



NATIONAL FAMILIES IN ACTION

Parent Corps®



# Tis the Season for Volunteering

No matter the age of your children, volunteering together as a family is a great way to spend quality time together while also shaping your child's character. And it doesn't have to take a lot of time.

Youth who say their parents "spend lots of time helping others" are almost twice as likely themselves to serve others, according to Search Institute research. In addition, Independent Sector research found that 67 percent of adults who remember that their family volunteered when they were young now volunteer as adults. In contrast, only 42 percent of those adults who do not remember family volunteering volunteer now.

Get started with simple,

short projects:

- Serve at home— Start with projects you can do at home. For example; make cookies to deliver to a homebound neighbor or a grandparent in the hospital. Assemble birthday bags to donate to a local food pantry. Make blankets for a crisis nursery. Create greeting cards for hospitalized children.
- Pick a day of service— Consider participating in a project at your local faith base community or work place.
- Check out the local newspaper for volunteering opportunities. Contact local commu-

nity service organizations: Salvation Army (770) 422-8234, YWCA of Northwest GA (770) 423-3599, Cobb Christmas, (770) 428-2601, ext. 473, Cobb County Dept. of Family and Children Services, (770) 528-5044, MUST Ministries (770) 436-9514 ext. 2104 or (770) 427-9862 ext. 1112.



## Growing Youth Abuse of Caffeine

Nausea, vomiting, racing heartbeat, hallucinations, panic attacks, and chest pains are among the possible effects of taking too much caffeine, which has landed increasing numbers of young people in hospital emergency rooms.

Some youths risk compli-

cations because they not only caffeine pills but also drink caffeine-laden energy drinks like Red Bull, Volt, or Venom to name a few.

An estimated 3 million new teen users of energy drinks were reported over the last three years.

Caffeine is a stimulant that releases your internal catecholamines (compounds that can serve as hormones) that make you anxious, jittery and create the fight-or-flight response. When the heart beats too fast, bad things happen.

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### Special points of interest:

- Underage drinking cost the citizens of Georgia \$1.5 billion in 2005
- This translate to a cost of \$1,753 per year for each youth in the State.
- 526 youth 12-20 years old were admitted for alcohol treatment in Georgia.
- Approximately 364,000 underage youth in Georgia drink each year.

# Underage Drinking: Helping Kids Steer Clear of Alcohol

As a responsible, caring parent, you want your children to make responsible choices regarding alcohol use that are consistent with your beliefs and values. But it's not a simple issue. With the holiday season in full swing you may have alcohol in your home for dinner parties, festive gatherings or as hostess gifts, but you don't want them to drink before they are adults. Or you may believe that drinking alcohol is harmful or wrong at any age, and you want your kids to recognize that many people choose not to drink as adults. In the midst of the season your child will see and hear numerous ads that promote alcohol. They may be curious and particularly as they grow older-face pressures from their peers to drink. How do you deal with this issue in a positive, healthy way?

## Stay Involved:

**Monitor**—Keep track of where your teenagers go and whom they're with. If they go to a party, check in advance whether an adult will be actively present and whether alcohol will be available.

**Keep your child involved**— Being active in youth clubs, school activities, religious activities and other caring environments with adult role models offers important reinforcements for your positive messages at home.

**Have a plan**—As your teenager gains more independence, negotiate a plan for what you'll do if he or she is in a difficult alcohol-related situation. Make safety a top priority.

**Set consequences**— Be clear about any consequences of underage drinking before

there's a problem. However, do not make the consequences so serious that your teen won't ask for help if they are in serious trouble or need a safe ride home.

**Model**— Model restraint in your own life. If you drink, use moderation. If you or your partner struggle with alcohol use, seek professional help.

**Teach**—Help your teen develop skills to resist pressure to use alcohol. Do this by giving them opportunities to make decisions and be responsible. Role play with your child to teach them how they can say no along with other options they have when they're under pressure.

**Keep perspective**— If your teen tries alcohol, address the issue directly, but don't assume they are "beyond hope." Use it as an opportunity to help them learn from mistakes.

## Powerful Speaker Coming To Walton



Sarah Panzau on August 23, 2003 was in a near fatal car accident which changed her life forever. Prior to this accident she lived only for today. She lived like she would never die. Sarah had turned her back on her family and had little purpose in life. She had quit school, and gave up a full ride volleyball scholarship. She was a two-time all American Volleyball player that now was a bartender.

Her life has totally changed and her story is one ALL teens should hear. Walton

High School please to announce that on **Wednesday, December 13th she will be on our campus speaking** to our students during WEB. Her powerful presentation talks to teens about drinking and driving, making good decisions, what is important in life and the importance of parents and family. It is a presentation of courage, determination and the celebration that emphasizes making the right choices in life. Encourage your teen to stay for this 90 minute presentation which will start at

**1:10 in the Walton theatre.** WEB credit will be awarded to those that must stay and FREE ice cream coupons will be passed out at the conclusion of the presentation. **Parents are welcome to attend this presentation also.**

Contact Pat Giuliani, 404-409-9112 or [pat.giuliani@parentcorps.org](mailto:pat.giuliani@parentcorps.org) for more information. Walton PTSA, Parent Corps® and Walton High School are sponsoring this program.

## What are Substance Abuse and Addiction?

The difference between substance abuse and addiction is very slight. Addiction begins as abuse, or using a substance like marijuana or cocaine. You can abuse a drug (or alcohol) without having an addiction. For example, just because someone smoked marijuana a few times doesn't mean that they have an addiction, but it does mean that they are abusing a drug and that could lead to an addiction.

People can get addicted to all sorts of substances. When we think of addiction, we usually think of alcohol or illegal drugs. But people become addicted to medications, cigarettes, even glue. And some substances are more addictive than others: Drugs like crack or heroin are so addictive they may only be used once or twice before the user loses con-



trol.

Addiction means a person has no control over whether he or she uses a drug or drinks. A person who's addicted to cocaine has grown so used to the drug that he or she *has* to have it. Addiction can be physical, psychological, or both.



# Myths and Facts About Depression

**Myth** Depression only happens when something bad goes on in your life, such as a divorce, the death of a loved one, or losing your job.

**Fact** Sometimes depression can happen, even when life is going well. Depression can be set off by things going wrong in your life, but that isn't always the case. Depression might be associated with a chemical imbalance in the brain.

**Myth** If you can't snap out of your depression, it means you're weak.

**Fact** Depression doesn't mean you have something wrong with your character. It doesn't mean you aren't strong enough emotionally. It's a real medical condition, like diabetes or arthritis.

**Myth** If you wait it out, your depression will always go away.

**Fact** If you're suffering from depression, it might not just go away. For some people, if it isn't treated, their depression can last months, or even years.

**Myth** Only suicidal people need antidepressants.

**Fact** Antidepressants are not just for people who think about suicide. Antidepressants might help people who are depressed feel better. It doesn't matter if they've had thoughts of suicide or not.

**Myth** Antidepressants are habit forming and will

**Fact** Antidepressants are not habit-forming. They don't turn you into a different person. They make you feel more like yourself again.

Depression is a common medical condition with very specific symptoms. Depression symptoms might be different for each person. The term depression refers to: A lasting sad mood and/or loss of interest or pleasure in most activities.

Sometimes people experience several or all of these additional symptoms: changes in appetite or weight, changes in sleep patterns, restlessness or decreased activity that others notice, loss of energy or feeling tired all the time, hard time concentrating or making decisions, feelings of worthlessness or guilt, and repeated thoughts of death or suicide.

For a doctor to decide that someone is clinically depressed, the person must have five or more of these symptoms and at least one must be either of the first two main symptoms of depression. Also, these symptoms must last for at least two weeks. The symptoms should be serious enough to cause worry and to get in the way of the person's work, social life, or daily life.

Depressed people might also have problems with digestion, such as dry mouth, nausea, constipation and, less commonly, diarrhea.

Being worried, anxious, or irritable all the time could also be hidden signs of depression.



## Eating Disorders: Anorexia and Bulimia

The two most common types of eating disorders are anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa, more commonly known as anorexia and bulimia. The two can be difficult to distinguish from each other because they have similar characteristics: the person will have a distorted image of his or her body. The person will seem to be obsessed with what he or she eats.

Both diseases tend to affect girls more than guys, but 10% of the people with eating disorders are guys. Guys with eating disorders are often unrecognized because they tend to focus more on athletic appearance or success than on just looking thin.

### Anorexia Behavior:

- Drops weight to about 20% below normal
- Denies feeling hungry
- Exercises excessively
- Feels fat
- Withdraws from social activities

### Bulimia Behavior:

- Makes excuses to go to the bathroom immediately after meals
- Eats huge amounts of food, but doesn't gain weight

- Uses laxatives or diuretics
- Withdraws from social activities

Fortunately, people with eating disorders can get well. Therapy and counseling is a critical part of treating eating disorders. Parents and other family members are important by helping a person see that his or her normal body shape is perfectly fine.. The most critical thing about treating eating disorder is to recognize and address the problem as soon as possible.

Anorexia and bulimia can do a lot of damage to the body and mind if left untreated.



#### NATIONAL FAMILIES IN ACTION

Walton Parent Corps  
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*Drug Prevention  
Starts Here*

*Parent Corps will help you have:*

A happy, well-adjusted,  
taxpaying 30-year-old who  
does NOT still live at  
home

**Join TODAY**

Contact Pat Giuliani today to join

## Curfews

“It’s so unfair!” “All my friends get to stay out later than I do.” “I don’t need a curfew.” “Just call me on the cell when I need to come home.” “Don’t you trust me?” Sound familiar? Setting a curfew is pretty easy when kids are little, but it gets harder and harder the older they get. You have less control over their lives and they get around on their own, particularly when they begin driving. But while kids certainly need more independence as they grow up, giving kids structure is also vitally important to their growth and development.

#### **Facts from Search Institute:**

Only 48% of the teenagers surveyed indicated that their family has clearly delineated boundaries, which includes having clear rules and consequences and monitoring their whereabouts.

Girls are more likely than boys to say that their parents monitor their whereabouts. 86% of girls and 77% of boys say their parents ask where they are going and who

they’ll be with most or all of the time.

Setting clear, fair and firm boundaries—and following through with consequences—are critical part of being a good parent. Having teens take part in the curfew discussion and establishing clear expectations and consequences gives them some of the independence they are looking for while still maintaining the boundaries they need to thrive.

**Think ahead**—Don’t try to set curfew when your teenager is begging to go out right now. Talk about the expectations early and be clear that everyone understands what’s expected. In addition, agree together on the consequences if curfew is broken.

**Confirm the plans**—Before they head out the door, find out where your kid is going, who will be with them, how they’ll be getting there and back and when they plan to be home.

**Adjust**—Review and negotiate curfews together. There are exceptions to every

rule, so it may be appropriate from time to time to change a curfew or allow your teen to participate in a positive activity at school or in the community.

**Enforce**—Be consistent when enforcing consequences, but when boundaries are broken, don’t give the impression that your children or teenagers have failed. Instead, use these situations to teach about responsibility.

**Affirm**—Tell your children how much you appreciate it when they tell you where they’ll be and when they arrive home on time. Plus, this positive feedback will make it more likely they’ll follow through next time.

**Be realistic**—There is no “magic” curfew time for all kids. Match curfews to the needs of your family, your children and your community. Some children need more sleep than others. Some communities are safer than others. Negotiate curfews that work for your family and adhere to local laws.