

December 2013



# coalition news

Prevention news and information from the Tiverton Prevention Coalition

## UnMarketers Launch Peer-to-Peer Prevention Program at THS

They call themselves the “UnMarketers” and their mission is to talk with every 9th grader at Tiverton High about the risks associated with smoking marijuana.

Last year, seven THS students volunteered for the [UnMarketing Weed](#) community service and learning program where they designed an in-school poster campaign aimed at dispelling or “un-marketing” common misperceptions many teens have about marijuana, such as: it’s not harmful to brain development; it’s medicine so it must be okay; “everybody does it” (less than half actually do); and even “I think I drive better when I’m high!” One member of last year’s program graduated in June but the other six, plus one new 9th grader, wanted to continue their perception-busting work this year.

The UnMarketers have taken on two major projects for the 2013-14 school year. Now underway are interactive presentations to 9th grade, 20-minute advisory sessions each week. Each of the UnMarketers talks about marijuana from a different perspective. They discuss the real risks associated with teen marijuana smoking, as well as healthy and natural ways to “get high.” One of the UnMarketers, a former marijuana user, talks about her before and after experiences. Another invites 9th graders to join the group. Some offer their mobile numbers to 9th graders who want to talk. And at the close of each session, senior Alex Cotton recalls that he often looked for positive role models among upperclassmen when he was a freshman, sometimes it was



*The UnMarketers Seated: Andrew Dion, Christina Bebe, Grace Simpson and Levin Carr. Standing: Alex Cotton, Tori DiBenedetto and Alex Turner.*

hard to find someone leading in the right direction, and he tells the 9th graders to reach out to him or the other UnMarketers. “If you see us in the hall or in the cafeteria, say hello. None of us will ever turn our backs.”

The UnMarketers also plan to move beyond peer-to-peer prevention to “adult education.” They are working on a 12-page “prevention handbook” for parents of Tiverton 8th graders that will suggest, from a student’s perspective, how parents can help their kids avoid marijuana use in high

school. They plan to host a meeting of 8th grade parents in the spring, where the handbook will be distributed.

### ***Around the Country: “Vaping” on the rise***

A [report](#) released by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention showed a sharp increase in “electronic cigarette” experimentation among U.S. middle and high school, which raises the fear that e-cigs may lead to using conventional tobacco products.

E-cigs come in a variety of designs and flavors and marketing campaigns portray these products as a safe alternative to cigarettes. However, a [2009 FDA analysis](#) of 19 varieties of e-cigs found that half contained a carcinogen found in real cigarettes and many contained diethylene glycol, the poisonous ingredient in antifreeze.

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## REBECCA'S notes

Whether we celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa or simply the arrival of a new year, the holidays are filled with memories and wishes.

As I think back on what the Coalition has accomplished this year, I have many warm memories of steps we have taken as a community to keep our kids drug and alcohol-free. Tiverton was the first community in the state to convene a marijuana summit — and to pass an ordinance that prohibits the sale of synthetic drugs in our town. Leaders of faith communities in Greater Tiverton have come together to actively support our Coalition's prevention efforts. *LifeSkills* training has been adopted as part of our 9th grade health curriculum. And a phenomenal group of high school students who call themselves the UnMarketers have launched peer-to-peer prevention efforts. Community involvement has grown and coalition membership has expanded. It's been a great prevention year in Tiverton, and I thank so many of you have contributed to its success.

My wish for the New Year is more progress. Prevention work never ends...and I'm happy to announce that Tiverton has been awarded an additional \$61,000 to reduce marijuana use among our teens — a Christmas-Hanukkah-Kwanzaa-New Year gift rolled into one!

*Wishing you all the best and Happy Holidays!*

### **Around the Country** *(continued from page 1)*

E-cigs are battery powered devices that provide doses of nicotine and other additives. They produce a mist like vapor which is inhaled and then exhaled by the user, commonly referred to as "vaping." The CDC estimates that 1.78 million children and teens used e-cigs last year. While selling regular cigarettes to minors is illegal, there is no such law for e-cigs.



"This report raises a red flag about newer tobacco products," said CDC Director Tom Frieden, M.D., M.P.H. "We need effective action to protect our kids from addiction to nicotine."

### **Practicing Prevention: Holiday Myths**

Teen drinking spikes during the holiday season, often because parents buy into some common [myths about serving minors alcohol](#).

Some parents think that allowing teens to drink at home decreases the risk for continued drinking as teens get older but evidence shows that supplying alcohol to minors increases the risk for continued drinking in the teenage years and leads to subsequent problem drinking later in life.



Often it's said that kids in Europe learn to drink more responsibly because parents allow minors to drink in family settings from a young age. The truth is that a greater percentage of European youth report drinking regularly versus American youth. For

a majority of European countries, a greater percentage of young people also report having been intoxicated before the age of 13.

Will being "too strict" about adolescent drinking cause teens to drink more when they first leave the home? New research from [The Partnership Attitude Tracking Study \(PATS\)](#) reveals that teens who perceive their parents to be more permissive about alcohol use are MORE likely to abuse alcohol and to use other drugs.

The fact is that there is no "safe use" of alcohol by minors. Keep kids alcohol-free this holiday season — and throughout the New Year.

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**Comments? Questions? Interests?**  
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