



June/July 2008

Welcome to the Northfield Area Parent Communication Network's monthly e-newsletter! You are a member of a network of unbelievable parents that do make a difference and help create a healthier and safer community for all our youth.

Data Supports Summer Prevention Efforts

Data released by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) shows that the highest occurrence of first-time alcohol use (13.1%) takes place during July.

Communication is key in preventing substance abuse. The freedom of summer and increased unsupervised time makes your role as the protecting parent more challenging. Spending more time away from you and exposure to outside influences play into the choices children make.

The earlier you begin a dialogue with your child, the easier it will be for both of you to talk about difficult topics. Taking the time to talk to your kids will help them steer clear of potential danger even without you around.

Consider a contract with your child that includes curfews, rules, and expectation. These contracts become even more valuable once your teen begins driving.

Teen Driving Laws

The Rice County Safe Communities Coalition (RCSCC) reminds parents and teens to be aware of the Minnesota laws for newly licensed teen drivers which will become law on August 1. These laws will help teens perfect their driving skills during the first year of licensure by reducing exposure to high-risk situations. Violating these laws is a misdemeanor.

Included in the laws are:

- Nighttime driving limitations
- Teen passenger limitations
- Seat belt use
- Cell phone and texting restrictions
- Drinking and driving

Visit www.dps.state.mn.us/ots/teens for a complete description of the newly licensed teen driver laws.

HCI 2008 Student Survey Stats:

- ★ 93 percent of students said they don't use tobacco products
- ★ 76 percent said they don't use alcohol
- ★ 96 percent said they don't use marijuana

Survey data also shows that the use of tobacco has dropped 5.5 percent for a composite five-year average; alcohol use dropped by 12.2 percent; and marijuana dropped by 9.8 percent. Another fact to note is children ages 13 to 15 are most vulnerable to risky behaviors.

The Healthy Community Initiative (HCI) student survey was administered in February 2008 to more than 1,000 Northfield students in grades 6, 8, 9, and 11.

The Northfield Area Parent Communication Network's mission is to foster communication between parents, to help parents develop good parenting skills and to help prevent risky situations for our children