

An Issue of Influence...

Volume 3, Issue 2

April 2011

Alcohol and Drug related domestic Abuse & Neglect and Prevention



Inside this issue:

Resources for abuse prevention	2
Event Calendar	2
Prom Tips for Parents	2

During the month of April we observe Child Abuse Prevention and Awareness Month. Native American elders teach that children are gifts from the Creator and it is the family, community, school, and tribe's responsibility to nurture, protect, and guide them. Children truly are gifts and should be treated as such, but when parents or community members are in the grips of substance abuse and addiction, nurturing, protecting and guiding children are not always a priority. The costs of both child abuse and addiction are staggering. Billions of dollars annually are used to try and fix the problems that result, but the human costs are so much higher.

According to Joseph A. Califano Jr., in the publication *No Safe Haven: Children of Substance-Abusing Parents*. "The human costs are incalculable: broken families; children who are malnourished; babies who are neglected, beaten, and sometimes killed by alcohol- and crack-addicted parents; 8-year-olds sent out to steal or buy drugs for addicted parents; sick children wallowing in unsanitary conditions; child victims of sodomy, rape, and incest; children in such agony and despair that they themselves resort to drugs and alcohol for relief."

This quote may be from 1999, but ask any social worker, school employee, medical professional, daycare provider, etc and they will confirm that all of what was said by Joseph Califano exists right here in our own backyard.

The "mess" that is left when addiction to alcohol or other drugs and child abuse invades a family is overwhelming to the victims and to those trying to help. And if the cycle of addiction continues, so does the aftermath. Investing more on the prevention side of things seems to make sense, financially and humanly. But what can we do?

- ◆ We can be aware: Look beyond the surface of your relationships. Note when those around you when they seem to be distracted or down.
- ◆ We can reach out: Offer support to others when things are difficult for them.
- ◆ We can listen: Take time to see what is going on. To be a sounding board for their frustrations.
- ◆ We can share: Don't be afraid to let others know you understand their circumstances. Let them know someone cares.
- ◆ We can contribute: Research local agencies that support parents in general such as Kinship and early childhood programming and give financially or give your time.

And always remember...*It is An Issue of Influence*



4,742 Minnesota children were confirmed as neglected or abused in 2009. Statistics show that of these 4,742 children, 70% suffered from neglect.

This specific type of chronic maltreatment especially affects a child's developing brain architecture and causes problems throughout their lifetime.



Resources for Abuse Prevention

From the Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota Website:

If you see a child being abused <or an adult struggling> in public, do what you can to help:

- ◆ Divert the adult's attention.
- ◆ Start a conversation with the adult. Offer sympathy. For example, you could say, "Shopping with children can really try your patience, can't it?" Talk to the child.
- ◆ If the child is acting out or misbehaving, start a friendly conversation to distract him or her. Praise the parent or child.
- ◆ Find something positive to say about the child or the parent. For example, "That's a pretty dress your daughter is wearing. Where did you get it?" Offer to help.
- ◆ For example, if a child has been left unattended in a grocery cart, stay near him or her until a caretaker returns. Avoid negative looks or comments.
- ◆ This may only increase the adult's anger, making things worse for the child.

No Safe Haven: Children of Substance-Abusing Parents

A comprehensive analysis of the deep and complex connection between substance abuse and child maltreatment

www.ncsacw.samhsa.gov/files/NoSafeHaven.pdf

Prevent Child Abuse America

www.preventchildabuse.org/help/reach_out.shtml

Alcohol and Other Drugs and Child Welfare: a booklet provides information and statistics on both the abuse of alcohol and other drugs (AOD) and the relationship of such abuse to child welfare.

www.cwla.org/programs/bhd/aodbrochure.pdf

Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota

www.preventchildabusemn.org



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Upcoming Events!

The Hubbard County Youth Drug Taskforce is sponsoring or promoting the following opportunities for information and education:

April 25th:

Jay Jaffee, Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Prevention Coordinator at the Minnesota Department of Health, will be speaking about **Prescription and Over the counter medication abuse** at St Joseph's Hospital in Park Rapids from 7:00-8:30 pm.

Jay will also be speaking Tuesday April 26th from 12:30-2:00pm at St Joseph's to Health Care workers.

April 27th:

Rush of Fools Youth Event at St Peter's Church in Park Rapids from 6:00-8:00 pm

April 28th:

Jessica T. Burkhamer, MSW, LICSW, child & adolescent psychotherapist

Before Time Out: The Choices Program 6:30-8:00 p.m. at the Park Rapids High School Auditorium

April 29th:

Ellie McCann U of M Extension Family Educator will Present the Fatherhood Leadership Circle: **Co-Parenting & Gatekeeping** in the Northwoods Bank Community Room from 9:00am-12:00pm. Please RSVP to 237-5474

May 1st:

The Hubbard County Youth Drug and Alcohol Taskforce will host it's annual

TOWN HALL MEETING: On Prescription Drug Abuse

Featuring the film Happy Valley at the Park Theater at 1 and 3 pm

The film is free of charge and a discussion featuring local stories will beheld after the showings.



7 days/week, 24 hours/day,
365/year safe disposal of
medication at the Hubbard
County Sheriff's Office:
301 Court Ave.
Park Rapids, MN

- Leave medication in the original container.
- Remove your name & personal information.
- Keep the name of the medication.
- Drop medication into the disposal box.

Call 218-237-4114 or log onto hubbardcountydrugfree.org for more information.

PROM IS COMING!

Here are some steps parents like can take to ensure a safe prom -- and after prom:

- 1) Set a curfew
- 2) Talk about your expectations for their behavior that night.

Make a plan about what to do if they find themselves:

- ◆ Getting in a car with a drunk or drugged driver
- ◆ Being encouraged to use drugs or alcohol
- ◆ Being pressured go too far with intimacy.
- 3) Be available that night

Spark the conversation with your teen is to talk about your own prom experiences. Laugh about what you wore, who you went with and lessons learned. Then ask: *How are you feeling about the prom? What are you most excited about? And most nervous about? And go from there..*

