

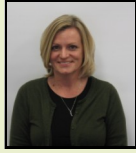


TASKFORCE NEWSLETTER

Our Voice. Our Community. Our Opportunity.

Kalamazoo County
Substance Abuse Task Force
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Kzootaskforce.com

Volunteer Spotlight:



By Diane Marquess

The Kalamazoo County Substance Abuse Task Force believes "every community member has something to offer" in the fight against substance use. When I began to participate in the Task Force, I joined the fight as a mother with a daughter preparing to enter high school and as a mental health professional in our community, serving youth and their families at Family & Children Services.

The stakes are so high for our youth today, and parenting in today's world is a difficult and complex job. Parents could often use some extra help. I have been open to guidance in my own parenting and have joined with parents facing a variety of parenting challenges through my work.

Because of this, my favorite community initiatives of the Task Force are those that provide parents with tools and information intended to help them limit their children's access to substances.

The *Smart Summer campaign* supports parents' engagement in their children's lives so they will be less likely to become involved in risky or self destructive behaviors such as substance use. The *Parents: You Matter Program* works to increase parents' understanding and confidence in addressing and preventing issues related to drugs and alcohol.

Youth have so much stress and pressure in their lives. It is my hope that as a community we can address potential problems with youth substance use before it escalates into a lifelong addiction.

Did You Make *YOUR* New Year's Resolution?

The Task Force presents four easy ideas for a healthy 2012

1 Learn the Signs

Knowing the signs and symptoms of drug abuse is key to help an individual. Commonly abused drugs



in our community by youth range from alcohol and prescription drugs to marijuana, heroin, and methamphetamines.

Symptoms of abuse vary widely between different drugs. One thing they all have in common: an inability to manage life once addiction takes hold.

Visit <http://timetoact.drugfree.org> or click on the icon below to learn more about how to spot signs and symptoms of substance abuse:

TIME TO ACT!

3 Join the Mission

Do you lead a group of youth? Get your group involved in preventing substance abuse in our community. The Task Force has lots of ways to get involved through out the year.

April is National Alcohol Awareness Month. On April 14, 2012 the Task Force will be conducting **2012 Project Sticker Shock**. Teams of youth and adults will be visiting local alcohol retailers and putting stickers on multi-packs of alcoholic beverages with an underage drinking awareness message. The goal is that adults will see this message and remember the importance of not serving to minors. This helps reduce youth access in our community!

2011 Project Sticker Shock Design Winner.
By Alexis Callaway,
Junior, Portage Central HS
Put on **1,297** packs of beer!



To find out how to get your youth involved, contact Tonya Collins at tcollins@prevention-works.org or call 269.364.2149.

2 Start the Conversation



Our Task Force has been hearing more and more reports of "drugged" driving incidents, so we decided to dig a little

deeper. Did you know that 1 in 3 drivers who were killed in motor vehicle crashes in 2009, and were tested, were found to be positive for drugs? In addition, 30 percent of high school seniors report driving after drinking heavily or using drugs, or riding in a car whose driver had been drinking heavily or using drugs, at least once in the past two weeks (2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health).

Drugged driving is a public health concern because it puts not only the driver at risk, but also passengers and others who are on the road. So please talk to the youth in your life about the dangers of driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol.

Click on the link for more info & expert advice:

["Tips for Parents of New Drivers"](#)

4 Be the Anti-Drug

Ever feel like the teens in your life don't care about what you say? Or that you won't be able to make a difference because you are so out of



touch with youth culture? You are not alone! But the truth is, caring adults - parents, teachers, and youth workers - are some of the MOST helpful resources and supports to teens. This year, BE the anti-drug for a young person.

Check out <http://www.theantidrug.com>

- ✓ Great information about drugs
- ✓ Advice on how to talk to teens
- ✓ Answers to the question, "Is your teen using?"

STATUS UPDATE

In its first two months the **Red Med Box** program collected 550 lbs. of out-dated and unwanted meds. This collection total represents close to 250,000 pills!

