

ALCOHOL & OTHER DRUG PREVENTION CONNECTION

County of Orange Health Care Agency, Alcohol and Drug Education and Prevention Team - ADEPT

THREE PROJECTS ~ ONE OBJECTIVE

The County of Orange Health Care Agency, Tobacco Use Prevention Program (TUPP) has initiated three comprehensive prevention projects to lower the prevalence of tobacco use among youth, as national surveys indicate that nearly 80% of adults who smoke began at or before age 18. Each project utilizes evidence-based strategies and best practices for intervention, community education and prevention services to reduce adolescent experimentation with tobacco products and lower prevalence for youth and adults.

“The projects were implemented over a three-year period ending in June 2011, which allowed us to develop partnerships, coalitions and a sustainable framework to institutionalize the projects within the selected communities,” said Barbara Brashear-Weimar, Program Supervisor, TUPP. “During the first year of each project our prevention providers conducted target audience research to establish baseline data and used Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping (software that links data to geographic locations) to plan and implement community-level interventions for tobacco prevention and education activities.”

REDUCING TEEN TOBACCO USE

One of TUPP’s prevention projects was developed specifically to reduce tobacco use among teens in the cities of San Clemente and San Juan Capistrano. The project was implemented at Capistrano Valley, San Clemente and Junipero Serra High Schools by National Council on Alcoholism & Drug Dependence-Orange County/ Community Alliance Network (NCADD-OC/CAN) health educators, in partnership with the Capistrano Unified School District administration.

The project was designed to follow 9th grade students over three years (through 11th grade) to identify changes in their knowledge about the harmful effects of tobacco, while participating in comprehensive classroom tobacco interventions, presentations and a campus-wide tobacco prevention campaign.

Continued on Page 2

Volume 10 2011

IN THIS ISSUE

Page 1
Three Projects~One Objective

Page 5
Transitioning the Challenges of Adolescence

Page 6
A Celebration of Achievement

Page 8
Catching the Spirit of Red

Page 9
Parent Power

WE HAVE GONE GREEN!!!

The County of Orange Health Care Agency, Alcohol and Drug Education and Prevention Team (ADEPT) Prevention Connection newsletter has gone green. To conserve energy and preserve the environment, this newsletter is now an electronic publication.

To receive future Prevention Connection newsletters electronically, please register your email address at: ohealthinfo.com/newsletters/subscribe, or send an email request to kpangan@ochca.com.

NCADD-OC/CAN first conducted a survey of current 11th grade students at each selected school to identify their knowledge and perceptions of tobacco use among high school age youth. The survey provided baseline data for the project, as these students had not received the classroom interventions or other prevention campaign components.

The project was uniformly conducted at the three selected schools. The classroom interventions included presentations highlighting the scientific data on the harmful effects of tobacco use and second-hand smoke, the prevalence of tobacco use in the media and the misperceptions of tobacco use among teens. Each classroom intervention included a student pre-and-post presentation survey to identify changes in knowledge resulting from the information presented.

“The administration and teachers at each of the schools were extremely supportive of our objective. They were willing to give up instructional class time to accommodate this project,” said Tiffany McCune, Health Educator, NCADD-OC/CAN.

On each campus, NCADD-OC/CAN health educators collaborated with school administration and existing youth leadership groups to form a student-led anti-tobacco task force to develop and implement a campus-wide tobacco prevention education and awareness campaign. Four tobacco awareness events at each high school

were conducted each year featuring anti-tobacco message posters/banners and prevention education games and contests developed by the student task force. Anti-tobacco campaign message ads were placed in the school newspapers and displayed on banners at school athletic events. Prevention education materials and anti-tobacco promotional items were made available to students at campus events.



throughout the community to highlight the students' creativity. At Junipero Serra High School, NCADD-OC/CAN health educators and the student task force sponsored the school's annual pie-eating contest, reproducing their awareness campaign messages on hats, bibs, tablecloths and banners.

This project included a parent education component as not only are youth influenced by their peers and media, research indicates they are also influenced by their parents. Parents were informed about tobacco products popular with youth and the prevalence of tobacco use in media. Teens are huge consumers of media. "If we teach parents and teens how to critically analyze media messages, they can use these skills regardless of how the message is delivered," said McCune.

The parent presentation was offered in English and Spanish in

partnership with the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) at San Clemente and Capistrano Valley High Schools. NCADD-OC/CAN health educators also offered the parenting workshops as a component in the Orange County Sheriff's Department Parent Project, a 10-week parenting skills program designed specifically for parents with strong-willed or out-of-control children, open to parents throughout the county.

“To establish sustainability of the multiple components of this project, we have focused on institutionalizing the prevention activities at the school and district levels. Over the past three years we have worked closely with a faculty advisor and tobacco program coordinator at each of the schools. We provided each school with a tool kit to maintain the project, which includes the project overview, educational materials, and student classroom and parent presentation curricula,” said Gwen Drenick, Program Director, NCADD-OC/CAN.

REDUCING YOUNG ADULT TOBACCO USE

According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, tobacco use among adults ages 18 to 24 years of age is more prevalent than among older adults. To influence this age group and behavior, TUPP developed a three year prevention project designed to lower the prevalence of tobacco use among young adults in the cities of Santa Ana, Cypress, Garden Grove and Huntington Beach. Reaching this specific target population for prevention outreach services is challenging as individuals in this age group make diverse and independent choices regarding education, employment and lifestyle after leaving high school.

PREVENTION CONNECTION

The objectives of the project were to implement a tobacco prevention media campaign and conduct educational outreach to inform young adults on the harmful effects of tobacco use, while building coalitions and partnerships for long term sustainability of the project components. During the first year, Community Service Programs, Inc., Project Positive Action Toward Health (CSP Project PATH) health educators, in partnership with community colleges in the cities of Santa Ana, Cypress and Huntington Beach, conducted 1,387 baseline surveys to assess the attitudes about tobacco use among young adults prior to the launch of the media campaign and educational presentations.

Informed by this baseline data, CSP Project PATH developed a media campaign utilizing venues and media outlets determined to be highly visible to a large segment of the adult population ages 18-24 years old. The media campaign addressed the harmful effects of tobacco use and the dangers of second and third hand smoke. A total of 94 media ads were placed in the first and second years of the campaign, and 63 ads were placed during the third year. Media campaign materials were displayed at venues in the selected cities: on community college and trade school campuses, on bus shelters and bus banner ads, billboards, kiosks, Web sites and as streaming video ads in Coffee Bean and Juice It Up! stores.

In collaboration with students from the Art Institute of California, CSP Project PATH developed public service announcements (PSAs) during year two of the project. The PSAs aired 234 times over a four-week period on the Time Warner Cable Company, primarily on six-networks that young adults frequently watch, including

MTV, VH1, and Comedy Central.

“CSP Project PATH partnered with the community colleges and vocational schools to offer educational presentations and display the media campaign elements. We offered our presentation as a service to the students through the college student health centers and as a classroom presentation,” said Vicki Williams, Project Coordinator, CSP Project PATH.



Over the three years, CSP Project PATH presented to more than 980 adults ages 18 to 24 years of age. Presentation topics included the latest scientific information on tobacco, the prevalence of tobacco use in media, the cost of smoking and the environmental impacts, new products on the market, and the effects of second and third hand smoke on adults, children and pets. A pre-and post-presentation survey was used to identify changes in perceptions and knowledge.

“We tried to engage this audience with information that relates to their current lifestyle. The discussion of new nicotine/tobacco products resonated with them because they were unaware of the harm associated with these items. Also, they responded to the concept that secondhand smoke was harmful to pets. They were very

receptive to discussing products and research outcomes that were new or trendy,” said Williams.

To help with project sustainability, CSP Project PATH developed a tool kit that includes resource information, copies of the media campaign elements and an outline of the educational presentation.

REDUCING YOUTH ACCESS TO TOBACCO

BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS
Reducing youth access to tobacco requires the effort of an entire community, including tobacco retailers. In partnership with America On Track, TUPP developed a three year project to engage the retail business communities in the cities of La Habra and Anaheim with a variety of methods to encourage the responsible sale of tobacco products.

To initiate the project, America On Track health educators identified the tobacco retail establishments in the selected cities. Using GIS mapping to target clusters near schools and tourist venues, the health educators identified 75 tobacco retail establishments in the City of La Habra, and 212 in the City of Anaheim. The overarching objective of the project was to educate these 287 retail merchants to ensure their compliance with existing state and municipal laws regulating tobacco retail sales and local window signage ordinances.

During the first year of the project, America On Track staff and adult volunteers accompanied teens (under 18 years of age) in carrying out a tobacco purchase survey or ‘attempted buy’ at each of the 287 retail establishments. The purpose of the survey was to determine whether the salesclerk would have sold tobacco to a

minor without identification, however, no actual purchase is made.

Merchants who refused to sell tobacco products to the teens received a letter explaining the survey conducted at their place of business, congratulating them on their compliance with the law. Merchants who would have sold tobacco to the teens received a letter summarizing the survey conducted, their failure to comply with the law regarding tobacco sales, and a merchant resource packet that included information on tobacco retail laws, licensing and local signage ordinances.

America On Track health educators initiated a merchant education outreach campaign, visiting all 287 retail establishments quarterly to inform them of the laws regulating tobacco retail sales, assist with window signage compliance, and provide resources to obtain the necessary licenses and permits. The health educators also created stickers and signage to remind the retailers and customers of the legal age to purchase tobacco products.

As a result of the educational outreach component of the project, in June 2011 America On Track health educators documented 100% compliance among the targeted merchants in posting required retail licenses. Retail establishments that demonstrated compliance with tobacco retail sales laws and sign ordinances for three consecutive quarters were recognized as a 5-Star Merchant.

The 5-Star Merchant Award program

was developed several years ago; however, it had not been implemented in the cities of La Habra or Anaheim. The program recognizes the business owners and the businesses for being responsible members of the community by upholding the tobacco retailing laws. "It is a fantastic way to reward merchants for following

the law. We wanted them to see us as partners by helping them to comply with the laws so they are not susceptible to a fine," said Claire Braeburn, Executive Director, America On Track.

In the final year of the project,

159 or 60% of the tobacco retailers received 5-Star Merchant Awards. The challenge for many merchants not qualifying for the award was compliance with local window signage ordinances. The final teen 'attempted buy' activity of the project identified only one retail establishment failing to comply with the law regarding the sale of tobacco to a minor. Based on the data collected, the project lowered the illegal sale of tobacco to minors by 97% in the selected cities.

REDUCING SOCIAL ACCESS

A second component of this project was a social sources campaign, targeting males 18-to-35 years of age on the consequences of providing tobacco to anyone under 18 years of age. A media campaign was developed to inform the target audience of the law and associated fine for providing tobacco products to minors. The campaign appeared in the local newspapers, bus shelters, and phone kiosks in the selected cities. Campaign

materials were distributed to retail merchants as flyers, stickers, window decals and penny trays.

During each year of the project 2,000 target population surveys were collected to assess the level of knowledge regarding the consequences of providing tobacco to a minor.

"Individuals in this age group were unaware of the legal consequences. We conducted a total of 6,000 surveys to assess the effectiveness of the awareness campaign. Over the three-year project, there was an increase in the number of people who could identify the \$200 fine for purchasing or supplying tobacco to a minor. In the first year of the project, 14% of individuals surveyed could correctly identify the \$200 fine, but in the third year of the project, 66.5% of individuals surveyed could correctly identify the fine, indicating almost a five-fold increase in knowledge among the targeted population over the three years of the project," said Braeburn.

Overall, TUPP provides comprehensive prevention and free cessation projects that address the public health problem posed by tobacco use throughout Orange County. TUPP's projects encourage individuals and communities to make lifestyle choices consistent with a healthy and safe environment for youth and adults.

TUPP tobacco prevention and cessation projects are funded by Tobacco Settlement Revenue Funds administered by the County of Orange Health Care Agency. For information contact Barbara Brashear-Weimar, Program Supervisor, TUPP; 714/834-3232, email: BBrashear-Weimar@ochca.com.



PREVENTION CONNECTION

TRANSITIONING THE CHALLENGES OF ADOLESCENCE

Adolescence is a time when youth begin to assert their independence and may feel separated from the support systems they enjoyed during elementary school. The degree to which intermediate school youth feel connected to their school, family and community are important factors in whether they are likely to fall behind academically, drink alcohol, smoke, use drugs or engage in other high-risk behaviors.

Latino Youth Network (LYN), a program of La Familia, is an after-school alcohol and other drug (AOD), violence and crime prevention program designed to assist intermediate school youth to make healthy life choices. La Familia, a California Hispanic Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Inc. (CHCADA) enterprise, provides bilingual family support services and AOD treatment and prevention services for Latinos in Orange County.

LYN is a component of the after-school program at four intermediate schools in the Santa Ana Unified School District (SAUSD) that serve the Latino community. Students are ages 11-14, in fifth through eighth grade. Hispanic/Latino enrollment for the 2009-2010 academic year at the four intermediate schools offering LYN ranged between 93% and 99%: Gerald P. Carr Intermediate, McFadden Intermediate, Sierra Preparatory Academy and Spurgeon Intermediate. (California Department of Education)

The SAUSD after-school program includes time for students to complete their homework followed by a wide range of age-appropriate activities, such as LYN, designed to engage

youth in healthy activities as an alternative to being home alone or unsupervised after school.

Students self-select to participate in LYN, often encouraged by parents, siblings or LYN peers. The program is open to all intermediate school students and class sizes range from 15-to-25 students per school.



Students meet in a classroom setting for 90 minutes twice a week, where they participate in discussions and an educational activity centered around a monthly youth development topic such as self-esteem, effective communication, respect, or academic achievement. Each monthly topic is addressed from three perspectives; how the topic relates to the student's sense of community, family interaction and self.

"We start each class with a group discussion. It gets lively, everybody wants to talk," said Jonnathan Gomez, LYN Prevention Supervisor. "Much of the classroom discussion focuses on how a situation makes the student feel. For example, if you do something wrong at home, how do you feel? If you helped your parents without being asked, how do you feel? The students share their experiences and feelings with the class. It is empowering when

their positive responses to situations are reinforced by adults and peers."

The LYN program sponsors a monthly community service activity. LYN youth volunteer at food banks, collect toys and assemble food baskets for holiday distribution, and participate in an annual graffiti cleanup event.

"LYN students like doing things for others and improving the appearance of their community. They receive positive feedback from the community during and after these events, which makes them feel appreciated," said Nick Amezcua, LYN Prevention Specialist. "We discuss their feelings about helping others as part of the monthly classroom discussions."

"I started working for LYN seven years ago, with a group of rather spirited students," said Gomez. "It took two weeks before they would give me a chance! Then slowly they started to open-up and began to appreciate the LYN curriculum. Now some of these same students are attending the best colleges and universities in the state. They still come back to be involved with LYN and to work with the youth in the community."

To support LYN students' post-intermediate school connectedness to the program, Gomez established a LYN Leadership Council for high school and college-age students. LYN Leadership Council students volunteer to help with LYN-sponsored community service projects, field trips and events, and they are mentors and role-models for LYN students.

LYN staff also provides educational workshops to community, school

PREVENTION CONNECTION

and parent groups on topics such as parenting, youth access to alcohol and drugs, signs and symptoms of drug abuse and cross-generational communication skills. Each year they host a Thanksgiving Dinner for LYN students and their families at the La Familia facility.

“Incorporated into the holiday event is a workshop for the students and their parents on communication, values, respect and family traditions. The students are growing up in an environment that is largely unfamiliar

to their parents. It is helpful for parents to gain a better understanding of the influences that impact today’s youth and to learn how to communicate more effectively with their children,” said Gomez.

“At the family workshops we discuss the signs and symptoms of drug use, access to alcohol and drugs, and the importance of academic competency,” said Amezcua. “The parents are like sponges; they have questions and more questions. For example, most parents are not aware of the impact that the

widespread acceptance of alcohol use within the Latino community has on youth.”

Gomez and Amezcua agree, “We see the impact the LYN program has made on students that are now in high school. They are making good choices and we strongly believe it is because of what the LYN program taught them.”

For more information, contact Jonnathan Gomez, 714/479-0120, email: jgomez@chcada.org.

A CELEBRATION OF ACHIEVEMENT

In November 2010, the Faiths and Institutions Together for Health (FAITH) Coalition celebrated its 10th anniversary with an impressive list of accomplishments in facilitating partnerships among alcohol and other drug (AOD) prevention providers and faith communities in Orange County. A highlight of the anniversary event was the presentation of the FAITH Coalition Visionary Leadership Award to Michael Cunningham, Chief Deputy Director, California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs. Cunningham was instrumental in establishing the Coalition by bringing together representatives from faith communities and prevention providers for a workshop titled “Involving the Faith Community in Prevention” in October 2000 hosted by Community Service Programs, Inc. Project Positive Action Toward Health (CSP Project PATH).

“The FAITH Coalition is a direct result of Michael Cunningham’s vision and the workshop he facilitated. It was the first prevention outreach to the faith community in Orange

County. Today, the Coalition membership represents diverse faith-based organizations and prevention providers from throughout the county,” said Lourdes Gutierrez, Project Coordinator, CSP Project Faith in Youth.

BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY

One of many accomplishments featured during the anniversary event was the award of a Drug Free Communities (DFC) Support Program grant from the Office of National Drug Control Policy and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration in October 2008. The five-year grant was received by CSP Project PATH on behalf of the FAITH Coalition and the City of Garden Grove. The goals of the grant are:

- To reduce alcohol and marijuana use among youth, and over time, adults in Garden Grove by addressing the factors in a community that enable problematic behavior
- To strengthen collaboration among local government agencies

and community organizations to support coalitions to prevent and reduce substance abuse among youth.

“The City of Garden Grove is very supportive of the DFC grant. We find city government to be proactive and responsive to the needs and concerns of the community. The Garden Grove Police Department (GGPD) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with CSP Project PATH, which was included with our grant application,” said Gutierrez.

A comprehensive community assessment was conducted during the first year to identify and analyze environmental, social and individual factors that contribute to alcohol and other drug problems in the City. California Healthy Kids Survey data for the Garden Grove Unified School District (GGUSD) were used to identify AOD use among Garden Grove youth. The Alcohol/Drug Sensitive Information Planning System, an analysis of GGPD calls for service, provided both a visual

PREVENTION CONNECTION

and a statistical “picture” of police events involving alcohol and other drugs. Community stakeholder interviews and focus groups with youth and adults were conducted to assess community perceptions of substance abuse among youth and local conditions that may contribute to AOD use.

Representatives from the FAITH Coalition, Project Faith in Youth, GGUSD, GGP, neighborhood coalitions and community organizations came together to establish the Garden Grove DFC Task Force. The Task Force, facilitated by Gutierrez and Stephan Lambert, Health Educator, Project Faith in Youth, used the community assessment baseline data to plan and implement community-wide strategies that address alcohol and marijuana access and use among youth.

Partnering with the GGUSD, the Task Force provided technical assistance in conducting a series of Drug Awareness Parent Meetings held at each of the nine high schools in the District. Parents of students attending the District’s 10 middle schools were also invited to attend. These meetings were presented in English with simultaneous translations into Spanish, Vietnamese and Korean.

Each workshop featured a panel of speakers who addressed youth AOD use from multiple perspectives. Lambert, as the lead presenter, discussed the popular drugs of abuse among youth and their harmful consequences, and shared the key findings from the Garden Grove community assessment. A Garden Grove police officer spoke on the legal consequences of AOD use among

youth and also shared his views as a parent of teens. A psychologist addressed the parents on how to talk with their children about substance abuse prevention strategies, signs and symptoms of AOD use. The final speaker was a school counselor who informed parents about the District’s substance abuse disciplinary policies.



“The parent meeting discussions reflected common issues and concerns, while also highlighting specific cultural issues related to how parents communicate with their children. Some parents were more comfortable than others in setting boundaries, monitoring their children’s activities or talking openly about personal feelings and emotions,” said Lambert. “Parents left the meetings with new information on parenting strategies and a feeling of connectedness to their neighbors and the community in addressing AOD issues.”

More than 1,000 parents attended the 10 Drug Awareness Parent Meetings, held November 2009 through May 2010. Each participant completed a post program survey to evaluate their overall increase in knowledge of AOD-related issues and to identify their support of policy initiatives that would hold adults accountable for underage drinking in their homes. “Results from

our parent meeting survey indicated 97% of participants were supportive of holding adults accountable for underage drinking in their homes. They recognize the prevalence and harmful effects of underage drinking in their community. The DFC Task Force has developed a Policy Brief for a Social Host Ordinance which is being shared with stakeholders,” said Gutierrez.

A Social Host Ordinance has proven to be an effective tool used nationwide to address underage drinking. The ordinance holds parents/adults responsible and assesses a fine for underage drinking in their home, whether or not they are present at the time of the incident.

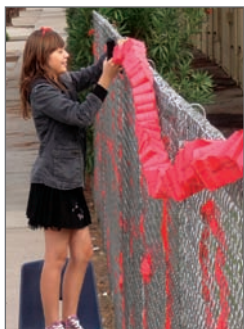
As the Garden Grove DFC Task Force moves into year three of the grant implementation, it is focusing on expanded outreach opportunities with the GGUSD, the City’s family and community resource centers and community organizations. The Task Force has also developed a partnership with cable television Channel 3 in Garden Grove to promote and publicize the DFC Task Force objectives and educational activities.

The DFC grant is bringing together City government, prevention agencies and community organizations in the City of Garden Grove to reduce alcohol and marijuana use among youth, and over time among adults.

For information contact Lourdes Gutierrez, 949/757-1096 extension 288, email: lgutierrez@cspinc.org or Stephan Lambert, 949/757-1096 extension 226, email: slambert@cspinc.org.

CATCHING THE SPIRIT OF RED

A visit to South Junior High School (SJHS), Anaheim Unified School District, during the last week of October 2010 brought new meaning to the expression “seeing red,” when the school was decorated top-to-bottom, inside-and-out in celebration of Red Ribbon Week. Each year Red Ribbon Week brings millions of young people and adults across the country together to honor Drug Enforcement Administration agent Enrique “Kiki” Camarena. His tragic death in 1985 sparked a grassroots movement aimed at reducing the demand for illegal drugs by raising awareness of the need for alcohol and other drugs (AOD) and violence prevention, early intervention and treatment services.



Spearheading the Red Ribbon Week activities that transformed SJHS into a classic example of youthful enthusiasm and commitment was Club Live, a program of the Orange County Department of Education Friday Night Live Partnership (OCFNLP). Club Live is a club, or chapter, for middle school-age youth located on school campuses, in faith and community-based organizations, and in other educational environments that foster positive youth development and leadership skills through AOD and violence prevention activities.

SJHS Club Live members planned and implemented their Red Ribbon Week activities with guidance from Linh Ho, eighth grade teacher and Club Advisor. “Club members wanted to present activities that engaged the entire student body. They wanted every element to be inclusive and to reach as many students as possible with their

anti-drug message,” said Ho.

Ho, Club Live members and volunteers facilitated an overwhelming number of events and activities focused on the spirit of Red Ribbon Week. They began by hosting a Red Ribbon Week training in September, attended by 140 youth from schools throughout

Orange County. To decorate the school for Red Ribbon Week they created posters, hung banners and sponsored a door decorating contest, which led to more than 40 office and classroom doors displaying AOD prevention messages. In addition, Club members distributed strips of red paper for each student to write a personal living drug-free message, fashioned the strips into chain loops, and created a 1,400 piece red chain displaying the messages, which was draped around the exterior of the school building.

SJHS’s Red Ribbon Week was filled with surprises and special guests. Jay Johnstone, retired left-handed hitter and outfielder for The Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim and a 20-year veteran of major league baseball, spoke to the students at a lunchtime rally about the negative effects of AOD abuse and the importance of making healthy life choices. Another lunchtime rally featured two members of the Angels Strike Force Team, Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim goodwill ambassadors, who presented autographed team and player pictures to students based on their correct answers to an AOD prevention quiz.

The highlight of the week was a student body assembly featuring Peggy Sapp, President of the National Family

Partnership and Marsha Stanton, representing Kings Pharmaceuticals. Sapp and Stanton spoke about the significance of Red Ribbon Week, the students’ responsibility as role-models for younger students, and the importance of continuing AOD prevention activities in their school and community throughout the year.

“The assembly exceeded our expectations. The students connected with the prevention messages,” said Ho. “Our goal was to engage every student by accessing outside resources that might not otherwise be available to them. The overarching message of the assembly, and the entire week, was for students to understand they are never alone in their decision making. They have an entire school and community for support when they are faced with decisions regarding AOD use.”



In February 2011, Ho learned South Junior High School was selected for the National Family Partnership 2010 National Red Ribbon Week Award. The award was officially announced in Washington D. C. at the National Family Partnership dinner and at the Community Anti-Drug Coalition of America’s National Awards Luncheon. Sapp’s comments at the announcement included, “Your school and your community partners are true role models for building community and delivering a drug free message.”

PREVENTION CONNECTION

“Implementing the Red Ribbon Week activities was extremely rewarding. We could not have executed such a comprehensive program without the support of our school administration, the community and our program

partners: Parent Teacher Student Association; County of Orange Health Care Agency Alcohol and Drug Education and Prevention Team; and the Orange County Department of Education,” said Ho.

For more information, contact Linh Ho, Club Live Advisor, South Junior High School, 714/321-0805, email: ho_1@auhsd.k12.ca.us.

PARENT POWER

Parental influence is one of the most important factors in keeping children safe. Close relationships, healthy open communication, and perceived parental support are especially important during adolescence, as children experience many physical and emotional changes. However, many parents believe they have little power over their children, according to the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA).

The County of Orange Health Care Agency, national advocacy groups, and local prevention organizations are reaching out to diverse parent populations with innovative programs that encourage positive parent-child relationships. These programs provide the tools, skills and support to build more healthy and cohesive family units.

STRENGTHENING THE FAMILY FRAMEWORK

Parenting is particularly challenging for vulnerable adults and families struggling with the effects of mental illness, addiction, or with a child in the juvenile justice system. To reduce the effect on children being raised in families exposed to these conditions, the County of Orange Health Care Agency, Behavioral Health Services, Prevention and Intervention Division, Education, Prevention, Intervention

and Community Services (EPICS) Program provides innovative parenting programs to strengthen and stabilize the family framework.

As a result of the State of California, Mental Health Services Act, the Prevention and Intervention Division was created to implement prevention and early intervention (PEI) programs as specified in the PEI plan that was developed from a comprehensive countywide mental health services needs assessment and approved by the Department of Mental Health. The PEI plan identified the need for parenting education and support services, prevention and early intervention services for families with a recovering or addicted parent, for families with a mentally ill parent, and for families with a child in the juvenile justice system and a sibling in the home.

CHILDREN’S SUPPORT AND PARENTING PROGRAM

The Children’s Support and Parenting Program (CSPP) is an innovative program to reduce the impact of mental illness and addiction on children being raised in families impacted by these disorders. The educational groups facilitated by trained mental health professionals are designed to build effective parenting

skills and strengthen family resiliency. CSPP is an 11-week group series, which includes two multi-generational workshops that bring the parents and children together to work on a shared activity, practice their newly acquired skills and celebrate their achievements.



The children’s group provides both age-appropriate education and support while validating their feelings and experiences as a member of that family. Group topics addressed include safety, coping, feelings and problem solving.

The final component of CSPP is an advanced parenting workshop offered at a six-month interval for families who have completed the initial workshop series.

CSPP is offered at residential treatment centers, shelters, transitional living facilities and family resource centers throughout the county. Since

PREVENTION CONNECTION

the program was initiated in mid-2009, more than 300 families have participated in the program.

According to Chip Pope, Service Chief of the EPICS Program, “The biggest concern, particularly for parents recently out of treatment or still in treatment, is their ability to rebuild their family framework. The parents must be willing to change behavior to create a healthy and safe environment for their children. It is a huge risk on the part of the parent and the children.”

STOP THE CYCLE PROGRAM

The EPICS Stop the Cycle (STC) program is designed to assist the siblings and parents of youth involved in the juvenile justice system. The intent of this program is to create a more stable family environment for the siblings in the home, through improved parenting skills and the development of a support system for the entire family. Participants are referred into the program from a variety of service providers including juvenile court, juvenile probation and social services, or a family can self-refer into the program.

The 12-week STC program is offered at community-based juvenile probation centers, and it is structured similarly to CSPP in that participating families are separated into workshop groups of parents, teens, and younger adolescents. Parents learn and practice prevention and intervention strategies for harmful teen behaviors such as truancy, alcohol and other drug use, gang involvement, and violence. The teen component empowers and teaches skills to exercise self-discipline, set personal goals, accept responsibility for actions, self-respect, and nonviolent problem solving. The component for youth 5-10 years of age aims to reduce

problem behaviors, while improving social skills and school performance.

All of the workshop series include 12 sessions, however the parent groups are encouraged to complete an additional four sessions by meeting as an independent support group to finish the last four sessions of the curriculum. The STC facilitators assist with this process by making themselves available to the group for technical assistance.

The goal of the independent meeting portion of the STC program is to establish effective and sustainable support networks for the families. For many parents, especially single parents, emotional support and positive reinforcement are not available to them at home. Using this model, STC provides ongoing self-help parent and family support groups throughout the county. To further encourage participation in and sustainability of the support networks, parents who have completed the STC program are invited to volunteer as co-facilitators for future STC program workshops.

The program has been in place for a year and a half, and there are three ongoing support groups. To date, 120 families have completed the program.

YOUTH AS PARENTS PROGRAM

Youth As Parents is a program for pregnant and parenting teens to prevent or lessen the impact of mental and emotional problems, substance abuse, domestic violence or involvement with the juvenile justice system. In addition, the program addresses emotional and behavioral problems early in their children’s development.

Through case management, a Positive Parenting Program also known as Triple P, participation in teen parent support groups and a developing mentoring component, each participant is given the tools to help them address the significant challenges they face in their own development and that of their children.



“The Youth As Parents Program has been in place for over a year and more than 70 parenting teens have completed the program. I expect the program will grow exponentially as we build a more comprehensive support system to serve the needs of this fragile population,” said Pope.

The EPICS parenting programs are available to all Orange County families. Workshops and meetings are held in the evening; a meal, child care and transportation assistance is provided. “There is such a need throughout the county for parenting and life skills among adults and youth. As our programs continue to create and build support networks we are hopeful the influences will impact families beyond those being directly served,” said Pope.

For more information, contact Chip Pope, Service Chief, County of Orange Health Care Agency EPICS Programs, 714/480-4653, email: c pope@ochca.com.

A CALL TO ACTION~TALK

In a nationwide initiative to reduce underage drinking and encourage parents to talk with their children about alcohol use, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) announced the Power of Parents, It's Your Influence® program on April 21, 2011 at a series of highly promoted press conferences in the cities of New York, Dallas and San Diego.

April is national Alcohol Awareness Month and a component of the MADD Power of Parents program identifies April 21 as national POWERTALK 21 Day, a day for parents to talk with their children about alcohol and underage drinking. MADD identified April as an important time of the year, before prom, graduation and summer vacation, for this conversation between parents and their children. It is the time of year when many parents request assistance from organizations like MADD on how to engage teens in a fact-based conversation about this high-risk behavior. The goal of MADD's parent initiative is to provide strategies and tools that parents can use to prevent underage drinking in their families.

Dr. Robert Turrisi of Pennsylvania State University has developed a handbook for parents of college students on how to talk with their children about alcohol that successfully reduced underage drinking and the behaviors associated with alcohol use among college freshmen. MADD has partnered with Dr. Turrisi in adapting his handbook for parents of high school students.

The "Parent Handbook For Talking With Teens About Alcohol" is

available from the MADD Web site and through an introductory 30-minute parent workshop presented at Orange County schools, service clubs, Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings and other adult group meetings.

The parent handbook offers guidelines on how to have family conversations about underage drinking. It also helps parents to identify their personal style of parenting and the responses that various parenting styles may elicit from their children. There are tips on how to alter or modify parenting styles to more effectively communicate, and strategies to help teens overcome the negative influences of their friends and peers.

"We have been conducting the workshops in Orange County since October 2010. The workshop is short and to the point, and it fits perfectly into a lunchtime meeting agenda. The feedback we have received from workshop participants has been very positive. We are not telling them how to parent; we are giving them conversation tools" said Mary Beth Griffin, Executive Director, MADD-Orange County (MADD-OC).

Workshop facilitators discuss research-based data regarding frequency of alcohol use among teens, the effect of alcohol on teen brain development and misperceptions about underage drinking. More than 100 participants have attended the MADD-OC parenting workshops to date and MADD-OC staff has trained an additional 15 health educators from various Orange County community agencies as workshop facilitators.

"Research indicates that 1-in-5 teens binge drink, but only 1-in-100 parents believe their teens binge drink. There is a disconnect between what parents think their teens are doing and what they are actually doing," said Griffin. "Also, parents are not aware of the influence they have on their teens; that their teens will listen to them. The handbook is helping to open the lines of communication within the family. It is empowering parents to talk to their children about underage drinking. Improved communication between parents and their children is good for many reasons."

For more information, contact Mary Beth Griffin, Executive Director, MADD-OC, 714/838-6199, email: MaryBeth.Griffin@madd.org.

MAKE EVERY DAY A FAMILY DAY



The Parenting Initiative Program, facilitated and funded by the County of Orange Health Care Agency, Alcohol and

Drug Education and Prevention Team (ADEPT), was launched in 2010 in the City of Anaheim. Pauline Stauder, Program Supervisor, ADEPT, stated the aim of the Initiative is to increase awareness of the influence parents have on their children in preventing alcohol and drug use. This Initiative provides parents with the tools to build more cohesive families; increases awareness of parenting resources available within the community; and encourages parent involvement in the schools and community to create a safer, healthier environment for all children.



PREVENTION CONNECTION

Stauder has drawn upon existing research and evidence-based programs to identify parenting workshops and presentations that provide the tools and techniques to build positive parent-child relationships, family and school cohesiveness, effective parenting skills, and tools for parents to initiate age-appropriate prevention conversations with their children. All presentations, workshops and materials are offered in English, Spanish and Vietnamese, at schools, community agencies, and parent-type organizations, such as Parent Teacher Associations.

“We are also developing targeted parent presentations to address specific family issues. One is Family Meals Make a Difference, based on CASA’s Family Day research, to encourage parents to engage with their children by having frequent family dinners. Research indicates that parental engagement during regular family dinners is an effective tool to help parents raise healthy, drug-free children,” said Stauder.



The Initiative began with a media campaign utilizing bus banner advertisements featured on eight buses for three months in Anaheim. The Solution is You advertising campaign theme is designed to convey a simple parenting message: Talk with your children.

To support the campaign, ADEPT collaborated with 211 Orange County, a free and confidential information and referral phone system, to develop a Community Resource Guide. The guide is a comprehensive

listing of parenting programs throughout the county.

“There is data that indicate that when parents do talk to their children about the dangers of alcohol and drugs, the child’s risk of alcohol and drug use lowers significantly,” said Stauder. “The objective of the Parenting Initiative is to provide parents with

tools and resources to effectively address these critical issues in their families.”

For more information, contact Pauline Stauder, Program Supervisor, ADEPT, 714/834-2094; email: PStauder@ochca.com.

The parenting programs offered by the County of Orange Health Care Agency, advocacy groups and prevention organizations are informing parents with innovative and effective strategies that encourage positive parent-child relationships. Many of the parenting programs offered throughout the county have been developed to address unique family challenges that can influence how parents interact with their children. They are designed to enhance parent-child communication and cohesiveness. These easily accessible and effective programs offer strategies to inform and support families and also provide positive parenting skills that create more stable and sustainable family units.



ADEPT
County of Orange Health Care Agency Headquarters
405 W. Fifth Street #211
Santa Ana, CA 92701
714/834-4058

Web site: ochcahealthinfo.com/adept



Please contact Karina Pangan with all comments and requests, 714/834-4325, email: kpangan@ochca.com

Funded by the County of Orange Health Care Agency, Alcohol & Drug Education & Prevention Team - ADEPT.

Written and published by Business Resource Group - BRG