Town Hall Meeting on Preventing Medicine and Prescription Drug Abuse

October is National Medicine Abuse Awareness Month and that is why on October 17th, The Erie County Council for the Prevention of Alcohol and Substance Abuse teamed up with CADCA (Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America) and CHPA (Community Healthcare Products Association) to host a Town Hall Meeting in conjunction with Senator Mark Grisanti. The Meeting’s emphasis was on medicine and prescription drug abuse in Upstate New York as well as across the nation.

ECCPASA’s Director of Programs, Robin Mann, emceed the event and was the time-keeper for a panel of speakers who took the stage. Senator Mark Grisanti began the discussion, stating, “It is alarming that more than five percent of teens report abusing over the counter cough medicine to get high. The panel of highly educated practitioners emphasized that parents must talk to their teens, monitor their medicine cabinets and share information with others in the community to stop this from happening.”

Additional speakers included Mary Elizabeth Elliott, V.P., Communications, Membership and IT, CADCA; Jenni Terry, Manager, Communications, Consumer Healthcare Products Association; Legislator Lynne Dixon; and Dr. Paul Updike, Medical Director at Pathways Treatment Services. Avi Israel, a local parent who lost his son to opioid addiction, also took a minute to share his personal story with the audience.

Second to marijuana, prescription drugs are the most abused illegal substances by youth. In 2009, 16 million Americans age 12 and older had taken a prescription pain reliever, tranquilizer, stimulant, or sedative for nonmedical purposes at least once in the year prior to being surveyed according to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health. However, research does show that teens who learn about the risks of drug use from their parents are 50% less likely to use.

“One promising outcome from this community event is that members of the audience expressed interest in developing a new community anti-drug coalition in the city of Hamburg, NY. CADCA and local member Erie County Council for the Prevention of Alcohol and Substance Abuse are on board to mentor and help foster this budding group,” Elliott said.

ECCPASA wishes to thank CADCA, CHPA, Senator Grisanti, and all the rest of the speakers for coming together to talk about such an important issue. Also, a special thank you to all members of the community who attended!
Letter from the Executive Director
Andrea J. Wanat, MA, CPP

As the fall leaves float away and the cold weather arrives, staff at ECCPASA are busy preparing for another year of programming. We are grateful for all of the wonderful partners and opportunities we have been given over the past year and are looking forward to new endeavors as we turn another page on the calendar.

In addition to the highlights featured in this newsletter, ECCPASA staff also helped to celebrate Family Day this past September with our Strengthening Families Program participants, as well as Red Ribbon Week at many schools throughout Erie County in October.

This holiday season, we continue to collaborate with the Erie County Prevention Coalition, Px20, and are urging people to drive safe. Check out the billboard below that will be used throughout Western New York.

Happy Holidays!
See you next year!

Andrea

Resources and Contacts:

Adult Children of Alcoholics - c/o ECCPASA 716.831.2298
Al-Anon & Alateen - 716.856.2520 www.aiswny.org
Alcoholics Anonymous - 716.853.0388 www.aa.org
Crisis Services - 716.834.3131 www.crisisservices.org Kids Helpline - 716.834.1144
Erie County Sheriff’s Office Underage Drinking Hotline - 1.800.851.1932
Gamblers Anonymous & Gam-Anon - 716.879.0555 www.gamblersanonymous.org
Nar-Anon - 716.875.0548 www.nar-anon.org
Narcotics Anonymous - 716.878.2316 www.na.org
National Association for Children of Alcoholics - www.nacoa.org
NYS OASAS Help Line - 877.846.7369 www.oasas.state.ny.us
Save Our Selves - Non-religious support for twelve-step recovery www.cfiwest.org/sos/index.htm
Western New York 211 Health and Human Services - 211 www.211wny.org
Meet Our Intern

Katilyn Rosso has joined the ECCPASA team as an intern for the 2012-2013 school year. She is in her senior year at Niagara University, studying social work and fine arts. During her time at ECCPASA, Katilyn will be shadowing all programs, but is working most closely with the Strengthening Families and SafeHomes programs.

Upon graduation, Katilyn plans to further her education at the University of Buffalo working toward a Master’s Degree in Social Work. She hopes to one day work in the school systems’ empowering future youth!
On October 25th, ECCPASA held its Annual Meeting for the fifth straight year. The meeting was once again held at Templeton Landing and showcased the agency highlights throughout the past year.

During the Meeting, Andrea J. Wanat, the agency’s Executive Director, spoke about all the great work ECCPASA has been doing as well as the multiple grants and activities ECCPASA has taken part in over the year. Some of these include the Underage Drinking Prevention Media Grant, which is a national pilot project for SAMHSA, the SAMHSA Service to Science Grant to refine and further prove the effectiveness of our Focus on Consequences for Adolescents Program, Tomorrow’s Leaders’ Camp, as well as some new fundraising efforts.

As per tradition, awards were given to those who exemplified excellence in the field of prevention. George Ghoshen, of the Native American Community Services, was awarded the William C. MacVicar Award for his dedication, media advocacy, and professionalism in the field of substance abuse prevention. Ida Parker who is the Program Manager for the CAPC (Community Action for Prenatal Care) Project with Buffalo Prenatal Perinatal Network, Inc., received the Community Partnership Award for her collaborative efforts in the field of substance abuse prevention. The Board Recognition and Service Award was presented to The Jolly Boys of Williamsville for their dedication to fundraising, which allows ECCPASA to bring programming to all seven Catholic schools in Amherst.

The Keynote Speaker, Dan Dubovsky, MSW, LSW, of the National FASD Center for Excellence was dynamic and informative, and intrigued all with his vast knowledge of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders. Mr. Dubovsky was kind enough to not only speak at the Annual Meeting, but he also presented a full-day training about FASD the previous day to professionals in the prevention, treatment, health, and education fields as well as offered guidance that evening to members of our WNY FASD support group for parents who have children with an FASD.

Mr. Dubovsky’s immense understanding on the subject provided all who attended the trainings with a better understanding of what Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders are, how they work, and how to help those with the Disorders. He shared that he learned first-hand from his son all about FASD and chose to work in the field and disclose his personal experiences to help those who are struggling with this silent disorder. His knowledge, humor, and personal success story were enlightening and touching for all in attendance.

ECCPASA once-again thanks Mr. Dubovsky and all who attended the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders training and/or our Annual Meeting. We appreciate your support and look forward to seeing everyone next October!
Parent Awareness Forums Make News

Sally Yageric, Parent Program Coordinator at ECCPASA, was recently featured in the New York State School Boards Association’s *On Board* publication. Freelance journalist, Lisa A. Johnson, wrote a special piece for the publication highlighting the Parent Awareness Forums that began in 2006. The idea for the program arose when a tragic event took place in the Lake Shore School District. A then 17-year-old student fell to his death at an underage drinking party. It was then that the boy’s mother, Janice Strubel, along with the School District, teamed up with prevention professionals to ensure that this tragedy would never happen again.

ECCPASA has been partnering with Western New York United Against Drug and Alcohol Abuse and The Erie County Sheriff’s Office to bring Parent Awareness Forums to several high schools in Erie County. These 90-minute educational sessions are currently being delivered to 19 of the 32 school districts. The program is mandated to all parents, usually of students entering high school at the freshman level. If parents do not attend the program, their child is unable to participate in school activities such as sports and dances. While it is sometimes met with resistance, most parents leave with their eyes opened and a greater knowledge of alcohol and other drug use.

Many parents think they know everything there is to know about alcohol and other drugs; however things are very different today than they were years ago. That is why during these educational sessions, prevention professionals, law enforcement officials, and school administrators come together to stress the importance of setting and enforcing rules—at home and at school. Law enforcement also explains the legal liability for underage substance use on one’s property. In addition, the prevention professionals provide an overview of signs and symptoms of substance use, and the “host” school provides information on who parents and students can turn to for help if substance use/abuse is currently a problem in their home.

Ms. Strubel hopes that by implementing these programs it will open up the eyes of parents so that they can help save young people’s lives. She has said many times that she “thinks the programs are worthwhile if they save just one life in the future.”

If your school has not yet signed on to be a part of these programs and is interested or would like more information, contact Sally Yageric at 716.831.2298 or email at sally@eccpasa.org.

Congratulations Judge Graber

ECCPASA wishes to congratulate the Honorable Gary A. Graber as he was recently sworn in as the new President of the New York State Magistrates Association. The Magistrates Association is an organization of approximately 3,200 sitting and retired Town and Village Justices. One of the jobs of the organization is to track legislation at the state level and keep the local county associations informed of proposed changes in the law that are of interest to the justices or will affect the local courts.

Judge Graber is a key figure who has influenced underage drinking policies across New York State. For example, he was instrumental in educating the community about the need to include harsher penalties for those caught drinking underage. A law introduced into the Assembly earlier this year authorizes courts to suspend a driver’s license when the holder fails to appear before the court, pay a fine, complete an alcohol awareness program, or complete community service within the period of time established by such court. This law is currently on hold in the Assembly Codes Committee.

Keep up the good work Judge Graber!
Marijuana: Just the Facts

As the great marijuana debate rages on, a recent paper written by Kevin Sabet, PhD., Policy Consultant and Assistant Professor at the University of Florida, works to sift through three decades of scientific studies on marijuana to present “Just the Facts.” Dr. Sabet’s paper, “Marijuana and Your Health: Just the Facts Part 1,” looks through studies on both the negative and potential positive effects of marijuana and human health. For anyone who believes marijuana is harmless to our health, please read on.

It is without question that marijuana, like all other drugs, directly affects the brain. Marijuana specifically affects the parts of the brain that are responsible for memory, learning, attention, and reaction time. According to Dr. Sabet's paper, these effects can “last up to 28 days after abstinence from the drug.” Studies have shown that marijuana affects the adolescent brain more severely than an adult brain, and wreaks havoc on the part of the brain that regulates planning complex cognitive behavior, personality expression, decision making and social behavior.

The paper also highlights the negative effects cannabis can have on the body. Research shows that “marijuana use can cause an increase in the risk of a heart attack more than four-fold in the hour after use.” It also has a negative effect on users’ lungs. Marijuana smoke contains 50-70 percent more carcinogenic hydrocarbons than does tobacco smoke, according to the American Lung Association and therefore can increase the likelihood of bronchitis, cough, and phlegm production in marijuana smokers.

Cannabis use and mental health has also long been a debated issue. In this paper, Dr. Sabet highlights the research that has found marijuana use significantly linking with mental illness, “especially schizophrenia and psychosis, but also depression and anxiety.”


Pot Now Legal in Two States

Not only did President Obama get re-elected for a second term in the November 6th election, but Colorado and Washington both passed laws allowing marijuana possession for recreational use. They are the first two states in the nation to make possession legal.

The new law in both states would allow legal sales of marijuana to anyone over the age of twenty-one. In Colorado, they are now able to consume, possess and purchase marijuana from legitimate, taxpaying businesses, up to one gram. The projected new revenue over the next five years for Colorado is approximately $32 million. Washington State estimated the new law could generate as much as $1.9 billion in state revenue over five fiscal years according to the state’s Office of Financial Management.

While this law seems promising as far as the financial aspect is concerned, we have yet to see the potential negative impact the law will have on increased use in adults and adolescents as well as other potential negative issues, such as driving while impaired. However, the Governor of Colorado, John Hickenlooper, warns smokers not to “break out the Cheetos and Goldfish” just yet, since the federal government still looks down on marijuana use.
Under contract with the Erie County Department of Mental Health. Funded by the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services, school districts and municipalities throughout Erie County, individuals, corporations and community service organizations. Member agency of the United Way of Buffalo and Erie County.

Thank you for supporting the ECCPASA community efforts!

Please mail your tax deductible contribution to: ECCPASA, 1625 Hertel Ave., Buffalo, N.Y. 14216

Support ECCPASA

As we continue to serve the community, please become an official “supporter” of our mission!

Your tax deductible contribution can be made at any time of the year:

☐ $ 10.00  ☐ $ 25.00  ☐ $ 50.00  ☐ $ 75.00  ☐ $100.00  ☐ Other $_______________________

Name:________________________________________________________
Address:______________________________________________________
Phone:________________________________________________________
Email:________________________________________________________

Or current resident

ERIE COUNTY COUNCIL FOR THE PREVENTION OF ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE, INC.
The Erie County Council for the Prevention of Alcohol and Substance Abuse will deliver research driven education, prevention, intervention programs and services to promote and support the health and wellness of individuals, families and communities by focusing on solutions to alcohol and other drug misuse, addiction and unhealthy behaviors.

ECCPASA will provide leadership to fight the stigma associated with addiction through public education, policy awareness, liaison with health professionals and recovering communities, by providing objective information, referral, and linkages to those in need.

Thank you for supporting the ECCPASA community efforts!

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