



What's New For Schools

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG DEPENDENCE OF MIDDLESEX COUNTY, INC.
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More Teens Than Ever are Putting Themselves at Risk During Spring Break

By Dena Charbonneau, MSW, LSW, CPS

According to travel industry experts, approximately one in seven high school students under the age of 18 take unsupervised trips during Spring Break. Teens can even be at risk when they stay at home during break. Unsupervised time, money to spend, and peer pressure to "let loose" can be a recipe for risky behaviors, including drug use. More teens start using marijuana, cigarettes, and alcohol for the first time between the spring and summer months - prime time for teens on Spring Break and time unsupervised by parents or teachers than any other time of the year. The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy's Media Campaign needs your help to alert parents in your community about the dangers associated with Spring Break.

While many people associate Spring Break with college age kids, the Media Campaign is urging parents of high school teens to know the risks associated with this time of year, before they agree to send their child on unsupervised holidays.



We are calling on parents to take action during this period, whether their teen is staying home, or going away on a Spring Break trip. Share this checklist with parents in your community. It offers three tips on keeping teens safe during Spring Break:

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SET RULES, especially no drinking or drugs

- Be clear and specific about your expectations. Spring Break should not mean a break from responsibility.
- Talk candidly about the risks of drug use and drinking, including alcohol poisoning, violence, sexually transmitted infections, and sexual assault.

PREPARE your teen

- Give teens tips on how to protect themselves, such as using a buddy system to watch out for each other.
- Walk through different scenarios and discuss how to handle pressures, including offers of drugs or alcohol and other risky situations.

KEEP MONITORING

- Know your teen’s itinerary and where he/she is staying.
- If they are staying home, know how they spend their unsupervised time.
- Ask questions. Require a daily check-in via cell phone and make sure your teen is reachable. Make sure to have cell phone numbers for your teen’s friends and check in with them as necessary too.
- Network with and connect with other parents to confirm plans and coordinate ground rules.

More Spring Break tips and information are available at: www.TheAntiDrug.com/springbreak.

“It’s important that parents resist the impulse to just do what their teen wants,” said Dr. Phillippe Cunningham, associate professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the Medical University of South Carolina, Family Services Research Center. “You’re the parent. You are not alone if you’re uncomfortable sending your teen on a week vacation to Cancun. This just shows that your parental instincts are intact. Generally, adult



supervision is inadequate during Spring Break trips. Research is clear, parental monitoring is a key parenting tool that can reduce youth risky behavior. Rely on your parental judgment, ask questions, and talk to other parents. Put a stop to the trip if you are uneasy with the amount of adult supervision or structure that will be provided. An alternative would be a community service project.”

Research shows that parents are a powerful deterrent to drug or alcohol use, even when teens are far from home. The majority of teens say the greatest risk in using marijuana is upsetting their parents or losing the respect of friends and families.

For more advice on preparing your teen for a safe Spring Break, and free resources to help parents raise healthy, safe and drug-free teens, visit www.TheAntiDrug.com.

NCADD of Middlesex County, Inc. is a private, non-profit community-based health organization serving Middlesex County. Our mission is to promote the health and well-being of individuals and communities of Middlesex County through the reduction or elimination of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use problems.

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Meet The Educator - Jennifer Smith

By Dena Charbonneau, MSW, LSW, CPS

In each issue of What's New For Schools, we would like to introduce you to the Educators who work at NCADD of Middlesex County, Inc. These individuals dedicate their professional careers to deliver prevention programs to all members of the community. From kindergartners through our older adult population. Many of you may have seen these educators walking the halls of your schools, delivering curriculum or presenting to your colleagues. So take a moment while we introduce you to this month's featured educator.



Jennifer Smith comes from a broad educational and work background, which began in May 1997, when she earned an associate degree in radio

broadcasting from Mercer County Community College. After her graduation, Jennifer was employed as a Production Assistant and Board Operator at WWFM 89.1 FM, where she operated technical equipment and produced public service announcements and promotional spots for airplay.

Jennifer is also a graduate of The College of New Jersey, where she obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication Studies. She graduated with honors and is a member of Phi Theta Kappa, the National Honor Society for Communications Majors. Jennifer began working at Yecies Associates, Inc., a public relations firm in

Manhattan, in 2000. While employed there, she wrote press releases and secured media coverage for top consumer products, such as Nabisco's Oreo Cookies, Edy's/Dreyer's Dreamery Ice Cream, and Jiffy Lube.

In November 2001, Jennifer took a risk and opted for a change in career. She came to work at NCADD of Middlesex County, Inc.

Initially, she was the Communities Against Tobacco (CAT) Coordinator/Public Health Educator. In that role, she planned and organized smoke-free events such as a 5K county walk, persuaded over 20 parks to voluntarily go smoke-free, and worked with New Brunswick Corrugated Packaging Industry to write and implement a 100% smoke-free workplace policy.

Jennifer, who is also a Certified Prevention Specialist (CPS), decided to leave her roll as the CAT Coordinator to work with younger members of our community. In 2004, she became a Prevention Educator for the agency. As a Prevention Educator, she prepares and presents primary prevention education programs for elementary and middle schools throughout Middlesex County. One such program is *Footprints for Life™*, a program that she helped to create.

In January, after much hard work, Jennifer completed her Masters in Public Health (MPH) for Health Education and Behavioral Science (HEBS) at the University of Medicine and Dentistry (UMDNJ) School of Public Health. It's Jennifer's thirst for knowledge and dedication to her own education that makes her a wonderful educator whom teachers welcome into their classrooms and students admire.

2008 Legislative Event Slated for April 29th.

The 2008 Legislative Event will take place on Tuesday, April 29th at Crossroads Theater in New Brunswick.



This year's event is titled "Underage

Drinking in Our Communities - A Focus on Solutions" and will feature the combined efforts of the Somerset Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependency as well as NCADD of Middlesex County, Inc.

The event is sponsored by centraljerseymoms.com in partnership with The Home News Tribune and the Courier News newspapers and The Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy.



This is a FREE community event

featuring a light dinner reception, panel discussion, a question and answer session as well as door prizes. The public is encouraged to come and learn about the problem of youth alcohol abuse and creative solutions employed by area communities. A panel of experts will provide relevant information about this important and timely topic and how we can all work together for our youth.

For more information or to register, call us at 732-254-3344. You can also register on-line at ncadd-middlesex.org/2008-legislative-event/

Children Need Help Too!

Children in families experiencing alcohol or drug abuse need attention, guidance and support. They may be growing up in homes in which the problems are either denied or covered up.

These children need to have their experiences validated. They also need safe, reliable adults in whom to confide and who will support them, reassure them, and provide them with appropriate help for their age. They need to have fun and just be kids.

Families with alcohol and drug problems usually have high levels of stress and confusion. High stress family environments are a risk factor for early and dangerous substance use, as well as mental and physical health problems.

It is important to talk honestly with children about what is happening in the family and to help them express their concerns and feelings. Children need to trust the adults in their lives and to believe that they will support them.

Children living with alcohol or drug abuse in the family can benefit from participating in educational support groups in their school student assistance programs. Those age 11 and older can join Alateen groups, which meet in community settings and provide healthy connections with others coping with similar issues. Being associated with the activities of a faith community can also help.

For More Information contact:

- NCADD of Middlesex County, Inc.
732-254-3344
- SAMHSA's National Helpline
1-800-662-HELP
- National Association for Children of Alcoholics
www.nacoa.org

