



# *Alliance for Safe Kids, Inc.*

## NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 5, February, 2009

Winter is slowly coming to an end, and ASK is planning several programs for the coming months: Michael Nerney will be returning in the spring, Teen and Family Nights will be developed with local businesses, and a Teen Speak will be held later in the spring. Future newsletters will have specific information about dates and locations.

In this month's newsletter, as in previous editions, there are two more articles from the Partnership for a Drug-Free America – "Your Child: Grades 4-6" and "Transitions: The First Year of Middle School".

If you have an event or other item you'd like to see in future newsletters, or have questions about any programs listed here, please let Cathy know at (914) 736-1450 or cadlerask@yahoo.com.

Tricy Cushner, President    Cathryn Adler, Director

### **Calendar**

**Tuesday, February 10<sup>th</sup>:**

**7 PM, ASK coalition meeting**

*at the Boys & Girls Club, Yorktown*

*Community and Cultural Center*

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**Wednesday, February 11<sup>th</sup> :**

**7 PM: Youth Court training,**

*Yorktown Town Court*

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**Wednesday, February 25<sup>th</sup>:**

**4 PM: ASK coalition meeting,**

*Location TBA*

**7 PM: Youth Court training,**

*Yorktown Town Court*

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**Tuesday, March 10<sup>th</sup>:**

**10 AM, ASK coalition meeting**

*Location TBA*

### ***An Update on Compliance Checks***

On Saturday, January 10<sup>th</sup> and Friday, January 16<sup>th</sup>, the Yorktown Police Department conducted two rounds of "compliance checks" – visits to local businesses to ensure that they are not selling alcohol to minors.

The following businesses passed the checks: A&P Shrub Oak, A&P Yorktown, Courtesy Mobil (on East Main Street), Courtesy Shell (East Main Street), Food Emporium, Lakeland Liquors, Steinman's Corner Deli, Yorktown Shell (Commerce Street) and Valley Market.

If you visit these businesses, please thank them for their good work in protecting our kids.

The following businesses failed the check by selling alcohol to minors: DeCicco's Market in Jefferson Valley, and Southside Grill in Yorktown Heights.

Many thanks to Chief McMahon and his officers for their work in keeping Yorktown safe for our kids, and our families.

### ***Responsible Vendor Training***

The Alliance for Safe Kids and Yorktown Police Department co-sponsor TIPS (Training for Intervention Procedures) classes for Yorktown businesses.

TIPS is a nationally-recognized program in education and training for the responsible service, sale and consumption of alcohol. For information on future TIPS classes, please call the ASK office at 914-736-1450.

*The Alliance for Safe Kids, Inc., is a not-for profit 501(c)(3) corporation dedicated to keeping our kids out of harm's way. For further information, please email the Alliance at [Alliance4SafeKids@yahoo.com](mailto:Alliance4SafeKids@yahoo.com), or write to PO Box 106, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598. Please visit our website, [www.AllianceForSafeKids.org](http://www.AllianceForSafeKids.org)*

## Your Child: Grades 4-6

*From Partnership for a Drug-Free America*

[http://www.drugfree.org/Parent/YourChild/Articles/Grades\\_4-6.aspx](http://www.drugfree.org/Parent/YourChild/Articles/Grades_4-6.aspx)

Preteens: They're on a quest to figure out their place in the world. When it comes to the way they view that world, they tend to give their friends' opinions a great deal of power while, at the same time, they're starting to question their parents' views and messages. Your advice may be challenged — but it will be heard and will stay with your child much more than he or she will ever admit.

Here are 8 tips to help you help your preteen live a healthy, drug-free life:

1. **Make sure your child knows your rules — and that you'll enforce the consequences if rules are broken.** This applies to no-use rules about tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs — as well as bedtimes and homework. Research shows that kids are less likely to use tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs if their parents have established a pattern of setting clear rules and consequences for breaking those rules.
2. **Act out scenes with your child where people offer her drugs.** Kids who don't know what to say or how to get away are more likely to give in to peer pressure. Let her know that she can always use you as an excuse and say: "No, my mom [or dad, aunt, etc.] will kill me if I smoke a cigarette." Explain why she shouldn't continue friendships with kids who have offered her cigarettes, alcohol or pills.
3. **Tell your child what makes him so special.** Puberty can upend a child's self-esteem. Feelings of insecurity, doubt and pressure may creep in. Offset those feelings with a lot of positive comments about his life and who he is as an individual — and not just when he brings home an A.
4. **Give your children the power to make decisions that go against their peers.** You can reinforce this message through small things such as encouraging your child to pick out the sneakers he likes rather than the pair his four friends have.
5. **Base drug and alcohol messages on facts, not fear.** Kids can't argue with facts but their new need for independence may allow them to get around their fears. Also, kids love to learn facts — both run-of-the-mill and truly odd. For drug and alcohol facts, visit our Drug Guide.
6. **Preteens aren't concerned with future problems that might result from experimentation with tobacco, alcohol or other drugs, but they are concerned about their appearance — sometimes to the point of obsession.** Tell them about the smelly hair and ashtray breath caused by cigarettes. Make sure they know that it would be hard to perform in the school play while high on marijuana.
7. **Get to know your child's friends — and their friends' parents.** Check in by phone or a visit once in a while to make sure they are giving their children the same kinds of messages you give your children about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.
8. **Help children separate reality from fantasy.** Watch TV and movies with them and ask lots of questions to reinforce the distinction between the two. Remember to include advertising in your discussions, as those messages are especially powerful.

**Substances in your fourth to sixth grader's world can include:  
Tobacco, Alcohol, Ritalin, Adderall, Inhalants, Marijuana.**

## Transitions: The First Year of Middle School

From *Partnership for a Drug-Free America*

[http://www.drugfree.org/Parent/YourChild/Articles/Transition\\_MiddleSchool.aspx#](http://www.drugfree.org/Parent/YourChild/Articles/Transition_MiddleSchool.aspx#)

You've been anticipating this for the past few years — your child's transition from elementary school to middle school. Be warned, this is a critical time and calls for extra vigilance on your part. Your son or daughter may still seem young, but their new surroundings can put them in some mature and tempting situations.

- The likelihood that kids will try drugs increases dramatically during this year. Your child is going to meet lots of new kids, seek acceptance, and start to make more — and bigger — choices. For the first time, your kids will be exposed to older kids who use alcohol, tobacco or other drugs. New middle- or junior high-schoolers often think these older students are cool and may be tempted to try drugs to fit in.
- One type of drug in particular to watch out for is inhalants, since they tend to be abused at a very young age. Inhalants are ordinary household products that are inhaled or sniffed by children to get high — but can cause serious brain damage, among other side effects.

- A 2007 study shows that 20 percent of 6th graders have tried inhalants. Another disturbing fact is that from 1998 to 2007, the percent of middle-school students agreeing strongly that sniffing or huffing things to get high can kill you significantly decreased from 61 percent to 54 percent. This is a potential signal of concern because the more risky an adolescent thinks a substance is, the less likely he / she is to abuse it. (Partnership Attitude Tracking Study). Therefore, it's important to be aware of these harmful chemicals and be sure to educate your children on their effects as well.

***While your child may physically and emotionally pull away from you to establish his own identity ... he actually needs you to be involved in his life more than ever before.***

- To many middle-school kids, peer approval means everything and your child may make you feel unwelcome. He is going through a time where he feels as though he should be able to make his own decisions and may start to challenge your values. While your child may physically and emotionally pull away from you to establish his own identity — and may even seem embarrassed by you at times — he actually needs you to be involved in his life more than ever before.
- Also, be aware that your child is going through some major physical and hormonal changes. Her moods may vary as she tries to come to terms with her ever-changing body and the onset of puberty. Keep yourself educated on what to expect — if you reassure her that nothing is out of the ordinary, your child can relax knowing that what she's going through is normal.

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***Transitions: The First Year of Middle School***  
*cont'd from page 3*

**To help your child make good choices during this critical time, you should:**

- Make it very clear that you do not want her to use alcohol, tobacco, marijuana or other drugs.
- Find out if he really understands the consequences of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use.
- Get to know her friends by taking them to and from after-school activities, games, the library, and movies (while being sensitive to her need to feel independent). Check in with her friends' parents often to make sure you share the same anti-drug stance.
- Be sure you know his online friends – as well as his other online activities such as websites he visits, with whom he emails, chats and instant messages, his MySpace or Facebook page, and who he text messages.
- Volunteer for activities where you can observe him at school.
- Hold a weekly family meeting to check in with each other and address problems or concerns.
- Get your kids involved with adult-supervised after-school activities.
- Give kids who are unsupervised after school a schedule of activities, limits on their behavior, household chores to accomplish, and a strict phone-in-to-you policy (along with easily accessible snacks).
- Make it easy for your child to leave a situation where alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs are being used.
- Call kids' parents if their home is to be used for a party; get assurance that no alcoholic beverages or illegal substances will be at the party.
- Set curfews and enforce them.
- Encourage open dialogue with your children about their experiences.

***Neighborhood Watch***

The Alliance for Safe Kids and Yorktown Police Department offer assistance in setting up Neighborhood Watch programs. If you don't have a local Watch, but are interested in starting one, just give Detective Lewis a call at (914) 962-4141

***Youth Court***

This year's class of the ASK Youth Court is full. To reserve a space on the waiting list for the 2009-2010 Youth Court, please contact Youth Court Director Art Lander at (914) 736-1450.