



Thank you all for your overwhelmingly positive response to our first newsletter! Each month we'll be including reports on events that occurred over the previous month, as well coverage of upcoming guest speakers, meetings, trainings, and other issues of interest. You'll also find information here on our upcoming year of Youth Court class, with the newest – and third - class of participants now starting training.

If you have an event or other item you'd like to see in future newsletters, or have any questions about any programs listed here, please let Cathy know at (914) 736-1450 or [cadlerask@yahoo.com](mailto:cadlerask@yahoo.com). This venue is a way to keep ASK emails to a minimum, and we welcome all of your comments and suggestions.

Have a very happy Thanksgiving, and if you're able to attend any meetings (see Calendar, below), we'll look forward to seeing you there!

Tricy Cushner, President      Cathryn Adler, Director

## **Calendar**

**Tuesday, November 18<sup>th</sup>:**

**7:30 PM: Parenting Teens In Stressful Times, Walter Panas Library, Panas High School**

**Wednesday, November 19<sup>th</sup>:**

**4 PM: ASK coalition meeting, Sparkle Lake community building**

**7 PM: Youth Court training, Lakeland High School**

**Wednesday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>:**

**7 PM: Youth Court training, Yorktown High School**

**Tuesday, December 9<sup>th</sup>:**

**7 PM: ASK coalition meeting, Sparkle Lake community building**

**Wednesday, December 10<sup>th</sup>:**

**7 PM: Youth Court training, Lakeland High School**

## ***Parenting Teens In Stressful Times***

On Tuesday, November 18<sup>th</sup>, the Panas Parent Club is hosting this program at Walter Panas High School. Topics will include:

- Setting limits and providing consequences
- Improving communication
- Managing social pressures & conflicts
- Teaching teen coping skills
- Preventing alcohol and other drug abuse

Ellen Morehouse, LCSW, will be the speaker. Ms. Morehouse is the executive director of Student Assistance Services Corp., a non-profit substance abuse prevention corporation in Tarrytown, NY. She has presented to parents and professional groups in 43 states and taught at Fordham University Graduate School of Social Work. She has published several articles in professional journals, and been interviewed on several national television and radio programs and in national magazines.

The event will start at 7:30 PM and will be held in the Walter Panas Library.

*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)*



## Neighborhood Watch



In ongoing support for a safe and drug-free community, the Alliance for Safe Kids has joined forces with the Yorktown Police Department to assist groups in starting Neighborhood Watch Programs. This newsletter will include information on important crime prevention tips for your home, as well as the formation of Neighborhood Watch programs in Yorktown.

Yorktown Detective Sean Lewis reports the following: in a recent burglary, taking place between 8 and 11 in the morning, a Yorktown home was entered through the rear sliding glass door. Neighbors did not see anything suspicious at the time, and jewelry was taken from the master bedroom.

*Safety tip: if you have sliding exterior doors, remember to keep a piece of wood in the track when not in use. This will prevent the doors from being opened from the outside.*

During the holiday season, police departments see a rise in theft-related crime. Please take the extra effort to be aware of suspicious activity and report it. If you see car that is possibly related to that suspicious activity, make note of the license plate number and report it to the police.

If you are interested in starting a Neighborhood Watch program, please call Detective Lewis at (914) 962-3811 or the ASK office at (914) 736-1450.

### **Attention Local Restaurants, Bars, Delis, Service Stations! ASK is Now Offering TIPS Training**

The Alliance will be offering TIPS training to both off- and on-premise businesses in 2009. Training for Intervention Procedures, a program training alcohol servers in the responsible service and sale of alcohol, has been shown to reduce not only intoxication by purchasers of alcohol, but also underage drinking and drunk driving. Not only does this protect the general public, but by training their staff, business owners can see a reduction in their insurance premiums.

Art Lander, ASK's Director of Special Projects, and Youth Officer Sean Lewis of the Yorktown Police Department, recently attended a two-day TIPS "Train the Trainer" program. They are now certified to offer TIPS to interested businesses here in Yorktown. Future training dates will be listed in the newsletter Calendar.

### ***Ping Pong, Video Game, & Kick Ball Tournaments at First Middle School Night***

60+ students from Mildred Strang and Copper Beech Middle Schools enjoyed a great evening on Friday, November 7<sup>th</sup>, at the Boys & Girls Club in Yorktown. The evening included these tournaments, plus card games, and dodge ball. Many thanks to Barbara Cutri for organizing the event!

If you are interested in helping with future Middle School Night planning, please contact the ASK office at (914) 736-1450 or email [Alliance\\_For\\_Safe\\_Kids@yahoo.com](mailto:Alliance_For_Safe_Kids@yahoo.com)

### **Upcoming Teen Nights**

The Teen Night committee is tentatively planning High School Teen Nights for Sunday, December 28<sup>th</sup>, and Sunday, January 18<sup>th</sup>, locations to be announced in the December newsletter.

## Advice on Parenting Teens: Be a Parent, Not a Pal

### From Partnership for a Drug-Free America

[http://www.drugfree.org/Parent/ConnectingWithYourKids/Articles/Parent\\_V\\_Pal.aspx](http://www.drugfree.org/Parent/ConnectingWithYourKids/Articles/Parent_V_Pal.aspx)

When parenting teens, it often seems easier (and more fun) to forge a close relationship with kids by playing the role of best pal instead of parent. But, while taking the cool route may make you the most popular parent around, "teenagers don't want parents who are buddies," says Marybeth Hicks, author of *Bringing up Geeks: How to Protect Your Kid's Childhood in a Grow-Up-Too-Fast World*. "They've got plenty of buddies. They need parents who are parents. When we step up to the plate and really behave the way we're supposed to, our kids will treasure and respect us even more."

Adds Dr. Neil I. Bernstein, author of *How to Keep Your Teenager Out of Trouble and What to Do If You Can't and There When He Needs You: How to Be an Available, Involved, and Emotionally Connected Father to Your Son*, "it's not cool to put our kids in harm's way." Some examples of extreme parenting pal behavior include allowing teens to drink alcohol in your home, giving teens permission to hang out at your house, unsupervised, while you're out of town, or smoking cigarettes or pot with your teen.

When parenting teens, parents should think "parent first, pal second, always," says Bernstein. "That doesn't mean we shouldn't be a pal to our teens. That just means there is a certain amount of distance and boundaries necessary for effective parenting."

There's no need to swing 180 degrees in the other direction and play the role of dictator, either. Bernstein encourages parents to be friendly with their kids, to interact and share activities and ideas. "But the key to [parenting teens] is that certain amount of distance," he says. "A parent has to clearly be a parent. When those boundaries get obscured, that's when kids start taking advantage."

Some parents try too hard to be their kid's friend and even go so far as to smoke or drink with them, or try to impress them with stories of past drug and alcohol use. That behavior gives kids harmful, unhealthy messages. Parents should only fill kids in on their own drug or alcohol past if there's a lesson to be learned from the story. "I think it's important that we remember our job as parents is to share our wisdom, not necessarily all of our experiences," say Hicks. While they don't always show it, teens need and want boundaries.

But make sure you don't pull back too far. "It's that sharing, that allowing for vulnerability that fuels intimacy and trust and respect and all those things we want with our kids," says Bernstein. "Not the *because I said so, that's why* and *what I did doesn't matter* and all this kind of stuff."

### Course Correction

If you've already crossed the line between parent and pal with parenting your teen, all is not lost. Bernstein says it's just time to make a course correction. Own up to your poor judgment and, if necessary, apologize to other parents whose teens you put at risk through your decisions. Then let your own child know you made a mistake and that your parenting is going to be different in the future.

## **The Importance of Rules: Setting Limits for Teens From Partnership for a Drug-Free America**

[http://www.drugfree.org/Parent/ProtectingYourKids/Articles/SettingRules\\_for\\_Your\\_Child.aspx](http://www.drugfree.org/Parent/ProtectingYourKids/Articles/SettingRules_for_Your_Child.aspx)

Rules don't alienate kids. Rules about what's acceptable — from obeying curfews to calling in to tell you where they are — make children feel loved and secure. Rules are also a key ingredient in substance abuse prevention. But rule setting isn't always easy.

Need help setting limits with your teen? Keep these four tips in mind:

1. When kids break rules, parents often overreact with harsh, disproportionate and unenforceable punishment, which undermines the effectiveness of setting limits. Instead, when you first tell your child about a new rule, discuss what the punishment will be and how it will be carried out. Consequences must go hand in hand with limits so that your child understands the cost of breaking the rules. Punishments should be reasonable and related to the violation. For example, if you catch your son and his friends smoking, you might ground him by restricting his social activities for two weeks.
2. Punishments should only involve penalties you discussed before the rule was broken. Also, never issue empty threats. Since we're all more inclined to say things we don't mean when we're upset, it's best to cool off before discussing consequences.
3. Insist that your teen be in adult-supervised situations after school. Encourage her to get involved with youth groups, arts, music, sports, community service and academic clubs. Research shows that adult supervision of adolescents after school is a key factor in substance abuse prevention. An example of an appropriate consequence for violating the after-school adult-supervision rule is loss of an activity of "freedom," like a parent-free trip to the movies or mall.
4. Make it clear that you do not ever want your child to use marijuana. By emphasizing your no-tolerance rule for drug use, you reduce the chances for substance abuse now or later in life. Also, if your teen knows she can always blame you, she will have an excuse to fall back on when tempted or urged by friends to make bad decisions.

The key to preventing substance abuse is setting limits for teens when it comes to drugs and alcohol. If they clearly see the consequences for using these substances, and view them as fair, they are more apt to follow the rules that you have created for them.

## **Teens, Parents, Law Panel**

On October 29<sup>th</sup> the Alliance hosted "Teens, Parents, Alcohol/Drugs, and the Law" at Mercy College in Yorktown. Over 150 parents and teens filled the audience, asking questions ranging from "what happens if my teen hosts a party and the police are called?" to "XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX".

Panellists included District Attorney Janet Di Fiore, Ellen Morehouse, Executive Director of Student Assistance Services, Corp.; Salvatore Lagonia, Esq.; Julie Vicinanza, School Resource Officer at Copper Beech Middle School; Scott Sage, School Resource Officer at Lakeland High School; Justine Rice, RN and Sandy Way, RN, from Northern Westchester Hospital. The event was moderated by Stephanie Carbone of the Alliance for Safe Kids.

ASK thanks the panellists and all those who attended. They all made this event a great success!

## ***2008-2009 ASK Youth Court is convened***

On November 5<sup>th</sup>, 24 middle and high school teens, along with their parents, met with the Youth Court Advisory Board. These teens will form the third class of Youth Court members. For further information about the Court, please contact Youth Court Director Art Lander at (914) 736-1450.