



Menasha School District Parent Corps Newsletter

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Tips About How to Talk to Your Teen About Substance Use

As parents we tend to get a little overwhelmed with the activities our kids are involved with during the school year. Our kids join sports and other co-curricular activities that require a lot of our time. We oversee their school work and attend all events in addition to our jobs and whatever responsibilities we have with siblings in other schools. Parents are very busy.

Sometimes our schedules are so packed there is little time to communicate with our teens. What do we do? The Partnership for a Drug-Free America listed a few tips for you and your high school teen:



- **Give general messages about drug use the heave-ho—your older teen needs to hear detailed and reality-driven messages.** Topics you might want to talk about with your teen include: that even trying a drug or using it occasionally can have serious permanent consequences, that anyone can become a chronic user or an addict, and the potentially deadly effects of combining drugs.
- **Emphasize what drug use can do to you teen's future:** Teens look ahead and think about their future. Discuss how drug use can ruin your teen's chance of getting into the college he/she has been dreaming about, landing the job he/she is perform for, or joining the military and following in his/her father's footsteps.
- **Encourage your teen to volunteer somewhere they can see the impact of drug use has on your community:** Teenagers tend to be idealistic and enjoy hearing about ways they can help make the world a better place. Help your teen research volunteer opportunities at local homeless shelters, hospitals, or victim services centers. This work will go towards the community service graduation requirement at Menasha High School.
- **Use news reports as discussion openers:** If you see a news story about an alcohol-related car accident, talk to your teen about all the victims that an accident leaves in its wake. If the story is about drugs in your community, talk about the ways your community has changed as drug use has grown.
- **Compliment and encourage your teen for all the things he/she does well and for the positive choices he/she makes:** Let them know that they are seen and appreciated. And let them know how you appreciate what a good role model they are for their younger brother or sister, or for other kids in the community. Teens still care what their parents think. Let them know how deeply disappointed you would be if they start using drugs. (For more information see: <http://www.drugfree.org>)

Upcoming Parent Corps Activities

May 2, 2006—Parent/Teacher Conferences at 3:15 PM in the MHS Field House

May 21-22, 2006—National Talk Weekend

June 1, 2006—Commencement in the MHS Field House—**CONGRATULATIONS!! CLASS OF 2006**

July 15, 2006—Emergency Services Night at Timber Rattlers ball game. Please stop by the Tri-Com Crime Prevention Trailer to learn more about the services in Winnebago County and to sign up for the Parent Corps.

Your Opinion Counts

<http://www.parentcorps.org/WI/ddaniels/>

National Talk Weekend

The first annual Partnership for a Drug-Free America National Talk Weekend, May 21-22, 2006.

Many Parent Corps Parent Leaders, including Donna Daniels, use the Partnership for a Drug-Free America as a resource for the information distributed at Menasha High School.

Statistics show that parents make a difference, yet studies still show that 3 out of 10 children report learning a lot about drugs from their parents. To break that down to Menasha High School, a little over 330 students at MHS learn about drugs from their parents leaving about 830 who do not hear from their parents.

Donna Daniels is asking all MHS parents to spend part of the National Talk Weekend with their teens to discuss substance use.

When you visit the Menasha High School parent corps site, please feel free to comment on the articles. Let Donna know what you want to see more of and less of, and let her know what your top concerns at Menasha high school are. During the month of May, Donna will be planning the Parent Corps meetings for next year, please feel free to send an email or post your suggestion on the website. Thank you for your support this year.

Understanding Risk and Protective Factors

Risk factors include biological, psychological and behavioral, and social and environmental characteristics, such as formal and informal marketing of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs to children, a family history of alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drug use, depression or antisocial personality disorder, or residency in neighborhoods where drug use is tolerated. The more risk factors a child experiences, the more likely he or she will experience drug use and related problems in adolescent or young adulthood.

Protective factors, such as solid family bonds and the capacity to succeed in school, help protect children from drug use. Protective factors reduce the likelihood that a child will develop a substance abuse disorder. (National Families in Action, Day 1 Parent Leader Training Manual).

There are three categories to risk and protective factors: Individual, Family and Environmental. Individual factors include behavior and personality as well as genetic and physical makeup. Family factors include the way that parents and children behave and relate to each other. Environmental factors include circumstances outside of the family such as school experiences, peer influences, and community conditions. (Focus on Prevention, DHHS Publication 06-4120, printed 2005).

Parent Corps at Menasha High School can help address the risk and protective factors through peer groups—parents from the same grade, school group—all parents who have children attending Menasha High School, and other groups that address issues such as parents who are dealing with a substance use issue and don't want their children to follow their path, parents who have children who are using and need support, parents who want to lower the level of tolerance of substance use in their neighborhoods, and parents who want to reduce the level of substance use tolerance in the community. Do you fit in one or more of these categories? If you do, contact Donna Daniels at donna.daniels@parentcorps.org or call (920) 830-9425 to find out how you can help change the social norm in our community.

Parents make a difference. *With parents, drug prevention will succeed. Without them, it will fail. It's that simple.* (Tom Hedrick, Vice Chairman, Partnership for a Drug-Free America). We must keep in mind that **all** children are at risk. *It is not inevitable that children will experiment with drugs. Parents can keep children healthy and drug free. The Parent Corps shows them how.* (The Parent Corps).

From the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration

Every year the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA) conducts the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH). The following are the findings in the 2004 survey:

- Parents make a difference—teens who say their parents would strongly disapprove of teens trying marijuana are much less likely to use an illicit drug than those who think their parents would not strongly disapprove.
- Illicit drug use starts early and spreads quickly—nearly 1 in 25 teens aged 12 to 13 reports past month use of an illicit drug; among 16 to 17 year olds the rate is 1 in 5.
- More than one in five teens who currently uses alcohol use illicit drugs.
- Two out of five 18 to 25 year olds are binge drinkers, and one in four admit to driving under the influence of alcohol in the past year.
- Cigarette smoking was more common in 2004 among pregnant girls age 15 to 17 than among non-pregnant girls in the same age group. Pregnant 15 to 17 year olds also were just as likely as non-pregnant girls to use illicit drugs.
- Cigarette smoking has declined among youths aged 12 to 17. However, past-month cigarette use among young adults aged 18 to 25 remained at about 40 percent in 2004.
- Asian and African American youths have the lowest rates of marijuana use.
- The number of youths under age 18 who began using inhalants topped 800,000 in 2003 and has risen each year since 1993.
- Because inhalants are easy to get, young people often use them before tobacco or alcohol.
- Youths make up almost half of all persons who begin using pain relievers for non-medical reasons. Girls are more likely than boys to use painkillers non-medically.
- Young people who have serious emotional problems are more likely to use substances and to become dependant on them.

We have a problem. And just because these are national results does not mean that Menasha High School does not see these same issues. As parents, we need to become educated and involved to keep our children healthy and drug free.

One way to become educated is to let your Parent Leader know what are the issues that concern you most at Menasha High School. The Parent Corps is not a cookie cutter, pre-packaged program that tells you what we think you should know. The parents are the drivers behind the Parent Corps success. Please email Donna Daniels at donna.daniels@parentcorps.org with the subject header "**TOP CONCERNS**" so that we can plan a successful 2006/2007 Parent Corps year.

Join The Parent Corps

Donna Daniels, Parent Leader at the Menasha High School, is looking for a few excited parents who want to work on eliminating the alcohol and drug use among our high school students. There are many ways you can help. Below are just a few areas:

1. If you are not a member of the Parent Corps, all you have to do is sign a pledge form so that you can start getting announcements and updates.
2. Start a peer group
3. Help organize larger meetings
4. Help with writing the monthly newsletter
5. Make treats for meetings
6. Make phone calls to five of your friends and invite them to a Parent Corps meeting
7. Help get parents and students to sign the Parent Corps and Youth Corps pledge at conferences, games, concerts and special events.
8. Become an assistant Parent Leader at Menasha High School.
9. Host alcohol and drug free activities for teens in your home.

Please call Donna Daniels at (920) 830-9425 or send an email: donna.daniels@parentcorps.org.