

October 2012



coalition news

Prevention news and information from the Tiverton Prevention Coalition

Un-Marketing Weed Kicks Off in November at Tiverton High School

Can a media campaign at Tiverton High School help students change misperceptions about marijuana? That's the question about 10 THS students will explore in *Un-Marketing Weed*, a new Community Service Learning program funded by a federal block grant and managed by The Tiverton Prevention Coalition.

Likely the first such program in the country, students will work closely with marketing professionals to create and conduct a media campaign designed to correct misperceptions commonly held about marijuana. They will learn basic marketing principles hands-on by engaging in market research, conducting focus groups, creating compelling messages and selecting eye-catching visuals that will become a print and electronic media campaign, scheduled to kick off in February 2013.

The goal of the program is to get more teens to understand the "real risks" involved in marijuana use, that is, to separate perception from reality. In a survey of THS students in May 2012, 56% reported that they saw no serious harm associated with daily marijuana use.

"That 56% is a telling number," said Rebecca Elwell, Coalition coordinator. "We are focusing on 'perception of harm' because it is a key measure in prevention. When perception of harm increases, use decreases. So, we are not

A central graphic featuring a large green marijuana leaf with a lit cigarette resting on it. The text "Perception vs. Reality" is written in orange and green, "Un-Marketing Weed" in black, and "@THS" in a large black font with a white outline.

Perception vs. Reality

Un-Marketing Weed

@THS

aiming at a 'just say no' campaign. Our focus here is education. We want to make sure that more students understand what science tells us about the harm associated with marijuana use, confident that use will decrease if the real risks are better understood."

Ed Parr of [O'Toole + Parr](#), the local marketing agency that will work with the students, added, "Marketing needs to be results-oriented and measurable, and the annual

Tiverton Health and Wellness Survey will be our measurement tool. If we can increase the number of students who report marijuana use as risky business in a statistically significant way in the May 2013 survey, then we'll know the campaign was a success."

Marla Schreffler, the former THS school psychologist, will serve as an advisor to the program.

O+P is owned and operated by Chris O'Toole of Little Compton, RI and Ed Parr of Dartmouth, MA. Each has more than 20 years of corporate marketing experience. Currently, they provide marketing and design services to several RI non-profit organizations, including The Rhode Island Historical Society, Sakonnet Preservation Association, The Greene School, Families First of Rhode Island, as well as prevention coalitions in Little Compton, Narragansett, Portsmouth, Scituate, Tiverton, and West Warwick.



REBECCA'S notes

At a recent conference on youth drug trends, a panel of six teens from three Rhode Island high schools presented a workshop called Youth Speak Out: *Clear, Confident and Courageous*.

Each teen made the decision to stay alcohol and drug-free. Each of them talked about future goals, role models and strongest influences. Each came from a different background and saw very different future paths; however there was a common perspective that they each shared. When asked one thing that they think would help them and their peers make safer, healthier choices, each expressed the wish that adults would set and enforce limits. They said that they wished their friends' parents set and enforced family rules, that their schools enforced policies, and that police officers consistently enforced the law.

Does it sound surprising that teens are asking for stronger rule enforcement? In working with teens over the past 12 years, it is a message I have heard over and over. They won't come out and say, please add some more restrictions to my life, but they really do want to know what's expected of them and what the consequences of violating boundaries will be.

At an age when kids are faced with many decisions, difficult choices and peer pressure, it is important for adults to draw the line and hold them to it. Though teens push the boundaries, test the limits, and insist on more freedom, there is comfort in knowing just what the limits are and how far they can go. rebecca@tivertonprevention.org.

Around the Country: 'Sup Doc?

Pediatricians can play an important role in preventing and reducing underage drinking.

Researchers at Boston Children's Hospital reported in the journal *Pediatrics* that when physicians used the "CRAFT Test" during routine visits that teens' risk of drinking dropped almost 50% for three months, and by about 25% one year after the doctor's visit.

The CRAFT test is a behavioral health screening tool for those under 21. Designed for busy physicians, it takes only two to three minutes — and produces great results, because teens do respect and listen to their doctors' advice.

See "[New Steps Pediatricians Can Take to Reduce Teen Substance Use](#)" for a more complete summary of the study — and then send a copy of this newsletter to your pediatrician. He or she can keep your child healthy in many ways.

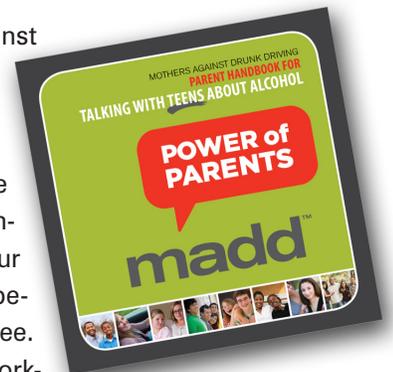
Practicing Prevention: Parent Power

Parenting is a rich rewarding experience but it can also be challenging, especially for parents of teens, who face the risks and harms associated with alcohol every day. *Power of Parents*™ can help you meet this challenge.

Developed by Mothers Against Drunk Driving and underwritten by Nationwide Insurance, *Power of Parents* is a research-based, 30-minute workshop that can substantially reduce the chance your son or daughter will drink before the age of 21. And it's free.

At the conclusion of the workshop, participants receive the free 48-page *Parent Handbook for Talking with Teens about Alcohol*.

The Tiverton Prevention Coalition, the local authorized agent for MADD's *Power of Parents*, is now scheduling workshops for area faith communities, Sunday school teachers, PTO's, coaches, teachers, youth workers and groups of parents. For more information or to schedule a workshop for your group or organization, contact Rebecca Elwell by phone at 401-835-5311 or by e-mailing her at rebecca@tivertonprevention.org.



Help us spread the word! Please forward the *Coalition News* to family, friends and associates. Ask them to ***sign up*** for their own free subscription.

Contact the Coalition

Get in touch with Rebecca at 401-835-5311 or Rebecca@tivertonprevention.org.
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