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Community
Prevention Council

Press Release

Community Prevention Council releases Teen Summit Report

CPC submits report of teen alcohol use and abuse in LCF and organizations' programs and strategies to combat problem

La Canada Flintridge, CA, October 20, 2007

The Community Prevention Council is releasing its Teen Summit Report during Red Ribbon week, October 22-26. The Red Ribbon Campaign was started when drug traffickers in Mexico City murdered Kiki Camarena, a DEA agent, in 1985. This began the continuing tradition of displaying Red Ribbons as a symbol of intolerance towards the use of drugs.

The CPC's report documents teen alcohol and drug use and prevention in the La Canada Flintridge Community.

On April 29, 2006 more than 35 dedicated community leaders gathered together for a Teen Summit at the La Cañada Flintridge City Hall to address underage drinking and substance abuse in the community. Those attending included members of the City Council, LCUSD School Board, prominent leaders of local

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schools and churches, representatives of the Crescenta-Canada Family YMCA, Community Center of LCF, Korean Outreach and other concerned members of the local community.

Since last year's summit, organizations and individuals have been busy addressing the issues discussed at the Teen Summit. Some have developed new programs and strategies. Others have revisited and re-tooled existing programs. Still others are currently creating and reviewing action plans.

"The Community Prevention Council hopes that its summary report of actions, programs and results can help us all deal more effectively with drug and alcohol issues, especially with our community's youth" says Will Moffitt, CPC Chairman.

According to Moffitt, alcohol and drug use is prevalent in LCF among youth and adults. Acts of violence, automobile accidents and vandalism are often accompanied by alcohol and drug use in our community. No family, organization or school escapes the effects of substance use and abuse.

Ken Gorvetzian, past chair of the Crescenta-Canada YMCA Board of Directors says, "What we have seen is that LCF is no different than any other community in the United States when it comes to alcohol and drug use and abuse. In general LCF follows the national trends. The reasons include

available discretionary funds among youth, easy access, media glorification, peer pressure and others.”

According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, nearly one million high school students across the United States are "binge drinkers," meaning that on each occasion, the teen(s) labeled as such consume more than four alcoholic beverages. Furthermore, three-quarters of high school seniors have consumed alcohol, as well as two-thirds of tenth graders, and two-fifths of eighth graders. Perhaps most tragic of all, 5,000 young people die every year as a result of alcohol consumption, whether from automobile crashes, miscellaneous accidents, or homicide.

Psychological effects as a result of teenage drinking have also been reported. Long-term memory impairment, depression, anxiety without alcohol, and the development of Oppositional Defiant Disorder have all been considered possible results of drinking before age 21. Furthermore, Antisocial Personality Disorder has been reported, resulting in yet another additional possible ramification of alcohol consumption. Even more disturbing, there have been claims that alcohol use among adolescents has also been associated with considering, planning, attempting, and completing suicide.

In La Cañada Flintridge active local churches and non-profit organizations like the Community Prevention Council, YMCA, Girl and Boy Scouts, The

Community Center of LCF, AYSO, Gladiators and others spread the message of no alcohol or illegal drugs for youth. At local schools the student organization S.A.D.D., an acronym standing for Students Against Destructive Decisions, actively works to make youth aware of the problems associated with drug and alcohol use.

Those attending the Teen Summit agreed that a combined effort was needed to attain results in the LCF community. They also agreed that renewed attention and commitment by each individual and organization was the only way to make a significant difference in the lives of local youth and their families.

Each group represented at the Teen Summit went away with the task of identifying and revisiting their existing programs dealing with underage alcohol and drug use or develop new strategies and action plans. They would then prepare a report to become part of the "living" document compiled and distributed by the Community Prevention Council.

That report released today lists a number of things adults can do at home and in the community to prevent or reduce teen alcohol and drug use:

- At home, be available when your teen needs you for support and information.

- Express an interest in all your teen's school and extra-curricular activities.
- Encourage your teen to participate in extra-curricular activities, religious and other youth groups, and other opportunities for using free time constructively.
- Support your teen's academic progress and accomplishments; help set goals for their future.
- Keep track of where your kids are, who they are with, and how they spend their time.

The report stresses that it is important to involve your teen in discussions to establish rules with regard to curfews, social activities, and dating. Support other parents' efforts to monitor peer group activities; alert other parents when you have reason to believe their kids are engaging in unacceptable behavior.

Let other parents know you do not condone underage drinking or drug use at parties, call parents to see if they will be present when parties are hosted in their homes, and support social and community activities that provide alternatives to drinking.

Finally, look for opportunities to meet with parents for support as well as to keep informed about youth issues, community norms and standards, and other parenting concerns. Work with one another to set standards for what is

acceptable teen behavior in the community, as well as to encourage community-wide efforts aimed at preventing teenage alcohol and drugs use and abuse.

Will Moffitt concluded by saying, "Our goal is to focus and advance our current understanding of underage drinking and drug use in La Cañada Flintridge; and promote strategies and actions that protect our children from their tragic consequences."

"It is the hope of the Community Prevention Council that this information will not be put on a shelf and forgotten but instead be used to help change the culture of acceptance of underage drinking and drug use that is currently prevalent in La Cañada Flintridge. We all want to keep our families healthy and safe."