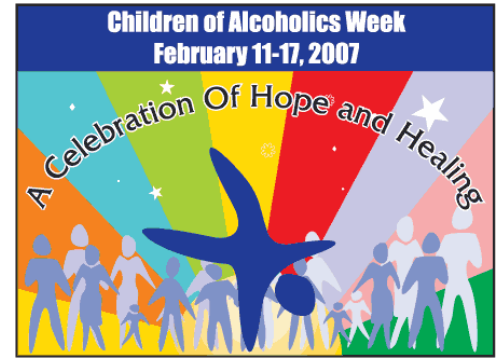




# PRAIRIE RIDGE

PREVENTION SERVICES

**"CLEAN MIND; CLEAN BODY; CLEAN SPIRIT; DRUG FREE"**



*Picture taken from www.nacoa.net*

## Newsletter

Vol. 2 Issue 2  
February 2007

### Got a Minute? Ask Questions.

By Rolena Hadwiger, MPH *Prevention Manager*

Youth ages 12 to 17 named "drugs as the most important problem they face"—more than social pressures, violence, crime, or any other issues. The 2005 Iowa Youth Survey states that among youth surveyed in Iowa, 4% of 6<sup>th</sup> graders, 14% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, and 41% of 11<sup>th</sup> graders reported currently using alcohol.

Youth need adult guidance and support. Evidence shows that youth who learn from a parent about the risks of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs are less likely to use these substances than youth who had not talked with a parent about drugs.

According to research, youth credit their parents as a major factor in their decision of not using alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs. Get into the habit of talking with your youth everyday. Ask questions: what, with whom, for how long, and where. Get to know their friends whom they spend time with and the other parents.

Remember, youth with boundaries are less likely to use drugs. To help keep our youth drug free, here are some tips:

- ☞ **Establish and maintain good communication with your youth.** Talk with them about alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs and listen to their pressures and problems.
- ☞ **Get involved in your youth's life.** Get to know their strengths and accept them for their unique talents and personalities. Provide love, support, and encouragement.
- ☞ **Make clear rules and enforce them with consistency and appropriate consequences.** Be clear and consistent in your expectations, rules, and messages.
- ☞ **Be a positive role model.** Provide an example consistent with what you say.
- ☞ **Ask questions about what, with whom, for how long, and where.** Get to know their friends whom they spend time with and the other parents, as well. Provide a drug-free environment for them to hangout, especially after-school.

Establishing a close relationship with your youth now will only make it easier for them to come to you when they have problems. Make time and ask questions. Your child is worth it.

**"Every child in America is at risk of using drugs, regardless of race, ethnicity, or economic status."**

*--National Survey of American Attitudes on Substance Abuse (2003)*

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**Prevention Team:**  
**Rolena Hadwiger, MPH**  
*Prevention Manager*  
**Kelly Grunhovd**  
*Prevention Specialist*  
**Jay Pedelty**  
*Prevention Specialist*  
**Trisca Sheimo**  
*Prevention Specialist*

**Prairie Ridge Prevention Services**  
**320 North Eisenhower Ave.**  
**P.O. Box 1338**  
**Mason City, IA 50402**  
**641-424-2391**

### Did You Know?

- ☞ **87%** of 11<sup>th</sup> graders reported that they “strongly agree” and “agree” that in their home there are clear rules about what they can and cannot do.
- ☞ **75%** of 11<sup>th</sup> graders reported “often” and “always” that their parents know where they are and who they are with, in the evening and on weekends.
- ☞ **19%** of 11<sup>th</sup> graders reported that their parents would feel “it’s not wrong at all” or “a little wrong” for youth to drink beer, wine, or hard liquor.

--2005 Iowa Youth Survey

### What Have You Heard About Marijuana?

Youth have heard lots of views about marijuana and it is hard to know what to believe. Here are some of the facts:

**Marijuana affects the brain.** The active ingredient in marijuana (THC) affects the nerve cells in the part of the brain where memories are formed. Like alcohol, it also impairs judgment, coordination, reaction time and vision.

**Marijuana can be addictive.** People can get hooked on the feelings they have when they’re stoned. People who use marijuana can experience withdrawal symptoms such as trouble sleeping, anxiety, feeling nervous, etc.

**Marijuana affects your lungs.** There are more than 400 known chemicals in marijuana. A single joint contains four times as much cancer-causing tar as 14-17 cigarettes.

**Marijuana affects your health.** Marijuana use can limit a body’s ability to fight off infection. Long-term marijuana use can even increase the risk of developing other diseases.

**Marijuana affects your reproductive system.** In men, long-term use of marijuana can cause a decrease in sperm count and abnormal sperm. In women, frequent marijuana use has been linked to abnormal menstrual cycles and can increase risk of birth defects and health problems in children. Marijuana is also associated with decreased sexual desire.



### Food for the Brain Answers to January Issue

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of Drug Abuse (2003), the rate of substance use increases when young people believe “everyone is doing it.” So, spread the truth, the majority of youth are drug free.

**Question:** How can I tell if a friend is using marijuana?

**Answer:** Sometimes it is very hard to tell. But there are signs you can look for. If your friend has one or more of the following warning signs, he or she may be using marijuana: seeming dizzy and having trouble walking, having red, bloodshot eyes, and smelly hair and clothes, having a hard time remembering things that just happened, and/or other unusual and dangerous behaviors. Remember, other factors can also cause these things.

**Question:** What can I do to help someone who is using marijuana?

**Answer:** Be a real friend. Encourage the person to seek professional help. Remember, the younger the person starts using marijuana, the more likely he/she will have problems connected to marijuana in the future. In North Central Iowa, call Prairie Ridge for information at 1-866-429-2391. For more information and referrals, call the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information at 1-800-729-6686.

### Questions & Answers:

**Question:** Is using drugs a normal part of growing up?

**Answer:** No. This is a false perception. The truth is NOT everyone is smoking, drinking, and/or using drugs. According to the National Household Survey

### Upcoming Events

**February 9-10, 2007 Adolescent Prime for Life** in Osage. The training will be from 4:30-8:30p.m. Friday and 9:00-5:00 p.m. Saturday. For more information please contact the Prairie Ridge Mason City Office 1-866-429-2391.

**February 12-15, 2007 Adolescent Prime for Life** at Prairie Ridge (West Wing) in Mason City. The training will be from 4:00-7:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday.

**February 17th and third Saturday of every month Survivor of Suicide Support Group.** United Way of Central Iowa, 600 1<sup>st</sup> St. NW, Mason City. 10:00 a.m.-noon.

**HBO's ADDICTION Project premieres** during a free HBO [preview weekend](#) from Thursday, **March 15 to Sunday, March 18** in participating cable systems. The 14 films will be shown on multiple HBO channels during the preview weekend and beyond.

For more information about any of the events, please contact us by phone or e-mail as shown below.