



What's New For Schools

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG DEPENDENCE OF MIDDLESEX COUNTY, INC.

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Media Literacy Monday

By Dena Charbonneau, MSW, LSW, CPS

As families gather to watch Super Bowl XLI on February 4, 2007, the amount of beer commercials served by advertisers during the big game could leave young football fans drunk on double messages. There are roughly 60 commercials (not counting those shown pre-game and pre-kickoff) sold during the Super Bowl. Last year, Budweiser bought ten of them. The average price for one of those 30-second advertising slots is \$2.5 million! Although teachers, parents, and other adults tell youth not to drink, they are bombarded with beer commercials every time they turn on the television.

A study by the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth (CAMY) shows that teens in the United States see more television commercials for alcohol than for jeans, sneakers, or other teen products. Not surprisingly, a poll conducted just after last year's Super Bowl found that the four favorite ads among viewers under 17 years old were Bud and Bud Light commercials. In addition, 56 percent of students in grades 5 through 12 say that alcohol ads encourage them to drink. As a result, beer companies make \$5 billion a year from underage drinking.

The public has the misconception that alcohol is a safe drug. Some parents would actually rather see their kids drink than

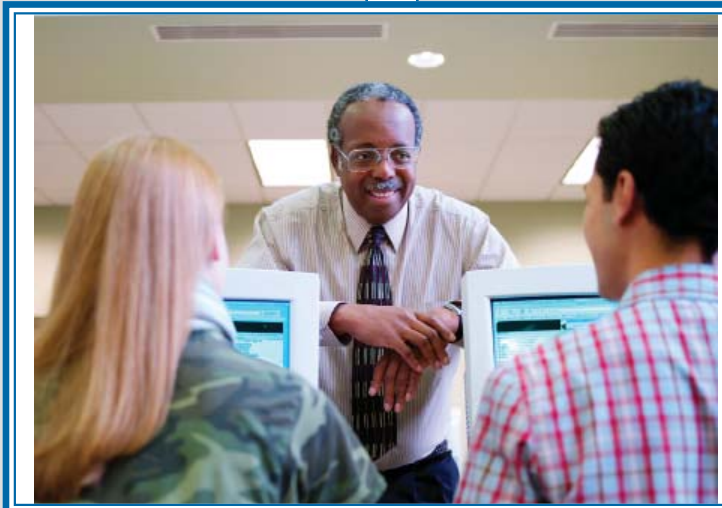
do other drugs. However, due to newer technologies to measure brain function and thinking abilities, we know that alcohol has more severe effects on youth than adults. Youth who drank alcohol 100 times use fewer strategies to learn new information and remember less - about 10 percent less - than youth who don't drink alcohol.

While young people probably won't be a majority of the Super Bowl's audience, many will be watching. The Super Bowl is seen by an estimated 40 percent of all children in the United States. These young sports fans will see ads for alcoholic beverages that portray alcohol as a normal part of life and

what youth need to do to fit in. Therefore, February 4 offers a golden opportunity for parents, teachers, and other adults to show concern over young people's exposure to alcohol advertising and to take action against underage drinking. As educators, you have the opportunity to do media literacy with your students: Pick apart commercials with your students.

Help them figure out what the alcoholic beverage industry is trying to do.

The Action Coalition for Media Education (ACME) is available to assist educators. ACME provides lesson plans that analyze advertisements and address critical thinking skills and alcohol prevention information relevant to middle school aged children. For more information, visit www.acmecoalition.org.



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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. Tax deductible contributions may be made to:

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New Sobering Facts on Youth Drug Use

By Linda Surks, BA, APS, Coalition Coordinator

The latest federal report on childhood drug use is a good news-bad news affair: Kids are using fewer illegal drugs but are increasing their abuse of prescription and over-the-counter medications. Illegal drug use is down 23 percent in five years, but the abuse of legal drugs remains relatively high. About one in 14 high school seniors said they took cough medicines containing dextromethorphan recreationally, which can alter moods but also cause brain damage and death, and similar ingredients.

But data on prescription drugs are alarming: about 4.3 percent of 12th-graders had taken OxyContin, an opiate, and nearly 10 percent had taken Vicodin, another pain killer. These are dangerous drugs. These figures, of course, fall far short of the 32 percent of high school seniors who had smoked pot and the 30 percent who had been drunk in the last year. This is concerning because there is little parents can do to block access, since many of the abused remedies are available over the counter.

Mom, Dad and educators, however, can at least talk with children about the dangers of abusing cough medicine and the like. Parents must take dangerous over-the-counter and prescription remedies out of the medicine cabinet and lock them up somewhere secret.

Another tip: Monitor children's internet use to make sure they aren't buying prescriptions drugs online.

More information and data from *Monitoring The Future* survey can be found at www.monitoringthefuture.org or, <http://www.hhs.gov/news>; or <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov>.

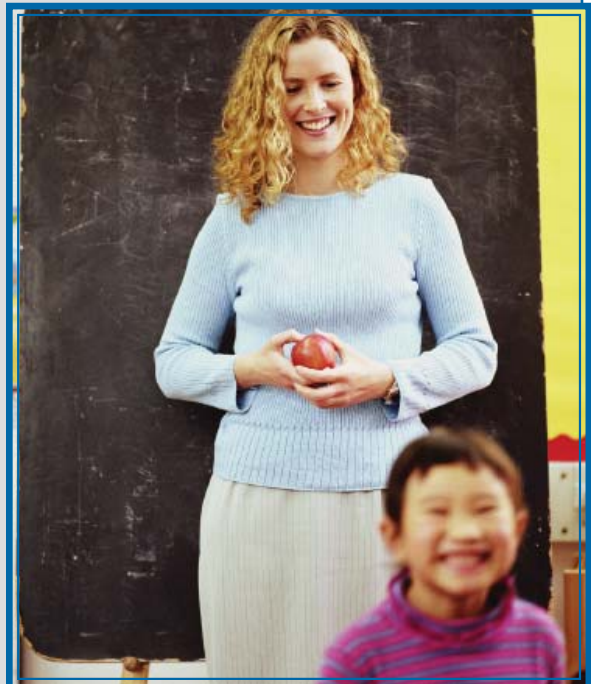
About Developmental Assets

Reprinted from The Search Institute's Website (<http://www.search-institute.org/whatsnew/>)

Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets are concrete, common sense, positive experiences and qualities essential to raising successful young people. These assets have the power during critical adolescent years to influence choices young people make and help them become caring, responsible adults.

The Developmental Asset framework is categorized into two groups of 20 assets. External assets are the positive experiences young people receive from the world around them. These 20 assets are about supporting and empowering young people, about setting boundaries and expectations, and about positive and constructive use of young people's time. External assets identify important roles that families, schools, congregations, neighborhoods, and youth organizations can play in promoting healthy development.

The twenty internal assets identify those characteristics and behaviors that reflect positive internal growth and development of young people. These assets are about positive values and identities, social competencies, and commitment to learning. The internal Developmental Assets will help these young people make thoughtful and positive choices and, in turn, be better prepared for situations in life that challenge their inner strength and confidence.



We invite you to thoroughly explore Search Institute: read about each of the 40 Developmental Assets, learn more about the research behind the assets, and discover all the resources and support services Search Institute provides to assist those who are ready to begin improving the lives of young people and their communities.

In future issues of "What's New For Schools" we plan to share additional information about the Search Institute's Developmental Assets. If you wish to learn about SI's Developmental Assets yourself, please visit www.search-institute.org/assets/

PSA Contest Open to Middlesex County High School Students

By Rachel Prupis, MSW Intern

You've probably heard, numerous times, that drinking and driving do not mix, and in fact can have horrific consequences. Maybe your students understand the importance of this message, but unfortunately not everyone does. The truth is that the number one cause of death among teenagers is motor vehicle crashes, and it is estimated that at least 40% of these fatalities involve alcohol. The "bottom line" is that alcohol interferes with a person's ability to make good decisions. So, if you're asking, "What can I do about it?" Well, here's a unique opportunity to let your students' collective voice be heard while sharing a vital message with their peers and community.

Middlesex County High School students are encouraged to submit entries for the 8th Annual "Don't Drink and Drive" 3D Public Service Announcement Video Contest. Students can reach out to their peers by using their talents to create a PSA up to 30 seconds long, that will highlight the consequences of drinking and driving. One English and one Spanish PSA can be submitted from each school.

The top three PSA's will be awarded \$1,000, \$750, and \$500 respectively, to be used for Project Graduation or any Driver Safety and Awareness Program.

The campaign will culminate with "Media Mix," providing students with workshops facilitated by local media personalities. The event will be followed by an award luncheon where all PSA's will be shown for the first time, winners will be announced, and all participants will be recognized. Winning students will also receive a gift certificate.

The 8th Annual "Don't Drink and Drive" 3D Public Service Announcement Video Contest is sponsored by:

- The Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders
- Middlesex County Superintendent of Schools
- Injury Prevention Program of the Level One Trauma Center Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital
- The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD) of Middlesex County, Inc.

For more information, contact Barbara Ryan at the Middlesex County Superintendent of School's Office at 732-745-3551 or Rachel Prupis at NCADD of Middlesex County, Inc. at 732-254-3344.



Pictured with the 2006 PSA contest winners from Woodbridge Vo-Tech High School students and teacher are (from left) Diana Starace, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital; Patrick Piegari, Middlesex County Superintendent of Schools; Middlesex County Freeholder John Pulomena; Nicholas Sewich, Assistant Prosecutor, Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office, and Steven Liga, Executive Director and CEO of NCADD of Middlesex County, Inc..