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Executive's Corner

By Lisa Barnes—WMPN Executive Director

One of my greatest joys of working in the field of Prevention is our teen leadership and peer education efforts. It is amazing to see the commitment and potential of our young people flourish and grow through these programs. I will never forget some of the comments made by pre-teens and younger children who attended a Teen Intern program. A middle school girl asked me how to become a Teen Intern she then said, "They are kids who are just like us that are doing something important!" Another time a grade school boy said, "I never talk in groups but you really care and will listen to me." And perhaps the most impactful comment was from a 9 year old girl who said, "I never knew anyone who didn't do drugs and I didn't know I didn't have to have sex."

One day I visited a school to do a workshop. The Counselor from the community recognized me and said, "teens from WMPN presented a suicide prevention workshop at an all day Youth Conference. Two ninth grade girls who attended came to me and said they recognized a problem with one of their friends. I called the student and his parents to a meeting where he told them how he planned to commit suicide the next Tuesday." Sometimes in prevention we do not get to see the fruits of our labor. But prevention does work!

We see dramatic drops in the number of Comanche County teens who use tobacco and marijuana. Retailers who sell alcohol and tobacco to minors are being held accountable; The Teen Intern Program plants seeds of hope and knowledge that makes a difference in the lives of others. Teen leaders save lives and they do it with passion and joy. It is a privilege to work alongside our young colleagues.

Teen Intern Program Quarterly Newsletter Spring 2010



1318 SW Lee Blvd.
Lawton, Oklahoma 73501
(580) 355-5246 ph
(580) 353-2168 fax
www.wmpn.org



SPRING
2010

Wichita
Mountains
Prevention
Network

Teen Intern Program

Quarterly Newsletter



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Teen Interns

Sara Collins
Jamar Davis
Mark Hill
Kelly Menasco
Devin Pollard
Garnett Sadler
Jacobi Shelton
Kendra Thomas
Jordan Tucker
Leigh Ashley Tucker
Shereyl White
Vertell White

Staff

Elizabeth Reeves
Coordinator.
Prevention Specialist

Paula Thomas
Prevention Specialist

Jennifer Baker
Project Specialist

Soaring to New Heights.

The 2009-2010 Teen Intern Program took a running start into the new program year and half way through has already soared to new heights.

The 2009-2010 Teen Intern Program kicked off with the group going to camp the first week of June where they melted together as one during a week of fun and training at Oakridge Camp in Anadarko. Interns were trained in areas of underage drinking, substance abuse and marijuana prevention. During free time, Interns tested their will and wit by experiencing activities such as rock climbing, power bouncing, water sliding and riflery.

Following camp, Interns met with their workshop groups to develop workshops to present throughout the community. Their workshops were officially premiered to WMPN staff and community members for evaluation and encouragement before being presented out in the Lawton Fort Sill community. A total of 5 workshops have been presented thus far. Nothing is too big for this group.

Exceeding program requirements, Teen Interns have gone above and beyond expectations. Here are just a few of this year's highlights so far—

Girl Power!

Interns served at this year's Girl Power! Conference as facilitators for workshops on healthy relationships, personality and the importance of being similar and unique. Roughly 400 5th grade girls from Lawton Public Schools attended the conference.

Heroes Youth Summit

Wichita Mountains Prevention Network held their first Regional Youth Summit at which Teen Interns played an integral part. Interns were responsible for helping with registration as well as teaching workshops.

Reality Parties

In attempt to raise community awareness of the dangers of underage drinking parties, interns became the actors in a staged underage drinking party. Parents were invited to walk through the party. Each party tour followed up with a question and answer discussion panel.

Community Workshops

Are you interested in scheduling a Teen Intern workshop presentation? Teen Interns present workshops on three different subject matters:

•Underage Drinking Prevention

This workshop is designed to inform on the dangers and consequences of underage drinking.

•Substance Abuse: Local Problem/ National Epidemic

This workshop focuses on the cycle of substance abuse. It shows the different stages one goes through that lead to addiction.

•Marijuana: Myth vs. Fact

This workshop addresses effects and consequences of marijuana use.

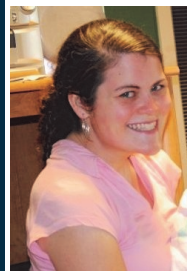
Workshops last approximately thirty minutes, are both informative and interactive and end with question/discussion time. If you are interested in having the Teen Interns present or would like more information please contact Elizabeth Reeves at the Wichita Mountains Prevention Network:

580-355-5246 x104
eyocham@wmpn.org



Making a Difference

Elizabeth Reeves—Teen Intern Coordinator



But have you ever tried drugs? Asked an audience member to unsuspecting Teen Intern presenters obviously questioning their credibility in the subject matter of substance abuse. "No," the presenters calmly respond; "all of the research that we have seen shows how dangerous using drugs can be". Unconvinced silence. "Can I say something?" asked an accompanying Intern whose original intention was to serve as a support for his fellow Teen Interns who would be presenting. "I have, I have been where you are," he said. "Its not worth it. My life was horrible when I did this kind of stuff and it wasn't until I made the decision to change that my life became better. It helps if you have something to believe in I chose

God. I now have a relationship with God and my life is changed. I'm in the Teen Intern Program now which is really great and helps me keep straight."

As the coordinator for the Teen Intern Program I am privileged to work with some of the best teenagers in Comanche county. Of course I'm a little partial, it's like I'm in a constant state of being proud. I must say though, in the few moments that this scenario took place I don't think I've ever been so proud. I could have floated right off the ground and into the sunset. These youth truly care and want to help, so much so that they are willing to be questioned, doubted and risk their reputations in order to share the knowledge that they have gained. These youth truly are making a difference.

Keep up the good work Teen Interns.

Intern's Perspective

Sara Collins—Teen Intern

As a teen intern, I have developed a greater understanding and awareness with the problems regarding substance abuse. Before I joined this program, I knew that people at my school did drugs and that people died from driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol, but I did not understand the true significance of prevention in our community until I saw the workshops on substance abuse, teen drinking, and marijuana and then later presented them myself to teens suffering from substance abuse.

Seeing real people experiencing this problem first hand changed the way I viewed this issue. The objective of the Teen Intern Program is to enlighten young people about the dangers of alcohol and drugs. Typically, when an adult attempts to show the next generation these hazards, many times this information is ignored and written off simply because they are "behind the times" as some teens might think. However, when factual information is reported by people from their own peer group, teens seem to be more accepting of this information.

Since joining the Teen Intern Program, I have made many friends, and I have been able to participate in a lot of really fun volunteer activities as well as presenting workshops on substance abuse. The Teen Intern Program is affiliated with many different types of activities in the community. We present workshops to 5th grade girls at an annual event called Girl Power, host booths at public events such as the Moonlight Walk Against Drugs, and present workshops to both people who may become involved in drug abuse and people who are already battling this disease. We also conduct Reward Reminder Visits which are designed to prevent retailers from selling tobacco products to underage teens. In addition, the Lawton Police Department has included the Teen Intern Program in compliance checks, which involves minors attempting to purchase alcohol from retailers.

The Teen Intern Program and the people involved have become very meaningful to me. Because of my experience in this program, I believe I will be well prepared for a drug-free future.



Join the Team!

How to become a Teen Intern

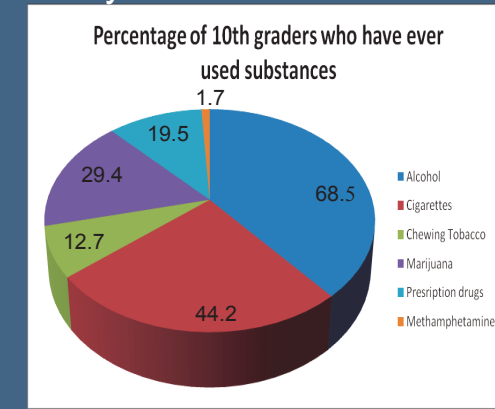
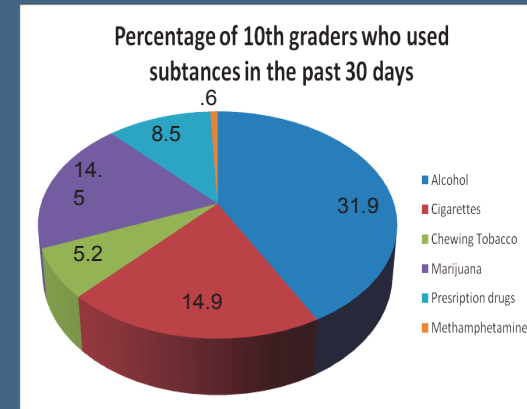
Are you interested in making a difference? Then you are at the right place! Making a difference is exactly what Teen Interns strive to do. Teen Interns work to make their community healthier by raising awareness of risky behaviors by presenting workshops and being an active community member through volunteering.

The Teen Intern Program is open to all Comanche County students grades 9-12 ages 15-19. The first step to become a Teen Intern is filling out the application and attending a parent/student information session. Afterwards, you will be called in for an interview. Upon interviewing all candidates, selection for the 2010-2011 Teen Intern Program will be made.

Interviews for the 2010-2011 year will take place in the spring 2010 but applications can be picked up at the WMPN office now. Keep in mind, you don't have to wait! Join us for our next Lawton Fort-Sill Youth Coalition meeting to find out more about the Teen Intern Program and how you can be involved!

Did you know?

Comanche County



Exactly what Teen Interns are working to Prevent

Call today for a Teen Intern application!
580-355-5246