

Prevention Paradigm

A newsletter building communication on preventing substance abuse in Merced County

Fall 2005

Inside This Issue.....

FNL Mentoring Program Continues.....1
2005 Red Ribbon Week.....2
Rivera Middle School Club Live.....3
Recovery Happens.....3
**Methamphetamine – A Powerful Addictive
Substance.....4**
Responsible Gambling Guidelines.....5
**Helping Youth to Become Positive
And Successful.....5**
Oxycontin.....6
Resources for Assistance.....7



FNL Mentoring Program Continues

Good news! Congress restored funding for Safe and Drug Free Schools in the 2005-06 federal budget. As a result, the local Prevention Unit staff in the Alcohol and Drug Services Division of the Merced County Department of Mental Health is gearing up the after school Friday Night Live (FNL) Mentoring Program at three local school sites.

Over the past three years, 135 local high school and middle school youth have attended the 16-week after school mentoring sessions in Dos Palos, Delhi and Merced. These after

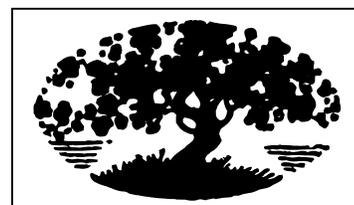
school sessions consist of curriculum and activities designed for students to:

- Experience a physically and emotionally safe environment.
- Have opportunities for community engagement.
- Have opportunities for leadership and advocacy.
- Have opportunities to build caring and meaningful relationships with peers and adults.
- Have opportunities to engage in skill development activities (alcohol/drug refusal skills).
- Have opportunities to develop healthy personal attitudes and behaviors.

An evaluation of the local program was conducted and results show that youth participating:

- Are making more positive choices around alcohol, tobacco and other drug use.
- Have opportunities to develop conflict resolution skills and are learning how to handle situations where others are being harassed or teased.
- Enjoy school more.

The FNL Mentoring Program has been well received in local schools and has had a positive influence on our local youth. Many youth in the mentoring program have also attended the local Youth to Youth Conferences where they have experienced more opportunities for positive youth development and learn how to make healthier choices in their lives.



Prevention Paradigm

A newsletter building communication on preventing substance abuse in Merced County

Fall 2005

***2005 Red Ribbon Week
School Spirit Contest
"I Pledge to Make it a
Drug Free Year"***

Increasing awareness about the negative impact alcohol and other drugs can have on individuals, families and our community is one of the main goals of Red Ribbon Week events. Red Ribbon Week began as a result of the murder of Enrique "Kiki" Camarena, a Drug Enforcement Agent assigned to a case in Mexico. He was kidnapped, tortured and killed days before he was to identify kingpins of the illegal business in Mexico. Angered by Kiki's death and the destruction caused by alcohol and drug use in the U.S., young people in Kiki's home town of Calexico, California began wearing Red Ribbons as a symbol of their commitment to fight drug use.

For many years, schools and communities as well as the Merced County Alcohol and Drug Services' Prevention Unit have hosted local Red Ribbon events. Creative Red Ribbon awareness events at schools have included classroom door and school decorating contests as well as rallies and assemblies with guest speakers. Some local communities, most notably Merced, Atwater and Livingston, have hosted community-wide events such as parades, walks and decoration days.

The Merced County Alcohol and Drug Services' Prevention Unit distributes 40,000 Red Ribbons annually throughout the county. The past two years, the Prevention Unit has sponsored a Red Ribbon School Spirit Contest to encourage and support efforts at creating school-wide awareness about alcohol and other drug use.

We are looking forward to this year's October Red Ribbon events and activities that are now being planned. We encourage you to support your local activities and to wear a Red Ribbon during the week of October 22-30.

Remember the Red Ribbon Pledge!

***No Use of Illegal Drugs,
No Illegal Use of Legal Drugs***

***No Uso de Drogas Ilegales,
No Uso Ilegal de Drogas Legales***



www.redribboncoalition.org

Prevention Paradigm

A newsletter building communication on preventing substance abuse in Merced County

Fall 2005

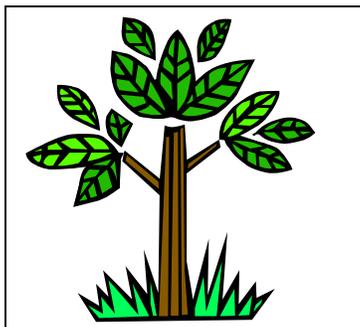
Rivera Middle School Club Live Rocks!

The motto for Rivera Middle School is “Committed to Excellence.” Over the past three years, Rivera Club Live has adopted this motto as well. With their site advisor, Joette Cotta, students at Rivera Middle School have been involved year round in their school and community.

“This year is off to a great start,” says Joette. “We already have thirty Club Live members and we are only four weeks into the year!” Each club member will be assigned to a committee. These committees will be used to plan, organize, publicize and perform year-round activities at school and in the community.

Rivera Club Live held their second annual carwash fundraiser this past weekend. The club raised \$277. Joette says, “The money will go towards paying for these youth to go on a trip to Great America at the end of the school year. Most of these kids have never been out of town, so for them it’s an opportunity of a life time.”

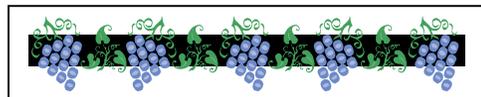
Way to go Rivera Club Live!



Recovery Happens Held on Saturday, September 17

The theme for this year’s Recovery Happens event was “Join the Forces for Recovery – Healing Lives, Families and Communities.”

Recovery Happens has been held nationally for eleven years to celebrate recovery and highlight the successes for individuals, programs and communities. Locally, this year’s event was held at Applegate Park and began with proclamations from the County of Merced that were presented by Kathleen Crookham, member of the Merced County Board of Supervisors. Mayor Hub Walsh presented a proclamation from the City of Merced as well. Various individuals in recovery presented testimonies, and Cal Skyhawk performed after lunch. Alcohol and Drug Services’ staff prepared and served the free lunch and FNL provided music and dancing. Thank you to Community Social Model Advocates for co-sponsoring the event with Merced County Mental Health, Alcohol and Drug Services Division.



Prevention Paradigm

A newsletter building communication on preventing substance abuse in Merced County

Fall 2005

Methamphetamine - A Powerful Addictive Stimulant

(www.nida.nih.gov)

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) has long recognized the danger of methamphetamine abuse, and has actively supported research on this and related drugs. Understanding methamphetamine's effects on the brain and behavior is critical to developing both prevention and treatment strategies.

Methamphetamine is a long-acting and very potent stimulant drug. It can be snorted, swallowed, injected, or smoked, and it is frequently taken in combination with other drugs. Like other drugs of abuse, methamphetamine produces a sense of euphoria by increasing the release of dopamine in the brain's reward centers.

When dopamine is liberated in such high concentrations, it can damage dopamine cells. Indeed, several studies in laboratory animals have corroborated this. In humans, imaging studies have shown that methamphetamine abusers show abnormalities in dopamine function resulting in impairments in movement and cognitive function that are similar, though of a lesser severity, to those seen in patients with Parkinson's disease. The good news is that unlike Parkinson's disease, where the damage to the brain cannot be reversed, with protracted abstinence from methamphetamine, there is some return of function. This further highlights the importance of instituting treatment for methamphetamine abusers to maximize their chances of a successful recovery.

There are other dangerous effects of methamphetamine. The large increases in dopamine produced by methamphetamine can trigger psychosis that in some instances persists months after drug use has stopped. Also, because methamphetamine affects the contraction of blood vessels it can result in heart attacks and strokes in relatively young patients.

In addition to its effects on the brain, methamphetamine use is inextricably linked to risky sexual behaviors, thus increasing the risk for transmission of infectious diseases, including HIV. The recent case of a methamphetamine abuser with a particularly virulent strain of HIV is a sobering reminder of this connection. Those who inject the drug risk contracting HIV through the sharing of contaminated equipment, and methamphetamine's physiological effects may also favor HIV transmission and progression. Preliminary studies suggest that HIV-positive methamphetamine abusers who are on antiretroviral therapy are at greater risk of progressing to AIDS than non-users. Furthermore, interactions between methamphetamine and HIV itself may lead to greater neuronal damage and functional impairment.

Methamphetamine addiction can be treated successfully using currently available behavioral treatments and NIDA is also investing in the development of new medications for methamphetamine addiction. NIDA also is pursuing the development of an immunization strategy based on monoclonal antibodies for the treatment of methamphetamine overdose.



Prevention Paradigm

A newsletter building communication on preventing substance abuse in Merced County

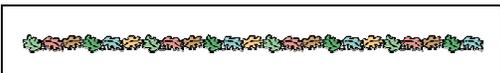
Fall 2005

Responsible Gambling Guidelines

If you're concerned that gambling is becoming more than a game for you, try using these guidelines to moderate your play.

- Think of the money you lose as the cost of your entertainment. Consider any money you win a bonus.
- Set a dollar limit and stick to it.
- Set a time limit and stick to it.
- Leave when you reach your limit, whether you're winning or losing.
- Understand that you'll probably lose, and accept the loss as part of the game.
- Don't borrow money to gamble.
- Don't let gambling interfere with or become a substitute for family, friends or work.
- Don't chase losses. Chances are you'll lose even more trying to recoup your losses.
- Don't use gambling as a way to cope with emotional or physical pain.
- Know the warning signs of problem gambling.

If your gambling is no longer an enjoyable activity, ask yourself: Why am I still playing? and call 1-888-277-3115 or visit www.adp.ca.gov.



Helping Youth to Become Positive and Successful

Many adults who work with and care about youth such as parents, teachers and other youth allies, have wanted to know how to best support youth in their development. The Search Institute in Minnesota surveyed over two million youth across the United States and Canada. Researchers learned about the experiences, attitudes, and behaviors including the number of **developmental assets or strengths** at work for these young people. The studies show a strong and consistent relationship between the number of assets present in youth and the degree to which they develop in positive and healthful ways. The fewer the assets, the greater chance the youth will engage in risky behaviors such as drug use, unsafe sex and violence. Interestingly, the studies show that overall, 62% of young people surveyed have fewer than 20 of the 40 assets. In short, the majority of young people in this country--from all walks of life--are lacking in sufficient Developmental Assets needed for healthy development.

The 40 assets fall into two major groups - external assets outside of the youth, and internal assets that are inside the person. External assets are grouped accordingly.

- Support (family support, other positive adult relationships, caring neighborhood and school).
- Empowerment (youth feel that adults in the community value them).
- Boundaries and Expectations (family has clear rules and consequences).
- Constructive Use of Time (youth activities, music, art, religion).

Prevention Paradigm

A newsletter building communication on preventing substance abuse in Merced County

Fall 2005

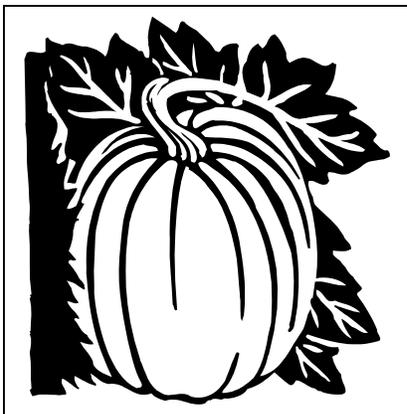
Internal assets have four main groups as well.

- Commitment to Learning (motivated in school, youth reads for pleasure).
- Positive Values (youth values promoting equality and reducing poverty and hunger).
- Social Competencies (knows how to plan and make choices, has friendship skills, comfortable with people from other cultures).
- Positive Identity (high self-esteem, knowing they have some control in their lives).

The reality is that the average young person surveyed in the U.S. experiences only 18 of the 40 assets. The majority of youth in this country are lacking in sufficient developmental assets needed for healthy development. This should probably come as no surprise living in a country that values technology, but youth are craving human relationships and positive personal interaction.

The Search Institute has a number of suggestions for how communities, groups, schools, churches, parents and individuals can help build assets for children and teens.

www.search-institute.org



Oxycontin

OxyContin is a prescription painkiller used for moderate to high pain relief associated with injuries, bursitis, dislocation, fractures, neuralgia, arthritis, lower back pain, and pain associated with cancer. OxyContin contains oxycodone, the medication's active ingredient, in a timed-release tablet. Oxycodone products have been illicitly abused for the past 30 years.

OxyContin produces opiate-like effects and is sometimes used as a substitute for heroin. Illicit uses of OxyContin include crushing the tablet and ingesting or snorting it. Most individuals who abuse this drug do so to gain euphoric effects, relieve pain, and to avoid withdrawal symptoms. Those who take the drug repeatedly can develop a tolerance or resistance to the drug's effects.

<http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/drugfact/oxycontin/index.html>



Prevention Paradigm

A newsletter building communication on preventing substance abuse in Merced County

Fall 2005

Resources for Assistance

- <http://www.nida.nih.gov/> (National Institute on Drug Abuse)
- <http://www.jointogether.org/home/> (take action against substance use and gun violence)
- <http://www.inhalants.org/> (information on inhalant use/abuse)
- <http://www.health.org/> (alcohol and drug information)
- <http://www.mediacampaign.org/> (National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign)
- <http://www.teennewhorizons.com> (information for families with struggling teens)

Prevention Paradigm is published quarterly by the Prevention Unit Team,
Alcohol and Drug Services Division,
Merced County Department of Mental Health

Troy Fox, Director of Mental Health
Tom Skinner, Assistant Mental Health Director

Questions regarding any information in **Prevention Paradigm** should be addressed to the
**Prevention Unit, 3345 M Street,
Merced, CA 95348
Phone: 209-381-6860**

Alcoholics Anonymous - 385-6004
(24-hour answering service)

Alateen – 383-6662

Tough Love Support – 386-0980
(for family members of teens)

Hobie House – 722-6335
(men’s residential treatment program)

Tranquility Village – 357-5200
(women’s residential treatment program)

**Merced County Mental Health
Emergency Services – 381-6800**
(24-hour crisis intervention)

**Northside Mental Health Counseling Center
Livingston – 394-4032**

The Center – 381-6880
(outpatient adult alcohol and other drug treatment program)

The Raft – 381-6860
(adolescent alcohol and other drug treatment program)

**Westside Mental Health Counseling Center
Los Banos – 710-6100**

**California Mental Health – Dos Palos
392-6400**

Aegis Medical Systems - 725-1060
(methadone program)

