

# Prevention <sup>IN</sup> Action

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## Keeping Burrillville Youth Engaged & Substance-Free

Summer is a wonderful time of freedom, adventure and exploration beyond the confines of high school schedules. However, this unstructured time can lead to substance experimentation and other dangers.

A survey from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration revealed concerning statistics that every parent should be aware as it relates to substance use by teens in the summer months.

- First alcoholic drink: Approximately 11,000 kids first try alcohol every summer day vs. approximately 8,000 during school year
- First use of cigarettes or marijuana: Approximately 4,500 every summer day vs. approximately 3,000-4,000 during school year
- Drugs like marijuana, hallucinogens and inhalants are at an all-time high in the summer
- June and July show an increase in use for those that drink and/or smoke

Let's look at how we can help provide opportunities for our youth to enjoy our summers without the temptations and experimentation of substance use.

**Open Communication.** Parents are the most important influencers on substance experimentation and use. Reinforce zero tolerance and expectations.



**Monitor Activities.** Be informed on activities and whereabouts. Trust your instincts and be proactive before a more serious problem occurs.

**Provide a Structure.** Youth thrive with structure, responsibilities and accountability. Help our youth follow their passions, secure jobs, volunteer, practice a sport, explore a new skill or take part in camps. It will be rewarding for them to gain new confidences and friendships in safe environments.

**Know Their Friends.** Friends can be strong influencers and need to be evaluated. Be sure to know their friends and be aware of unsupervised parties that might occur while people are away.

**Define Summer Goals.** Establish summer expectations. It might be

related to required summer school work and creating a schedule, or fun things that they are interested in accomplishing by summer's end. Having a goal helps our youth keep focused and engaged.

**Show Trust & Pride.** Certainly be tuned-in to the activities and decision making of our youth, but also be sure to show them your pride in their actions, selections of friendships and activities. Allow them to prove their maturity within appropriate parameters and logical steps.

Summer can be a time for growth, learning and exploration. Let's work to make it a summer that develops valuable skills, builds self-worth and expands confidence as opposed to introducing dangerous habits.



Next Issue: Faith Communities and Civic Organizations

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