

ADULTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF CHILDREN

FEBRUARY 2006

WWW.FCPS.EDU/HERNDONHS/COALITION/HOMEPAGE.HTML

WHO IS THE GREATER HERNDON COMMUNITY COALITION?

DID YOU KNOW?

- Let your child feel he or she is important. Children have a great need to feel they are important to their parents. Children grow on love and challenges.
- Do not give in to your child to avoid conflict. Children feel more secure when they have limits set for them in their everyday life, but they often cannot refrain from testing their limits.
- It is important that you consistently support your child's contacts and activity outside of the family. Try to avoid being over-protective, but keep an eye on what is going on and arrange situations that can bring about positive development.

For more information on GHCC or to become involved—contact Lisa Lombardozzi at 703.973.4444 or via email—ghcc@cox.net.

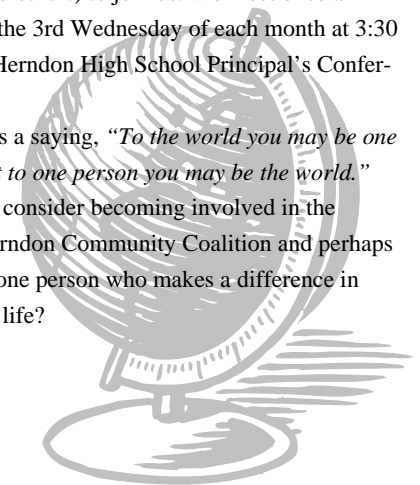
The Greater Herndon Community Coalition (GHCC) is a group of parents, teachers, and community members whose focus is to educate, inform, and take a leadership role in coordinating the Herndon High Pyramid schools and communities about issues concerning risky behaviors such as alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use. Our program support for this year will include—*co-sponsoring the HHS Homecoming Parade; supporting Red Ribbon week at elementary schools; and supporting after-school programs at Clearview and Dranesville Elementary*

We will also be coordinating these activities—*Prom Note-cards from elementary students for high school students; hosting several Parent Workshops on topics such as Motivation, Bullying, and Teen Drinking; supporting the High School All Night Graduation celebration and the After Prom celebration activities; supporting the*

Middle School After-School programs; and supporting the Middle and High School Hispanic Parent programs.

We continue to look for individuals from our community (parents, business members, senior citizens, faith-based individuals, private school individuals, and others) to join us. We meet once a month, on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 3:30 pm in the Herndon High School Principal's Conference room.

There is a saying, "To the world you may be one person, but to one person you may be the world." Won't you consider becoming involved in the Greater Herndon Community Coalition and perhaps being that one person who makes a difference in someone's life?



View our Website for more Information

[www.fcps.edu/HerndonHS/
Coalition/homepage.html](http://www.fcps.edu/HerndonHS/Coalition/homepage.html)

OUR MISSION

Out of concern for the safety and well-being of all children in our community, members of the GHCC believe that we must unite our efforts to support all young people with regard to character issues that will help foster drug/alcohol prevention and violence prevention in the Greater Herndon Community.

The Greater Herndon Community Coalition is funded by the Safe and Drug Free Youth Section, through the Federal Safe and Drug Free Schools and Community Act.

HELPING YOUR TEEN HANDLE PEER PRESSURE

Helping Your Teen Handle Peer Pressure by Dr. Pam Cook, Ph.D., LPC

Peer pressure may be a normal part of teenage life, but, at times, the effects of peer pressure on a teenager may seem anything but normal. Peer pressure can affect a variety of aspects of a teen's life, from hairstyles to clothing choices to musical tastes. And sometimes peer pressure has a decidedly positive effect, keeping a teen participating in after-school clubs, attending religious activities or playing on sports teams.

But peer relationships can also have a negative impact, leading a teen to defy authority and engage in harmful behavior. Many parents are shocked, when they take the time to look at the effect of peer pressure on their son or daughter, to learn their teen is already heading down a dangerous path. While most parents want to encourage relationships that are bringing positive results, the difficult question is what you can do if your teenager is already yielding to negative peer pressure. In most cases, it isn't too late to help him or her establish positive peer relationships, but it will take a committed effort to intervene.

One reason many teens submit to negative peer pressure is because they lack self-confidence and a positive self-concept. As a parent you can help build the self-confidence your teen needs to avoid the negative pressure of a peer group. Encourage your teen to make independent decisions whenever possible, and offer praise for making a good choice. Take notice of accomplishments and offer compliments on a job well-done.

Other things you can do to combat the influence of negative peer relationships include:

- **Be interested.** Don't just ask the common "who, what, where?" questions. Encourage your teen to share more about his or her life with you. Show a real interest in what is being shared. Respect and accept what he or she is thinking, even if you hold an opposing point-of-view. It may take time to feel that you're reaching your teen, but persistence is the key to making positive changes.

- **Confront problems.** If your child spends time with friends involved in unacceptable activities, confront the issue directly. Express your concerns, but also try to understand your teen's

need for being with such people.

- **Set boundaries.** If some of your teen's friends truly worry you, rather than prohibiting all contact with them, restrict time with them to supervised settings.

- **Set rules.** Limits and rules are an essential part of the safety and development of your teen. No segment of society can properly function without clearly defined rules. Families must have a set of rules based on personal values that create a positive environment.

- **Handle the conflicts.** Even with a clear set of rules, conflicts can and will occur. But even conflicts can serve as a means to form a stronger relationship with your teen. Consistently resolving small issues and creating preventive rules is the best way to prevent larger and more devastating issues from developing. Insisting that homework be completed, chores accomplished and curfews obeyed are small but important ways to strengthen a positive family relationship. When you and your teen can work together and feel in control when setting rules, boundaries and limits, a teenager learns decision-making and develops a better sense of responsibility.

- **Take a proactive approach to potentially serious problems and involve your teen.** Help him or her become more aware of negative situations and how to make better decisions when forming relationships. One way to do this is to help your teenager evaluate each friendship. Get your teen to answer some basic questions about whether the friendship is reciprocal, safe, one that will help meet your teen's needs, and one that will help your teen be a better person. The answers to these questions are a good indication of the types of peers surrounding your teenager - and they can help your teen decide which friendships should be kept.

As parents, remember that peer pressure can be positive. Although peers have the potential to encourage problem behavior, more times than not peers reinforce positive values and provide a supportive environment necessary for your child to move through this difficult stage of adolescence. Your goal is to help your teen identify peers who provide real friendship and benefits.

Source: American Counseling Association

More often than not, peers reinforce family values, but they have the potential to encourage problem behaviors as well.

Source: Nat'l Institute of Mental Health



ALCOHOL AND YOUR CHILDREN

Did you know that nearly half of US teens have been able to obtain alcohol, and sometimes the suppliers are their parents or the parents of a friend? Almost 75% of seventh graders who drink alcohol obtain it from their parents (with or without their knowledge).^{*} Also, many youth are able to purchase alcohol themselves, but most use the assistance from persons over the age of 21. The median age at which children begin drinking is 15.7 years of age and 48% of high school seniors have consumed alcohol in the past 30 days.

How can adults help?

- Make sure your kids know what you expect from them regarding underage alcohol use. Set rules with clear consequences and follow through consistently.
- Think about where alcohol is kept in your home and how much you have on hand. Monitor your supply.
- Hold your ground. Don't provide, ignore, or excuse the use of alcohol with kids.

Teens are at reduced risk for alcohol problems when they have—

- A parent(s) or significant adult who is actively involved.

- Adults who regularly support positive lifestyle choices and activities.
- A sense of responsibility to others.

The Law -

- It is illegal for anyone under 21 to possess or consume any alcoholic beverage.
- Virginia's Zero Tolerance law makes driving under the influence of any amount of alcohol a serious criminal offense for drivers under age 21.
- No one may use an altered or fake ID such as driver's license, birth certificate or student identification card to establish a false identity or false age to purchase an alcoholic beverage.
- Violators of the above are guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor, and, upon conviction, face a fine of up to \$2,500 and/or a year in jail and/or fifty hours of community service, and can lose their driver's license for up to a year.

^{*} Source—Dept. of Health and Human Services



Teens ages 13–18 reported that they were able to obtain alcohol from their parents with their knowledge (24%), from their home without their parent's knowledge (19%), from someone else's home without their parent's knowledge (15%), and from someone else's parents home with their knowledge (14%).

Source: American Medical Association.

RESOURCES

There are some good websites where you can get more information on Peer Pressure and Alcohol Abuse:

- Bullying.Org (www.bullying.org) dedicated to increasing the awareness of, and the problems associated with, bullying and to preventing, resolving, and eliminating bullying in society.
- No Bullying.Org (www.nobully.org.nz) - kid-friendly website that addresses bullying prevention and education.
- National Institute of Health (www.nih.gov) - great site with a lot of useful resources.
- US Department of Health and Human Services (www.hhs.gov) - lots of great information.
- The Cool Spot (www.thecoolspot.gov) - National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism website for middle-school children.

Over 15,000 teens have died since 1999 as a result of **drinking & driving** and countless others have paid the price for those tragic decisions. **Report a party where underage drinking is going to take place and you may save someone's life.**

Make an anonymous phone call to the Shut it Down message line – 703.246.2333. All you need to provide is the date, time and address where you suspect underage drinking or other activities that will be taking place.

MEET TRINITY AMBASSADORS INTERNATIONAL

Learn Computer Repair and Maintenance For Free! Trinity Ambassadors International (TAI) is a non-profit organization that gives youth and young-adults a new way to learn and grow by providing them with the knowledge and know-how to fix broken computers. Join the team of professional Ambassadors lead by Dr. Johnson, Akindele, the President and Mr. Michael Thomas, TAI'S Reston - Herndon Executive Program Director, in a quest for the knowledge and skill to help yourself and others.

In the Computer Repair Program at TAI you will:

- Learn to build, troubleshoot, and configure a computer.
- Learn computer programs: Windows, MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Access.
- Learn to use the Internet for educational purposes.
- Receive career counseling in computer science, communications and technology.
- Receive counseling on employability skills, work place competencies and personal qualities that are critical for success in any endeavor.
- Build and strengthen critical thinking and

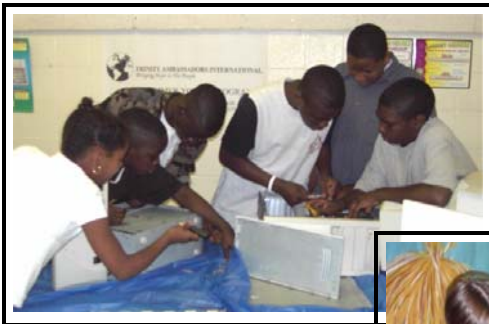
problem solving skills.

- Learn and experience the latest developments in computer technology.
- Broaden knowledge of computer concepts by gaining hands-on experience.
- Benefit from recognition of achievements.

So... Why should youth learn computer maintenance and repair? The TAI Computer Repair Program's main goal is to provide youth with pre-employment works skills. We want youth, along with other inner-city youth and young-adults, to have an opportunity to learn the skills that can help youth enter and get ahead in the work force. After completing the program, youth will not only have the knowledge, but also the skills to help broaden employment opportunities.

Other Benefits and Rewards Not only is TAI prepared to provide youth with the knowledge and skills to get ahead, TAI also offers certificates of completion upon completing the program and helps find internship opportunities for the following year. **And as if that isn't enough, successful graduates get to build and take home their own computer.**

Trinity Ambassadors International is looking for computer donations and volunteers. Call 703-751-8420.



The program last year was held at Clearview Elementary School from July 5 through August 12. Guest speakers who spoke with the students including the Vice-Mayor of the Town of Herndon, the Captain of the Herndon Police, a retired military officer, the head of after-school programs in Fairfax County, a recruiter from General Dynamics, and doctors from Howard University gave an anti-drug presentation on the "effects of alcohol and marijuana on the brain" and the "value of education."

For more information:
 Trinity Ambassadors International
www.trinityambassadors.org
 703-751-8420
 Email—charles.thomas@fcps.edu