

Not Just a *minor* Thing

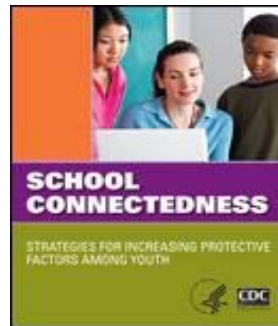
Arizona Statewide Underage Drinking News

Underage Drinking Prevention Committee

July 2009, Volume 1, Issue 2

School Connectedness...the Way to Healthy Youth!

Typically, efforts to reduce unhealthy and risky adolescent behaviors have focused on reducing risk factors. However, a growing number of studies show that when programs focus on enhancing protective factors, greater health impacts are achieved.



(Continued on page 2)

Smells Good!

According to the journal *Behavioral and Brain Functions*, rats whose mothers were exposed to alcohol during pregnancy are more attracted to the smell of liquor during puberty. Researchers from State University in New York Upstate Medical University, lead by Professor Steven Youngentob investigated the effects of fetal ethanol exposure in adolescent and adult rats. Interestingly, rats exposed to alcohol during gestation find the smell of alcohol on another rat's breath during adolescence attractive.

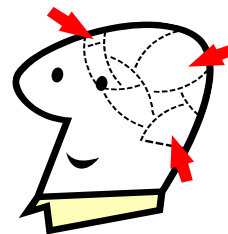
In both rats and humans, fetal exposure changes how the odor and flavor of ethanol is perceived. In this study authors conclude that such learning is a fundamental feature of all mammalian species as the pre-weaning animal is attracted to the food the mother consumes. Also, rats unexposed to ethanol were significantly less likely to follow an intoxicated peer than those who have been exposed.

According to Youngentob, "Such a proposition is clinically relevant since, in humans, adolescence is a key transition point for emergent patterns of alcohol abuse."

Why 'White Matter' Matters

Binge drinking during the teenage years can impair a part of the brain affecting memory and thinking and can lower school performance. This part of the brain is referred to as the 'white matter': a sensitive area of the brain responsible for relaying messages between brain cells.

Although white matter impairment has been seen in the brains of adult alcoholics, "We were somewhat surprised that these adolescents who had histories of binge drinking showed significantly poorer quality of their white matter," said lead researcher Susan F. Tapert, an associate professor of psychiatry at the University of California, San Diego, and director of Substance Abuse/Mental Illness at the VA San Diego Healthcare System.



The cause of the damage is not fully understood, Tapert said. "It could be that episodes of binge drinking during the teenage years, when

(Continued on page 2)

Inside this issue:

Featured Community Projects	3
Coalition of the Quarter	4
Announcement, Events & More!	4



Latest Research

School Connectedness...the Way to Healthy Youth! - continued from page 1

One of these protective factors is “School Connectedness.” Recent research indicates that students who feel connected to their school are more likely to engage in healthy behaviors and do well in school. So what does it mean to be connected to school exactly? School connectedness is the belief by students that the adults and peers at their school care about their learning and about them as individuals.

Some of the risky behaviors that adolescents who feel connected to school are less likely to engage in include: tobacco use, alcohol and drug use, violence and gang involvement, and early sexual initiation. Adolescents that are connected with school are also more likely to attend school regularly, stay in school longer, and have higher grades and classroom test scores.

A great resource to enhance school connectedness is made available by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). [*School Connectedness: Strategies for Increasing Protective Factors Among Youth*](#) identifies six evidence-based strategies that teachers, administrators, school staff and parents can implement to increase the extent to which students feel connected to school.



Why ‘White Matter’ Matters – continued from page 1

their brain is still developing, could have adversely influenced the brain's white matter development," she said.

Tapert's team conducted a study in which a type of MRI imaging called diffusion tensor imaging was used to look at the brains of 28 teenagers. Fourteen of them had a history of binge drinking. Binge drinking was defined in this study as having consumed four to five drinks in a day. It comes as no surprise that MRI results showed that teens with histories of binge drinking had damage to the white matter in their brain.

Further studies conducted by Tapert's team show that teens with a history of heavy drinking retrieved about 10 percent less information compared with teens who were not binge drinkers. "We have also seen that if you start drinking heavily in adolescence, you are more likely to go downhill on other measures of thinking and information processing," she said.

Heavy drinking among adolescents remains a major problem in our society. With about 55 percent of high school seniors reporting having been drunk before and 25 percent say they have

had five or more drinks on at least one day in the past two weeks, prevention professionals have to strive to protect the future of these adolescents.

“We have also seen that if you start drinking heavily in adolescence, you are more likely to go downhill on other measures of thinking and information processing.”

Not Just a *minor* Thing is published quarterly in March, July, October and January. We are looking for community/coalition stories announcements and other leads that are related to efforts to reduce under age drinking in Arizona. Due to space limitation, each story should not exceed 500 words. Our deadline is the 1st of the month prior to the publication date. Please email articles or ideas to the editor at: madan@azdhs.gov. Ideas and comments are welcome as well! Thank you.

Featured Community Projects

SAMSHA's Reach Out Now Teach-In a success!

April was Alcohol Awareness Month, and on April 20th, the Safe and Drug Free Coalition in South Phoenix collaborated with community members to participate in SAMSHA's Reach Out Now nationwide Teach-In to bring awareness to underage drinking.

Assistant Superintendent of Special Needs of Roosevelt School District Dr. Jeanne Koba and Officer Eric Amato of the South Phoenix Police Department were lead presenters of the lesson plan on Underage Drinking. Also present were members of the Southwest Behavioral Health Prevention Department and Magellan Health Services.

The presentation was given to approximately 60 fifth grade students from Ed Pastor Elementary School. The lesson plan was interactive and touched on what to know, what to say and what to do with regard to underage drinking. It also covered aspects of underage drinking such as alcohol's effect on the

brain and the body, reasons people use it, and how to prevent underage drinking. The children were energized and actively participated in the lesson. They were very curious about the topic and were not afraid to ask questions.

SAMSHA's Reach Out Now Teach-In was a successful venture! The children as well as the adults had a great time. It was a great experience to see young fifth graders utilizing their minds and coming up with ideas to prevent underage drinking. The teachers did a great job by tying the Teach-In into what they are teaching their classes: rise to your potential. There was a lot of interaction, laughs and learning that took place!

-Tina Cardenas, prevention coordinator with Southwest Behavioral Health



It's Time to Change!

In May 2008, the Scottsdale Prevention Institute's *Comunidades Saludables* program and Scottsdale Neighborhood in Action coalition were selected to implement the Strategic Prevention Framework process within the South Scottsdale Hispanic community. A needs assessment revealed that underage drinking was a major issue in the community and several contributing factors were prioritized.

In particular, the coalition targeted community and family norms favoring underage drinking with a comprehensive campaign. This involved extensive community outreach to inform the community about underage drinking and provide flyers and educational tips to adults and parents. Additionally, the coalition placed ads in two local newspapers and the Internet to bring their message to the community at large.



"I feel proud of myself for learning about underage drinking and helping change our community."

The youth involved in the campaign distributed the newspapers and spoke with the community to raise awareness about underage drinking. All of the youth who participated reported that they felt satisfied and empowered to be part of making positive change in their community. "I feel proud of myself for learning about underage drinking and helping change our community," was one of the comments of the participating youth. Also, through *promotoras*-led outreach activities, fliers were distributed to the community. The campaign has received valuable feedback through e-tips messages and continues to promote the involvement of parents and community stakeholders.

This newsletter was created by the Arizona Underage Drinking Committee to increase the sharing of information between coalitions and people who are working to prevent underage drinking.

Coalition of the Quarter

The **Community Outreach Prevention Education (C.O.P.E.) Coalition** has been serving the West Phoenix area, more commonly known as Maryvale, since 2005. The aim of the coalition is to reduce underage drinking and substance abuse within the Maryvale area. Throughout the years, C.O.P.E. has been able to organize and partner with several agencies and organizations serving the Maryvale area. More importantly, C.O.P.E. has been able to engage the community and youth to have a more active voice.

C.O.P.E. has been especially active in educating the community on the effects of drugs and alcohol. The coalition has appeared on both Spanish language and bilingual radio stations conducting interviews, while also recording and airing public service announcements (PSAs) on underage drinking and substance abuse. C.O.P.E. involved the community, youth and other agencies in the interviews and writing the PSAs. C.O.P.E. also provided materials from the Draw the Line campaign, in which it has been greatly involved. Coalition staff were highly involved in developing the Spanish language sister campaign to Draw the Line, the *Hasta Aqui* campaign.

Coalition staff were highly involved in developing the Spanish language sister campaign to Draw the Line, the *Hasta Aqui* campaign

The "Penny for Prevention" initiative, which aims to sustain the statewide prevention system, is being spearheaded by coalition staff. This effort will bring in funds for a significant increase in all spectrums of prevention throughout the state. The coalition has also partnered with several agencies to create its annual Cinco de Mayo Community Event bringing community organizations together to inform the Maryvale community on underage drinking and substance abuse, in addition to the real history behind the holiday.

The C.O.P.E. Coalition is utilizing all its resources, bringing together key stakeholders in an effort to make Maryvale a community safe for youth and family, free of drugs and alcohol.

Announcements, Events & More!

Congrats!

Social Host Ordinances are being passed around the State and Nation in an attempt to bring additional criminal and civil measures against those who give alcohol to youth...

- *The **Pima County** Board of Supervisors passed a Social Host Ordinance, putting it in line with the ordinance passed almost two years ago in the City of Tucson.*
- *The City Council's passed an unanimous approval of **Casa Grande's** social host ordinance.*
- *In **Miami**, Council members and Mayor Canizales approved the ordinance in a unanimous vote in May 2009, after being presented by Arizona Youth Partnership.*

Free Resource

The country's first guide on the restriction of out-of-home (OOH) alcohol advertising was released in March 2009 by the Marin Institute, the alcohol industry watchdog.

Download the guide here: [Out of Home Alcohol Advertising](#)



Mark your calendars!

- **CADCA's Mid-year Training Camp, July 27-30, 2009 - Louisville, KY**
- **41st Annual Southwestern School for Behavioral Health Studies, August 23-27, 2009 - Tucson, AZ**
- **22nd Annual National Prevention Network Conference, September 15-18, 2009 - Anaheim, CA**