

Partnership Press

Winter 2006



Partnership Receives At-Risk Funds from Madison County Schools

Goal to reduce dropout rate; improve academic performance

The Madison County school system recently awarded the Partnership for a Drug-Free Community a grant to reduce the drop out rate and improve academic performance. Deborah Soule, Executive Director of the Partnership, expressed her appreciation for this award, "We are honored to have received this award for the past six years, especially since these funds provide at-risk county school students the great service of free tutoring."

The concept was developed by Sandra Rhodes, former Federal Program Director of Madison County Schools, who envisioned a program that would involve qualified teachers to tutor students who were determined by local school faculty to be at-risk.

Students, grades K-12 who have scored poorly on tests and have received academic grades lower than a "C" are targeted. Her vision became a reality when the first contract between the Partnership and the Madison County schools was awarded in 2001.

The first year began slowly with only ten schools participating, but continued to grow steadily over time. Early on, the Madison county school system recognized that not only would students benefit from the program, but it would also raise the level of excellence throughout the entire school system.

And that's exactly what happened. Today the program, managed by Partnership staffer Elaine Carlton, coordinates 55 tutors in all 24 Madison County schools. The program has expanded from an eight-month to a ten-month duration to better serve students at the beginning of the school year. Last year over 11,000 students received tutoring as a result of the program. Carlton stated, "The teachers are so enthusiastic about the program that they call weeks in advance to find out if the Partnership will provide the program again."

The success of last year's program was evaluated and revealed that the average percentage of students showing improvement in grades was 81.4%. The report cited the range of improvement varied from 50% at one school to 100% at another school. In general, the improvement percentages at most schools ran between 75% - 95%

When asked if the program was successful, Donna Dunaway, assistant principal of Central expressed her satisfaction, "Absolutely - highest DIBEL scores ever and math scores. No student failed math." Sherri Plant of Lynn Fanning Elementary added, "Parents were thrilled that there was help that did not cost them."

The grant's objective goes hand-in-hand with Partnership's mission to prevent youth substance abuse. Statistics reveal

that students who perform better in school are less likely to use drugs. Tim Allen, reading coach at Riverton Elementary, noted one result of the tutoring program "Students demonstrated improved self-confidence in both academic and social areas."

Even the kids like it. A Walnut Grove student beamed, "My grades came up when a tutor started helping me."

Terry Davis, Acting Superintendent of Madison County Schools notes, "We have enjoyed a great working relationship with Partnership for the last several years. They always have such a strong proposal and continue to provide the much needed tutoring and mentoring in all of our schools. Our students needing that extra help gain tremendously by their tireless efforts. We look forward to working with them again this year and wish them the best of results in working with the young people of the Madison County Schools".



Program Facts At a Glance

- In June 2000, the Alabama State Department of Education Prevention and Support Services established new at-risk legislation designated for at-risk student programs.
- Funds provided are specifically earmarked for special programs that increase learning opportunities for at-risk students.
- Funds are to be used for additional assistance above and beyond the regular instructional program for at-risk students.
- The services are provided at no cost to families with students determined to be "at risk."
- This year the amount awarded was \$82,844.
- The school system receives 83% percent of the total funding for tutoring services.
- The Partnership receives 17% to administer the program which includes staff and operating expenses.

Jimson Weed: Dangerous to Unsuspecting Youth Seeking Thrills



Jimson weed is a common name for a plant known botanically as *Datura stramonium*, which has been used as a medicine and intoxicant for centuries. The plant's main ingredients are the belladonna alkaloids atropine and scopolamine. Since Jimson weed is native to much of the U.S. (from New England to Texas), it's

most often used by young people in those areas unfamiliar with its reputation and unprepared for its side effects.

Jimson weed, also known as thorn apple, stinkweed, and locoweed, can reach a height of five feet. It bears white flowers and prickly seed pods that split open when ripe, usually in fall. All parts of the plant are poisonous, however the highest concentration of poison is found in the seeds.

Most Jimson weed use tends to be of the one-time-only thrill-seeking or curiosity variety, typically involving younger teens. Since Jimson weed's effects aren't generally considered pleasurable, addiction usually isn't a factor.

The phrase "Red as a beet, dry as a bone, blind as a bat, mad as a hatter" has been used to describe Jimson's effects, and it does a good job of summing them up. All parts of the plant are toxic, so pleasant effects are limited — a big reason the plant is used only by novices.

Atropine and scopolamine block the neurotransmitter acetylcholine, causing dry mouth, dilated pupils, high temperature (but reduced sweating), and blurred vision. Psychological effects include confusion, euphoria, and delirium.

Symptoms include incoherent speech, impaired coordination; rapid heart beat; and dry, flushed or hot skin. Depending on the dose, most effects begin within two hours of use and some linger up to 24-48 hours.

Potential for accidental poisoning increases with higher doses. As little as one-half teaspoon could be fatal. In extreme cases, users can experience seizures, intense visual or auditory hallucinations, or cardiac arrest. A Jimson weed overdose should be considered potentially serious and medical intervention sought. Few statistics are available on use but, in 1998, 152 cases of Jimson weed poisoning were reported nationally, according to the American Association of Poison Control Centers.

Jimson weed is not a controlled substance. Because of its anticholinergic properties and antispasmodic effects, Jimson weed was used in traditional medicine to treat a variety of illnesses. Today, extracts are still used in treating asthma, intestinal cramps, and both diarrhea and bed-wetting.

Sources: www.doitnow.org/pages/525.html, and www.healthed.msu.edu/fact/jimson_weed.shtml

Alcohol and Automobiles Lethal Combination

The holiday season brings family and friends together from far and wide, resulting in an increased amount of roadway traffic. Holiday gatherings often include alcoholic beverages. Be smart this holiday — don't drink and drive.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), alcohol-related fatalities have plummeted since the 1980s because police enforce drunk driving laws, and the public is aware of this enforcement. For the third consecutive year, alcohol-related fatalities declined in 2005, to 16,885 nationwide. Unfortunately, many thousands of people lost loved ones to drunk drivers.

Nicole Nason, NHTSA administrator, states "We must never forget that safety starts with the family. Parents and caregivers must accept that providing and teaching safety in all its forms is their most important responsibility." Celebrate responsibly and encourage friends and family to do the same. Talk to your teens about the dangers of drinking and driving. Persuade them to phone home for a ride or call a cab if they are unable to drive or are riding with someone else that is impaired. Help keep our roads safe and sober.

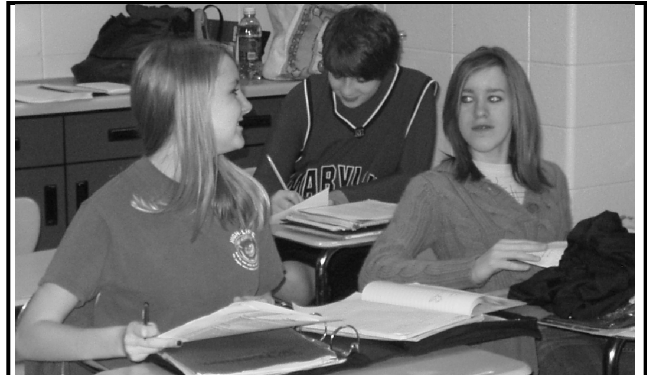


Partnership Expands Reach To Redstone Arsenal

The Partnership for a Drug-Free Community has been awarded the Governor's Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Grant for the second year in a row. This grant allows the Partnership to offer the *Too Good for Drugs and Violence* curriculum for school classes and after-school programs to local youth, grades 6-8, in middle schools, after-school groups and other interested organizations at no cost. The program consists of 10 sessions at approximately 45 minutes per session.

Recently Debra Milliken, TGDV program manager, met with Andre´ Terry, Redstone Arsenal's Chief of Child and Youth Services, to discuss plans for introducing the program. The TGDV program, created by the Mendez foundation, is designed to reduce risk factors and enhance protective factors related alcohol, tobacco and other drugs among youth. The program also equips students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to remain safe and drug free. Youth are taught how to apply the protective factors they need to overcome risk factors and build resiliency.

A Redstone Arsenal youth group will also be formed to become involved with an anti-alcohol youth advocacy program. Youth will plan and initiate programs that encourage peers to remain alcohol free. For more information about *Too Good for Drugs and Violence*, please contact Debra Milliken at 539-7393 or email dmillike@hiwaay.net



Too Good for Drugs and Violence was presented to students at Hampton Cove Middle School last year.

How Young Adults Obtain Prescription Pain Relievers for Nonmedical Use

- In 2005, 12.4 percent of young adults aged 18 to 25 used prescription pain relievers nonmedically in the past year, and 1.7 percent met the criteria for past year prescription pain reliever dependence or abuse.
- Among young adults aged 18 to 25 who used prescription pain relievers nonmedically in the past year, 53.0 percent obtained them from a friend or relative for free.
- Among young adults aged 18 to 25 who used prescription pain relievers nonmedically in the past year and met the criteria for prescription pain reliever dependence or abuse, 37.5 percent obtained the prescription pain relievers that they used most recently for nonmedical purposes for free from a friend or relative, 19.9 percent bought them from a friend or relative, and 13.6 percent obtained them from one doctor.

Source: *National Survey on Drug Use and Health, Issue 39*

Local Nonmedical Prescription Drug Use Findings

A recent survey conducted among north Alabama college students ages 18 — 25 revealed the following information regarding drug use:

- 7.1 percent reported using non-prescribed prescription medications within a 30-day time period
- 3.8 percent reported using OxyContin within a 30-day time period
- 3.2 percent reported using *uppers* within a 30-day time period
- 36 percent reported being around friends or adults that didn't approve of drug use would help them avoid using drugs
- 24 percent reported avoiding places and situations where drugs were used would help them avoid using drugs



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The mission of Partnership for a Drug-Free Community is to reduce the illegal use or abuse of drugs including alcohol, inhalants, methamphetamine, marijuana and tobacco among youth throughout the Huntsville/Madison county community-at-large. This mission is accomplished through strengthened anti-drug coalition efforts using research-based, scientific and environmental strategies.

Try These Non-Alcoholic Beverages to Quench Holiday Thirst

Hot Wassail

4 cups (1 quart) unsweetened apple juice
3 cups unsweetened pineapple juice
2 cups sugar-free cranberry juice cocktail
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 cinnamon stick
3 whole cloves
Lemon slices
Cinnamon sticks for garnish (optional)

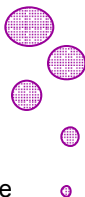


Combine all ingredients except cinnamon sticks in large kettle and simmer over low heat 10 minutes. Serve warm with cinnamon stick garnish in each cup, if desired. Makes 18, 1/2 cup servings. Can be kept warm on a holiday buffet in a crock pot.

Mock Pink Champagne

1/2 cup sugar
1 cup water
1 6-ounce can frozen orange juice concentrate
1 6-ounce can frozen grapefruit juice concentrate
1 28-ounce bottle chilled ginger ale
1/3 cup grenadine syrup

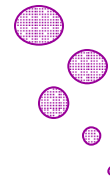
Early in day, mix sugar with water in sauce pan and boil 5 minutes. Cool. Add frozen juice concentrates. Refrigerate. At serving time add ginger ale and grenadine syrup. Stir lightly. Makes 10-servings. Excellent for ringing in the New Year.



Cranberry Fizz

1-16 oz can chilled cranberry juice
1-16 oz can apple juice
2 tbsp lemon juice
1-12 oz bottle ginger ale

Combine cranberry juice with apple and lemon juices. Add ginger ale. Makes 8 servings.



Lemon-Grape Frostie

8 tablespoons grape juice concentrate
3 cups water
1/2 cup lemon juice
1 cup plain yogurt
Lemon slices for garnish

Pour all ingredients in a blender and mix well. Pour into four ice-filled glasses. Top with lemon slices. Serves 4.

