively impact the lives of those with whom they work.

If you have ever labored over a jigsaw puzzle, you understand one element of prevention—hard concentrated work only magnifies the frustration when a few pieces are missing. Our puzzle is the community, and when we find a piece to finish one element, we see pieces missing in other areas. The missing pieces have a high cost to the individuals and families, which ultimately cost our towns and villages.

We can't do it without your help. YOU can provide the following missing pieces by: 1) acknowledging a young adult in the community by saying hi to them; 2) providing them with opportunities to meaningfully participate in positive ways; and 3) recognizing them for their accomplishments and achievements.



Live Auction Items!

*A week at the Marriott Grande Vista Hotel in
Orlando, Florida (Value \$2,000)*

Diamond Pendant Necklace (Value \$2,000)

Hermle Chiming Mantle Clock (Value \$659)

"Sherlock Holmes" Package

"Agatha Christie" Package

Library Open House

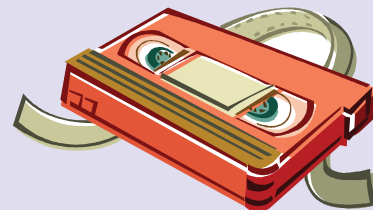
(Ribbon Cutting Ceremony)

**Friday, April 7,
2006**

8:30 a.m.—10:00 a.m.

**9:30 a.m.—Presentation by David Lasda,
Board of Directors President**

Watch for your postcard coming soon!



April is Alcohol Awareness Month

Did you know these facts?

- ⇒ Alcohol is the most frequently used drug by high school seniors, and its use appears to be increasing along with the use of tobacco and marijuana.
- ⇒ High school students lack essential knowledge about alcohol and its effects. Nationwide, an estimated 5.6 million junior and senior high school students are unsure of the legal age to purchase alcohol; one-third do not understand the intoxicating effects of alcohol; and more than 2.6 million do not know that a person can die from an overdose of alcohol. A projected 259,000 students think that wine coolers or beer cannot get you drunk, cannot make you sick, or cannot do as much harm as other beverages.
- ⇒ Due to heavy or binge drinking, nearly one out of every five teenagers (16%) has experienced "black outs," after which they could not remember what happened the previous evening.
- ⇒ Alcohol is a factor in the four leading causes of death among persons ages 10 to 24: motor-vehicle crashes, unintentional injuries, homicide, and suicide.
- ⇒ Girls are beginning to drink at younger ages. In the 1960's, 7% of 10-to-14-year-old females used alcohol; by the early 1990's, that figure had risen to 31%.
- ⇒ More than 67% of young people who start drinking before the age of 15 will try an illicit drug. Children who drink are 7.5 times more likely to use any illicit drug, more than 22 times more likely to use marijuana, and 50 times more likely to use cocaine than children who never drank.
- ⇒ Of the estimated 5.4 million junior and high school students who have ever consumed five or more drinks in a row, 39% say they drink alone; 58% drink when they are upset; 30% drink when they are bored; and 37% drink to feel high.

**Feel free to contact us at:
editor@preventionnetwork.info**

Internet Alert: About MySpace

You may not have heard about the “secret” society called MySpace. Almost everyone in school has a MySpace page that lists everything about themselves. Chances are your child has been encouraged to create one. It’s a fun way to share information about yourself and post pictures that can be dangerous for kids, especially teens.

All that is required to get a MySpace page is an email address to sign up and proof stating that you are at least 14 years of age. Most kids just say they are 14 even if they aren’t. MySpace will discontinue the service if they find out they aren’t 14 years of age.

Most kids make their page private where only friends they designate are allowed to see their page. Although this is safer than letting anyone see it; it also makes it difficult for parents to keep track of what they are posting. Most kids don’t want their parents to see what they are posting.

MySpace makes it easy to post all about you. The first thing you do is post a profile with your name, town, interest, school, sexual orientation, books and movies you like, who your heroes are and much more. Your child can easily put everything about themselves online.

Your child can post enough information about themselves to be abducted. An online predator looking at your child’s page has enough information to arrive at your door or the playground your child frequents. You must teach your child the dangers of posting too much information, and you must follow up to make sure they aren’t posting too much information.

Another problem is that children tend to post things that should never be put in print. They say things like: they want to “burn down the school” or they want to “kill so-and-so”, not literally meaning it. Threats like that could be taken seriously, though. Because MySpace is for kids over 14 years of age, there is sexually explicit information on the site posted by other

users; and the profile questions users create are geared towards adults.

Protect Your Child! The main safety rule is that they must not post too much identifying information especially their last name. If your child wants to have a MySpace page, you need to have access to it. When you explain to them that there are very real dangers, you can make the rule that if they want to use the computer, they will have to share the access information. If you cannot do this, you can install monitoring software to see what sites they are going to. You can also install filtering software that will stop them from visiting the site.

For other safety information, you can visit www.wiredsafety.org.

Did you get your “Top Secret” Invitation in the mail yet?

Some Silent Auction “Clues”...

- ◆ *Car Detailing*
- ◆ *Bed & Breakfast*
- ◆ *Estate Jewelry ~ 14Kt. Yellow gold princess style ring*
- ◆ *Fine Art Print of Chittenango Falls signed by John Francis McCarthy*
- ◆ *Remote Car Starter*
- ◆ *Signed SU Football and Basketball*
- ◆ *Bone Fish Restaurant Gift Certificate*
- ◆ *Francesca’s Cucina Gift Certificate*
- ◆ *L’Adour Restaurant Gift Certificate*
- ◆ *Matted and Framed posters from the Syracuse Poster Project*
- ◆ *Family Fun Parks Package*

...will your key be the lucky one to unlock the treasure chest that evening??



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- Faith Mary Gault, Program Coordinator**
- David Sturgeon, Business Manager**

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***Committed to Addictions
Awareness since 1949***

“Top Secret” event on April 21, 2006

Please join

Honorary Chair Rick Trunfio

First Chief Assistant District Attorney

and

Master of Ceremonies Doug Logan

in a “Top Secret” evening of fun at the
Oncenter Ballroom.

Friday, April 21, 2006

6:30 p.m. to Midnight

Wearing Business Casual

Dance to the tunes of
“Private Eye”

6:30: Reception

Silent Auction

7:30: Dinner

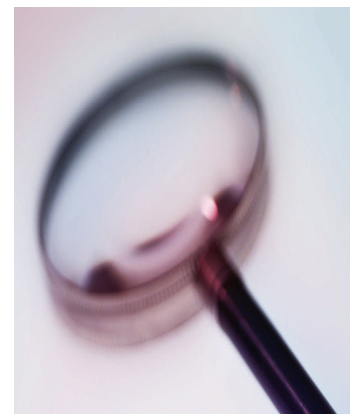
Live Auction

9:00—12:00 Midnight

Dancing

\$100 per person

\$800 per table



For invitations or reservations,
please call us at 471-1359.