

GRADE A PLUS



Great River Alcohol and Drug Education Alliance, Parents Linking in United Support

March 2009

Get The Family Together!

GRADE A PLUS is sponsoring a Family Trivia Contest on Sunday, April 19 at West Burlington Christian Church from 3:00-5:30 pm. It is designed with the *entire* family in mind and cost only \$5.00 per person with each team/table limited to ten people. With a grand prize of \$500 cash, it is certain to be exciting! Call 752-6027 to register or for more details.

“Diversity: Everybody Has A Story” A Public Forum

In light of recent social justice concerns and other issues, a Diversity Forum is being held on April 2 from 7-9 pm, sponsored by The City of Burlington, The Human Rights Commission, and GRADE A PLUS. This forum will be held in the Burlington City Council Chambers. Featured speaker will be Mr. Preston Daniels, former Mayor of Des Moines and the Director of the Iowa Department of Human Rights.

Please plan to attend to help resolve these issues and make our community a better place to live and work. (This event will also be televised on Cable Channel 18.)

Think your Child Might be Using Drugs?

It can be a scary time when you suspect or discover your child is drinking or using drugs. The Partnership for a Drug-Free America has launched Time To Act, a new, first-of-its-kind resource to help parents spot signs and symptoms, have productive conversations with their teens, and find outside help if they need. Please go to <http://timetoact.drugfree.org>.

Prevent Teens from Engaging in Risky Behaviors as a Coping Strategy

Even under the best of circumstances, teens in our community struggle with a great deal of stress in their lives. Without the proper guidance from a parent or other trusted adult, they may turn to risky and unhealthy behaviors, such as drug use and drinking.

A recent survey shows that 43 percent of 13- to 14-year olds say they feel stressed every single day. By ages 15 to 17, the number rises to 59 percent. And nearly two-thirds of teens say that they are “somewhat” or “very concerned” about their personal finances, with girls reporting feeling “frequently stressed” more often than boys.

Valuable information and a new expert column are now available on the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign’s parent Web site, at www.TheAntiDrug.com. For more information, contact GRADE A PLUS to receive a copy of *Navigating the Teen Years: A Parent’s Handbook for Raising Healthy Teens*, endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics. This resource is packed with useful tips and expert advice on how parents can tune into their teens, set rules and expectations, and monitor them through their adolescent years.

Iowa Ranks Second Best on Drunk Driving Fatalities

MADD’s Campaign to Eliminate Drunk Driving has issued a 2007 State progress Report. Iowa ranks number 2 as the nation’s best on its percent of total traffic fatalities that involve a drunk driver. According to MADD, 23.8% of Iowa driving deaths involve drunk drivers. The report included a statement that says Iowa could decrease fatalities by another 20% if it allowed sobriety checkpoints.

Fewer Iowa Adults Are Smoking



Smoking prevalence is at 14% among Iowa adults; this has decreased every year the survey was performed since 2002:

- In 2002: 23% smoked
- In 2004: 20% smoked
- In 2006: 18% smoked

32% of current smokers reported smoking fewer cigarettes now than before Iowa raised the cigarette tax in 2007. 83% of the smokers reported the desire to quit.

The 2008 report also showed:

- 4% currently use smokeless tobacco
- 4% currently use cigars
- 0-1% currently use pipes

-Source: Data collected April 4 – June 9, 2008 by the University of Northern Iowa's Center for Social & Behavioral Research.

Significant Research Findings About Underage Drinking

Data from two major National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism surveys have shown that those who begin drinking before the age of 21 tend to be at much greater risk for lifetime alcohol dependence than those who begin drinking after 21.

One theory on this is that people who start drinking early in adolescence are more likely to become dependent later because their brain is still developing, making it more vulnerable to particular alcohol actions that promote addiction. Research shows that the adolescent brain doesn't actually stop developing until the age of 25, so the longer a person waits to drink alcohol, the better off their brain will actually be.

Religious Involvement Strengthens Protective Factors

Several recent studies indicate that religiosity during adolescence and early adulthood strengthens protective factors and weakens risk factors that promote drug use. Generally, the higher a youth's level of religiosity, the less likely they are to binge drink or use marijuana. Also, an adolescents' religiosity had a significant positive association with self control, and both religion and self control are related to fewer delinquent behaviors such as marijuana and alcohol use.

-Source: Religious Practice and Civic Life (conference): What the Research Says (November 2007)

Five Resolutions that Show Your Kids You Care



1. Help them discover the feeling of gratitude, not just to say thank you.
2. Keep the promises you make. If you do not keep your word, acknowledge that. Help your teen understand the circumstances or choices that precipitated the change in your plans.
3. Answer your teen's questions and be consistent. When you notice behavioral changes in them, make yourself available and encourage them to talk about what is going on in their life.
4. Be understanding when they have a difficult time and let them know you will love them no matter what.
5. Be diligent. Have ongoing conversations with your kids about the risks of drugs and alcohol.