

Shrewsbury Community Alliance for the Prevention of Alcohol and Drug Abuse

Special recognition to the Shrewsbury Police force, especially DARE officers (Sgt. Fitzgerald, Ptl. Boyd, Gallagher and Turner), Lt. Ferraro, and RBR School Resource Officer/Lt. Silver Police Officer/Shrewsbury Fire Chief and Shrewsbury resident Peter Gibson, for their ongoing work promoting the merits of a healthy drug-free lifestyle to our Shrewsbury Boro and Red Bank Regional High School students through the following programs:

-**5th Grade DARE** - Congratulations to all the DARE graduates!

Special recognition to **Essay Contest winners - Jake Lane, Max Lane and Ella Brockway**, and **T-Shirt Design Contest winner - Eric Pusterhofer!**

-**8th Grade DARE Program** (6/10) highlighting the dangers of underage alcohol use and drinking and driving

-**Project Prom activities for RBR seniors** (wk of 6/1). Shrewsbury officers aided Officer Pete Gibson in his week long program to deter the underage use of alcohol and the dangers of drinking and driving through use of many effective tools (mock accident, speakers, videos, drunk driving simulations)

Upcoming Events:

-Week of 10/18-10/22: **Red Ribbon Week at SBS**. 2010 theme is: "I Believe in Me. I'm Drug Free".

-Saturday, 11/13 (10 am -2 pm): **2nd Annual Statewide Operation Medicine Cabinet**. Dispose of your expired, unused, unwanted prescription/OTC drugs safely by dropping them off at the Shrewsbury Police Station. Last year the Police Dept. collected 9 lbs of medicine. Thank you for doing your part to help keep these out of the hands of our children.

A recent study by the NJ State Dept. of Human Services highlights the ever growing trend of teens turning to drugs and alcohol. The results for Monmouth County are staggering. The use of drugs or the underage consumption of alcohol is not a 'rite of passage'. **The climate has definitely changed since most of us parents were teens. Here are a few points to consider as your children/grandchildren approach their teen years. Please know that there are so many teens and their parents that are strong enough to say 'no' and not be swayed by peer pressure. They need your help and support to stop this cycle.**

Alcohol

Not only is the age of first use dropping each year (now at age 11), but binge drinking is on the rise, as is the type of hard drinks our youth are trying and mixing. The younger you start to drink the odds of having an alcohol dependency problem later in life increases significantly. Makes sense - does the cycle of drinking to fit in/need in order to socialize really stop at some point once they start?

Underage drinking is an adult problem: anywhere there is a child drinking there must be an adult involved: either selling, providing, allowing or simply looking away. Providing to those under 21, that are not your children, is illegal and comes with steep fines and possible jail time. Most kids say they get their alcohol from their home or that of their friends. Do what you can to **Shut off the Supply!** If you can't lock it up then keep track of it, count it, see if it is being 'watered' down, and keep it out of your garage refrigerator which leads to easy

access. See someone coming into your house with a large bag/ backpack on the weekends? Have them leave it in a common area in your home where you can see it.

There are many who believe if you let kids drink at home they will learn to drink in moderation like the European kids. Not true. Countries with lower drinking ages (with the exception of Turkey) are suffering from worse problems than the US. The European Union recently reported that due to significant problems with underage use of alcohol: bingeing, violence, car accidents that several countries are lobbying to raise their drinking ages.

Marijuana

19% rise in usage in Grades 9-12. Why? Glorification by media (tv, movies, youtube), discussion of full legalization (to help with budget woes) or reduction in fines for small possession. How bad could it be if it is now being used as medicine and politicians want to legalize it? **Truth: THC levels have never been higher (10x since 1970's) due to the way weed is now being grown (indoors with 24 hr. light).** High THC is causing addiction, chemicals traced to a rise in teenage depression. Many teens say they don't smoke cigarettes because of the risk of lung cancer but the damage to lungs is 4x more toxic with this high THC intake.

Talk to your kids. See what they think about what's going on. Communication is key. Let them know how you feel and your rules and consequences if not followed. How you feel, act and react really does make a difference to your children. We need to stop these trends. Our children's health and their futures depend on us working together to change this environment.

The Alliance is always looking for fresh ideas of how to reach our community. Please stop by our meetings (2nd Monday of every month – 7 pm at Boro Hall). Visit our link on the Boro website for substance abuse information and helplines.
Have a great summer!