

We're on the web!
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WMPN

Parent Power

Summer 2006

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A newsletter for parents raising teenagers.

Parents are a child's first, and most important teachers.

Parenting is hard but rewarding work.

This newsletter will feature practical information, tips and the stories our kids don't always tell us.

"What Teens Want Adults To Know"

From the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy



2005-2006 Lawton-Ft. Sill Youth Coalition

The National Campaign asked teens from all over the country a simple question:

If you could give your parents and other important adults advice about how to help you and your friends avoid pregnancy, what would it be?

These tips represent the major themes the Campaign heard from teens.

1. Show us why teen pregnancy is such a bad idea.
2. Show us what good responsible relationships look like.
3. Talk to us honestly about love, sex and relationships.
4. Telling us not to have sex is not enough.
5. Even if we don't ask, we still have questions.
6. Whether we're having sex or not, we need to be prepared.
7. If we ask you about sex or contraception, don't assume we are already "doing it."
8. Pay attention to us before we get into trouble.
9. Don't leave us alone so much.
10. We really care what you think, even if we don't always like it.
11. We hate "the talk" as much as you do.
12. For us it's about abstinence and contraception. Not either/or.

WMPN Mission Statement

Wichita Mountains Prevention Network is a charitable organization working to:

network, involve and utilize all of our community citizens, agencies, organizations and institutions in order to promote positive youth, family and community development;

develop increased awareness of problems facing society and promote a community climate of positive opportunities, attitudes and activities;

promote community support for effective parenting, constructive family communication and parental networking;

promote community awareness and revision of youth related laws and their consistent enforcement as well as the development of appropriate juvenile justice programs in the community;

promote the continued development and implementation of comprehensive, community-wide programs, primary prevention, intervention and education;

change social policy, laws and advertising practices regarding school, tobacco and other drugs; and,

develop, support and provide community and public education programs regarding such matters.



Youth Coalition members share their vision of a perfect community

See the results of the 2004 Oklahoma Prevention Needs Assessment Survey at www.wmpn.org

Parents Play Vital Role In Underage Drinking Prevention

Approximately 171,000 underage youth in Oklahoma drink each year. Young people who begin drinking before age 15 are four times more likely to develop alcohol dependence and are two and a half times more likely to become abusers of alcohol than those who begin drinking at age 21.

(The International Institute for Alcohol Awareness (IIAA), a Project of the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (Evaluation (PIRE)).

Develop Family Rules About Teen Drinking

When parents establish clear "no alcohol" rules and expectations, their children are less likely to begin drinking. While each family should develop agreements about teen alcohol use that reflect their own beliefs and values, some possible family rules about drinking are:

- Kids will not drink alcohol until they are 21.
- Older siblings will not encourage younger brothers or sisters to drink
- Older siblings will not give younger siblings alcohol.
- Kids will not stay at teen parties where alcohol is served.
- Kids will not ride in a car with a driver who has been drinking.

(From Make a Difference: Talk To Your Child About Alcohol produced by National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, National Institutes of Health, and U.S. DHS)

LFSYC: Empowering Youth for a Positive Future

What happens when 21 young community leaders come together at camp? Leadership development, prevention training, collaboration and FUN!

The Wichita Mountains Prevention Network hosted the Lawton-Ft. Sill Youth Leadership Camp February 17-19 at Cameron University (A BIG thanks to CU for hosting the event). During the weekend conference, Coalition members learned about the basics of community prevention (teenage pregnancy prevention, substance abuse and violence prevention and community mobilization).

Through teambuilding, workshops and experiential learning, the Coalition members developed real time skills to empower them to be more active participants in community planning and development. The



Youth Coalition members work together to navigate the grid

Lawton-Ft. Sill Youth Coalition meets monthly, and extends an open invitation to any Comanche County resident in grades 9-12 interested in being part of positive change in the our community.

Youth Coalition Information
355-5246 x 104 or 111

County Middle Schoolers find the value of Choosing the Best

The WMPN Teen Pregnancy Prevention Project brings abstinence education to Comanche County middle schoolers with a program designed just for them.

Choosing the Best Path uses focused discussion and interaction to allow students to discover for themselves the value of remaining sexually abstinent. Students learn about the physical and emotional dangers of early sexual activity. They also learn how to set personal boundaries and develop healthy and age appropriate relationships. Above all, students are encouraged to talk with their parents about each *Choosing the Best Path* lesson.

In addition to classroom implementation, the project offers workshops to the parents of Comanche County teens and their communities. To bring the project to your area, please call 355-5246 x111.

The Search Institute

The Search Institute is a wonderful resource for parents, caregivers and other adults who love, raise, guide and mentor young people.

The institute promotes the development of the positive experiences and personal qualities young people need to grow up healthy, caring and responsible:

- *Young people need consistent support and love from those around them.*
- *Young people need to have boundaries and discipline for appropriate behaviors.*
- *Young people need opportunities to be involved in positive activities, including art and music, clubs, sports, community organizations, and congregations.*
- *Young people need to value education and be committed to learning.*
- *Young people need values to guide their priorities and choices.*
- *Young people need skills and competencies to negotiate through life.*

(www.search-institute.org)

The power of parents to positively influence the decisions and choices of their children is always underestimated.

User Friendly: Practical Tips for Positive Parenting

Kids who are close to their parents are the most successful at avoiding risky behavior. What can you do?

GET INVOLVED

Establish together time. Make it part of your routine to do something special each week. *Don't be afraid* to ask where your kids are going and who they'll be with. Learn the names of their friends and where they live.

Need more information? visit the WMPN clearinghouse at our office or online at www.wmpn.org

LEARN TO COMMUNICATE

Make small talk. The easier it is to talk about everyday issues, the easier it will be to talk about the sensitive ones. *Make it clear* that you do not approve of substance use or early sexual activity. *Take advantage of teachable moments.* Use TV shows, news reports or commercials to begin conversations in a relaxed setting.

WALK THE TALK

Be the person you want your kids to be—what clearer message is there?

PRAISE AND REWARD

The right word at the right time could be the inspiration that keeps your child away from destructive behavior. So, always *reward good behavior* with words of appreciation or even a big hug. Point out what your kid does right. Try not to be too critical.

An open invitation...

The Lawton-Ft. Sill Community Coalition (LFSCC) seeks a community that is proactive in the development of healthy, responsible and involved individuals. LFSCC members come from all sectors of our community. They represent businesses, civic and faith-based organizations. They are also concerned parents, grandparents and educators.

Together we partner to target problems faced by our community such as substance abuse, teen pregnancy and violence. We raise awareness and bring prevention programs to youth, parents and the public.

The next meeting of the LFSCC will be Tuesday, August 15 at 12:00 pm. in the WMPN conference room at 1314 SW Lee. Upcoming events include Red Ribbon Week, the Road Kill Classic Run, the Drug-Free Fair and the annual Back 2 School Bash. Lunch will be served. Call 355-5246 for further details.

LAY DOWN THE LAW

They may protest, but they still need you. Let them know you care enough to set limits. *Create rules* and explain the consequences for breaking them in advance. *Set a curfew* and keep it strictly enforced. *Call parents* whose home your child will be visiting. Do their rules and expectations match yours? *Make it easy* to leave an unsafe party. Outline exactly how you or another trusted adult will pick up your child if he or she feels uncomfortable.

LISTEN TO YOUR INSTINCTS

If your gut reaction tells you something is wrong, do something. *Interrupt, investigate and intervene.*

(from the Office of National Drug Control Policy)



Youth Coalition members celebrate Girl Power!