

ADULTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF CHILDREN

DECEMBER 2004/JANUARY 2005

WHO IS THE GREATER HERNDON COMMUNITY COALITION?

DID YOU KNOW?

- Every day more than 4,700 kids under age 18 try marijuana for the first time (National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2003)
- When children feel competent, confident, and needed, they sparkle. (National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, 2004)
- Children who are unsupervised for 11+ hours/week are twice as likely to use alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs (Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs).

For more information on GHCC or to become involved—contact Lisa Lombardozi 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; co-sponsoring a guest speaker, “Vision Warrior”, on drugs & alcohol; supporting Aldrin Elementary’s Red Ribbon week; producing a newsletter; implementing a website; offering a Gang Awareness program for the community; and facilitating a Risky Driving Awareness program for the community.*

We will also be coordinating these activities—*Prom Note-cards from elementary students for high school students; a Teen Drinking & Drug Abuse presentation for parents; supporting Clearview Elementary’s After-School program; sup-*

porting the High School All Night Graduation celebration and the After Prom celebration activities; supporting the Middle School After-School programs; supporting the Middle and High School Hispanic Parent programs; and recognizing outstanding contributions to the community by students and adults.

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?



Greater Herndon Community Coalition

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.

TALK TO YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT MARIJUANA

Here are some facts about Marijuana—

- ♦ **Marijuana is Addictive.** Each year, more teens enter treatment with a primary diagnosis of marijuana dependence than for all other illicit drugs combined. Research also shows that marijuana use is three times more likely to lead to dependence among adolescents than among adults.

- ♦ **Marijuana Hurts Young Bodies and Minds.** Smoking marijuana leads to some changes in the brain similar to those caused by cocaine, heroin, and alcohol. Regular marijuana users often develop breathing problems.

- ♦ **Marijuana Affects Learning & Academic Achievement.** Heavy use impairs the ability of young people to concentrate and retain information. Students who have smoked marijuana in the past year are more than twice as likely to cut class than those who did not smoke.



What can you do to keep your kids away from Marijuana?

- ♦ Be involved in your kids' lives. Ask *who*, *what*, *when*, and *where*.
- ♦ Know who your children's friends are, what your children are doing, when they'll be home, and where they're going.
- ♦ Set a firm rule of no drug use in your family.
- ♦ Parents are the most powerful influence on their kids when it comes to drugs. Two-thirds of youth ages 13-17, say losing their parents' respect is one of the main reasons they don't smoke marijuana or use other drugs.
- ♦ 89 % of youths reported that their parents would strongly disapprove of their trying marijuana once or twice. Among these youths, only 5.5% had used marijuana in the past month. However, among youths who perceived that their parents would only somewhat disapprove or neither approve nor disapprove of their trying marijuana, 30% reported past month use of marijuana.

You can help keep your kids safe from drugs. Two-thirds of kids say that losing their parents' respect is one of the main reasons they don't use drugs.

GIVING KIDS THE ABILITY TO SAY NO

Why do some kids grow up with ease, while others struggle? Many factors influence why some young people have successes in life and why others have a hard time. The Search Institute is an independent nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide leadership, knowledge, and resources to promote healthy children, youth, and communities. They believe that if kids are given positive assets they can make wise decisions, choose positive paths, and grow up competent, caring, and responsible.

They need **Support** from their families and many others, especially the adults in their lives. They need to feel **Empowerment** that they are valued in their community. They need to be

given **Boundaries and Expectations** to know what is "out of bound" behavior. Their free time needs to be a **Constructive use of time**.

A **Commitment to learning** helps them develop a lifelong commitment to education. **Positive values** help them develop strong values that guide their decision making. Young people need **Social competencies** that equip them to make positive choices in relationships. And, a **Positive identity** gives them a strong sense of their own power, purpose, worth, and promise.

Take the time to talk to your kids. Get involved in their lives. Know who your kids' friends are. *You can make a difference in a child's life!*

