

Building Bridges To Parenting

A Newsletter from Building Bridges Together

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Are you looking for
FREE Family
Resources?

Our Information and Referral Line can give you more than phone numbers and addresses to programs in your neighborhood. We have live specialists answering your calls, which provide support, and lend a compassionate ear to every caller.

CALL US AT:
(619) 477-0242

TOLL FREE
(888) 843-5800

Latest Trends

'Jelly Bracelets' Cause for Parent Concern

A fashion accessory may have a lot more meaning than you realize for your teenager: Jelly bracelets are making a comeback. But instead of a fashion statement, they may be making a statement about your kid's sex life. Madonna wore them in the '80s. Now, teen pop star Avril Lavigne has an armful, and your little girl may have them, too. Only this time these jelly bracelets have a new nickname: *sex bracelets*. These bendable pieces of colorful rubber have a whole new unwholesome meaning: They're a sexual code to many teens. The color codes vary widely according to region and age group. In Florida, for example, purple wins a French kiss, while in other states purple means oral sex. In a game called Snap, if a boy breaks a jelly bracelet off a girl's wrist, he wins a particular sexual reward corresponding with the color of that bracelet. It has become such a problem in some middle schools, districts started banning the bracelets. If your daughter is wearing one of these bracelets, it certainly doesn't mean she's having sex, following through on the Snap game, or even knows about the code. But experts say it's a good opportunity for you to have that all important conversation about sex, what you think is acceptable, and best for your family.

Drugs in Cyberspace

The Internet acts as a megastore where young people can purchase almost anything, including prescription drugs, marijuana, cocaine, club drugs, alcohol, and cigarettes. They can also find online directions to concoct drugs such as methamphetamines. And even learn how to get high on household products such as cough medicine or aerosol sprays. This is why parents and caring adults must be on the alert to ensure that their kids don't buy drugs online or obtain them from other kids who are buying them online. With a credit card, teens can buy drugs online as easily as they can purchase a book or download music. Many Web sites sell prescription drugs, such as narcotic pain relievers, stimulants, and sedatives, without asking for a written prescription or the age of the purchaser. Then, the drugs are mailed in unmarked packages. Some prescription drugs sold on the Internet have harmful ingredients, are fake, are stronger or weaker than listed, or are manufactured without proper safety standards. The Internet is one of the few centers of teen culture that mentions even promote cough medicine abuse. Several Web sites promote the abuse of cough medicines containing dextromethorphan (DXM), recommending how much to take to get high, suggesting other drugs to combine with DXM, explaining how to extract DXM from cough medicines, and even selling a powder form for snorting. Marijuana, as well as pipes, seeds, and other related items, also can be bought online. Legislators and law enforcement are finding new ways to address drugs in cyberspace. People who buy and sell illegal drugs online risk being scammed or busted in a sting operation, even though dealers and buyers can mask their identities.

A Pharm Party; not a keg party out on the farm!

Today, when young people talk about a "Pharm Party," they are not necessarily referring to a keg party in someone's barn out on the family farm. The new term "Pharm Party" refers to a party where prescription drugs are readily available in a potentially deadly mixture. The term "Pharm" is short for pharmaceuticals, which includes such drugs as Xanax, a strong tranquilizer and powerful pain killers like Vicodin and Oxycontin. Often times mind altering psychotropic drugs like Zoloft, Prozac, and Wellbutrin, commonly advertised on television, are taken in concert with other powerful pain pills and tranquilizers at these pharmaceutical cocktail parties. Pharm party goes often refer to this potentially lethal concoction as "trail mix". The "trail mix" is usually served up in large bowls or baggies and handed out to

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guests in the same fashion as a hostess serves snacks and drinks at a cocktail party. Many kids believe these prescription drugs to be less dangerous because they are "prescribed by a doctor". From the television ad campaigns selling anti-depressant medications, to the Internet and family medicine cabinet the availability of prescription drugs is an epidemic that has the potential to far exceed the devastation society is being faced with already through illegal drug use in the U.S.

What goes in one neighborhood may not apply to another, and teenagers have their own ways of interpreting and morphing trends. We encourage all parents to take the time to get educated on the latest trends. If you would like more information on the latest trends on drug and substance abuse, contact PRONASA at 858-493-0392

Program Highlight

Family Support Partner

Family Support Partners (FSPs) are individuals who understand what is required to care for a child with mental health challenges. These individuals have gone through this personal experience themselves. FSPs develop a supportive and helping relationship with assigned children, parents, and families in the area of San Diego County.

Are you interested in becoming a Family Support Partner? Please contact Sue McCoy at (619) 477-0757

PARENTING LINKS:

pronasa.org

bubblemonkey.com

advocatesforyouth.org

The Book Corner

Sparks: How Parents Can Ignite the Hidden Strengths of Teenagers *By Peter L. Benson*

Dr. Benson offers a step-by-step program for parents that takes a positive approach to helping teenagers thrive by identifying their unique sparks, special skills and assets to be nurtured and developed in the family, the school, and the community.

Free Community Presentation

Learn to Recognize the Signs of Alcohol and/or Drug Use in Youth

Come and learn to recognize the signs of drug use, as well as the physical effects, packaging and slang terms of the *latest* drugs. Presented by PRONASA

Location: Pt. Loma High School, 2335 Chastsworth Blvd. San Diego, CA 92106 **Date:** May 7th, 2008 from 6:00pm-8:00pm

Location: 9915 Magnolia, Santee, CA 92071 **Date:** Wednesday, May 14, 2008 from 6:00 am-8:00 pm

Youth Depression & Suicide (Japanese Only) by Dr. Taeko Uchino

Location: 4660 Viewridge Av. San Diego, CA 92123 **Date:** May 15, 2008 from 6:00 am-8:00 pm

Anger Management and Effective Communication with your Children

Location: 4660 Viewridge Av. San Diego, CA 92123 **Date:** May 28th, 2008 from 6:00 am-8:00 pm

[RSVP 888-843-5800](tel:888-843-5800)

About Us: Building Bridges Together is a component of the Families Forward Program of Mental Health Systems, Inc. We provide an Information & Referral Line to help the families of San Diego teach parents and caregivers how to better understand and raise happy and healthy children. It is our hope that this newsletter will be one more way of making available beneficial information for the parents of our County.

Contact Us:

Admin Line: 619-477-0757

I&R Line: 619-477-0242

Fax Line: 619-477-0799

www.buildingbridges2gether.org