

## • Support Your Community

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### Parents Be Aware

Another school year is well on its way and your children are adapting to new teachers, new classmates, and possibly to new schools. Transition years can be a difficult time for youth. They will be dealing with new pressures and may not be equipped with the skills and tools to deal with them. Whether these influences are coming from television, rock videos, peers or society, we need to keep in mind that for our youth, the influences are real. Parents, teachers, coaches and other adults can help reduce the risk of teens becoming involved with drugs by encouraging strong protective factors to help them cope with pressure. The following are some tips for adults who want to have an impact on "Helping Keep Kids Drug Free":

- **Feeling secure and loved.** Teens need to feel that others, especially their parents and other responsible adults, love and care for them and think they are worthwhile.
- **Having solid values.** Parents have the job of passing on values to their children. Solid values are a strong protective factor against heavy involvement with drugs.
- **Understanding and living within rules.** Families can set consistent rules, and follow them.
- **Recognizing the power of personal choice and accountability.** Teens need to learn that their choices have consequences. But, they are not puppets. They have power to choose.
- **Being involved in school.** Teens who enjoy school are at less risk of all sorts of problems. Enjoying school does not have to mean getting all A's.

- **Having responsible adults in their lives with whom they can talk honestly.** Teens need adults who can give them advice and show confidence in them.
- **Having positive outlets for creativity.** Teens need to be challenged. Every teen can find some area to provide an outlet that brings fulfillment. Sports, music, arts, reading, hobbies, service, all provide opportunities.

### *Parents as Preventors™*

In October, the Queen Charlotte Islands were host to our *Parents as Preventors™* workshops. Alcohol-Drug Education Service Executive Director, Judi Lalonde, visited communities around the island delivering a drug prevention message to small but very enthusiastic crowds. Though the towns' populations are modest, their commitment to 'keeping their kids drug free' is powerful. Upon entering the town of Skidegate, a large imposing road sign warns, "If you're peddling drugs keep peddling past Skidegate". Just up the road from that, another informs passers-by, "Keep our children alive, report drug dealers".

The workshops were organized by Agnes L. Mathers Elementary PAC in Sandspit and sponsored with assistance from Gwaii Trust.

In November, *Parents as Preventors™* will travel to Campbell River where Alcohol-Drug Education Service has partnered with schools and community groups in past years to provide comprehensive drug prevention programs and policies to protect their youth from the harms associated with drugs.

To sponsor a *Parents as Preventors™* workshop in your community, contact our office or visit our website for more information.

### What's New

Beginning January 2007, Alcohol-Drug Education Service will be producing 2 bi-monthly newsletters for members; one specifically for parents and grandparents, and the other for teachers and other professionals working in the field of drug prevention.

For a minimal cost of only \$20/year (individuals) and \$50/year (schools & organizations), members will receive the latest research, valuable tips, creative lessons and useful skills/tools for "helping keep kids drug free". To be added to our mail (or email) list, email us at [info@ades.bc.ca](mailto:info@ades.bc.ca) to register or call the office at 604-944-4155.

### drugfacts.ca

The Alcohol-Drug Education Service is proud to launch its new website for youth, [drugfacts.ca](http://drugfacts.ca).

With funding from the National Crime Prevention Centre and members like you, this new site will provide youth across BC (and beyond) with the latest drug facts. The site will also provide a forum where students can speak their minds and receive feedback from other youth. There will be a creative section where writers can express themselves through poetry, song, stories and more. The "drugfacts.ca" site is ever changing and we value your opinions and comments.

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## Teen Parties—Parents Clueless!

According to a survey by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, conducted March 2006, parents' understanding of what goes on at teen parties is *way out of sync*.

The 11th annual survey of teenagers and parents finds that half of teens who attend parties say alcohol, drugs or both are available, but 80% of parents believe their teens attend substance-free parties. And although parental supervision at parties deters some drug use, it does not guarantee kids won't sneak alcohol and drugs, the survey shows. While 99% of parents say they would not be willing to serve alcohol at their teen's party, 28% of teens say they have been at supervised parties where alcohol is available.

As my eldest son makes the move from middle school to high school, I am more aware than ever just how these transition years are the time when the risk of alcohol and other drug abuse rises dramatically. According to the survey, 14-year-olds are four times more likely to be offered prescription drugs and three times more likely to be offered Ecstasy or marijuana than 13-year-olds.

Regardless of student's age, school or country, the reality is parents need to become more aware of what their children are doing. If teen parties are a reality in your family, there are things parents can do to ensure safety and control over parties.

1. Be there – check often.
2. Limit attendance-know who your child is inviting.
3. Make clear rules about alcohol and other drugs.
4. Discuss with teens the responsibility of hosting a party.
5. Discuss the things that can go wrong and ways to deal with problems.
6. Have plenty of food, drinks and activities available to youth.

Remember, if you are hosting a teen party in your home, you are liable for anything that goes wrong. Providing alcohol to minors is against the law – even if their parents give them permission! I've heard parents comment – "If we don't let them drink here, they'll go elsewhere to do it." If we assume our kids are going to use alcohol before they are 19, we are setting the bar very low. Instead, try communicating that you hope and expect they will not get involved with alcohol or other drugs and make sure the lines of communication are always open on the subject.

(Stay tuned for Part 2)

### OUT OF SYNC

Parents and teens have different perceptions of what goes on at parties:

- 80% of parents say: Neither alcohol nor marijuana is available at teen parties.
- 50% of teenagers say: Alcohol, drugs or both are available at teen parties.
- 98% of parents say: Parents are normally present at teen parties at their home.
- 33% of teenagers say: Parents are rarely or never at teen parties.

Source: Telephone survey for the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, conducted March 9 to April 30 of 1,297 12- to 17-year-olds, and 562 parents. Margins of error: ±3 percentage points for teens, ±4 percentage points for parents.

## Tobacco Free Sports

Tobacco Free Sports is an international initiative which aims to reduce the harm of tobacco by addressing the relationship between tobacco use and sport. **Alcohol Drug Education Service** has been awarded the contract, through the Ministry of Health, Tobacco Control Programs, to coordinate Tobacco Free Sports initiatives for the province. The 5 provincial Health Authorities, Pacific Sport BC and the Ministry of Health will join **Alcohol Drug Education Service** to increase the number of sporting organizations and facilities with tobacco-free sport policies in the years leading to the 2010 Olympics by:

1. **Tobacco-Free Policy**: developing policy materials and pledge systems to assist sports and recreational organizations in creating tobacco-free policies
2. **Tobacco-Free Resources**: developing manuals and training materials to promote policy and prevention messaging around tobacco-free sports

3. **Winning Role Models and Messages**: working with high profile athletes, minor sport athletes, coaches, leaders and other stakeholders to ensure accuracy and engagement in messaging and other aspects of program delivery.
4. **Evaluating to Stay on Track**: developing and implementing a program evaluation framework to ensure positive outcomes

As the 2010 Olympic Games approach, British Columbia is in the unique position to showcase to the world that it is the healthiest jurisdiction to ever host the Olympics, by strengthening its position on tobacco through initiatives like Tobacco-Free Sports. For more information visit [www.tobaccofreesports.ca](http://www.tobaccofreesports.ca). (website to be launched by January 2007)



Please let us know if there are any drug prevention activities or events being hosted in your school or community and we will share your story with other interested groups across the province.

## National Addictions Awareness Week

**NAAW**, which runs every year during the 3<sup>rd</sup> week in November, is an opportunity for all to become more aware of the dangers and harms associated with alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Schools and communities across the province will be planning activities and initiating campaigns to promote drug free lifestyles. In our next edition, we will highlight some of the stories and successes from around the province. If you would like to share your organization's **NAAW** initiatives, please send your stories and photos to our office before December 1.

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