

# Alert

## Metropolitan Drug Commission

A PUBLICATION OF NEWS AND EVENTS

### Knoxville Youth Excel at *JUST GIRLS!* Camp *Funding from East Tennessee Foundation, First Tennessee Bank and Community Prevention Initiative Made Camp Possible*

The Metropolitan Drug Commission recently hosted a weeklong camp for local "tween" girls ages 12-15, June 5-9, 2006 at the **Knox County Health Department**. The camp emphasized empowering communication skills, as well as pregnancy prevention education.

"Camp has been so much fun. We were able to express our feelings, cry, laugh and have fun!" said 15-year-old Central High sophomore Velocity Moore.

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while learning about themselves at the same time. This unique psychotherapy approach focused on responsibility, self-esteem, creative problem solving, social skills and peer relationships.

**Cynthia Hudson** of the **Knox Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Initiative (K.A.P.P.I.)** led workshops discussing Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Shaken Baby Syndrome, and Teen Body Image. Campers also tried on a 35-pound "empathy belly" and took home baby simulator dolls to experience the responsibilities of caring for a child. Knox County Health Department Nurse Practitioner **Anita Blatnik** discussed pregnancy prevention, sexually transmitted diseases and gave a tour of the women's clinic.

Throughout the week, campers practiced valuable life skills lessons through problem-solving exercises utilizing the evidenced-based **Say It Straight (SIS)** program. *SIS* is a research-based education and training program that results in empowering communication skills and behaviors, increased self-awareness, positive relationships, and personal and social responsibility--all of which are proven effective in reducing risky behavior. The program utilizes a variety of teaching methods including discussion, role-playing, skill building activities and interactive learning.

Each morning began with warm-up sessions that included line dancing, mambo and freestyle dance time. Afternoons ended with an arts and craft activity, including scrapbooking, journaling, and decorating picture frames, tee shirts and tote bags.

As a special surprise on the last day of camp, the young ladies were treated to lunch at the **Time Warp Tea Room** and makeovers at

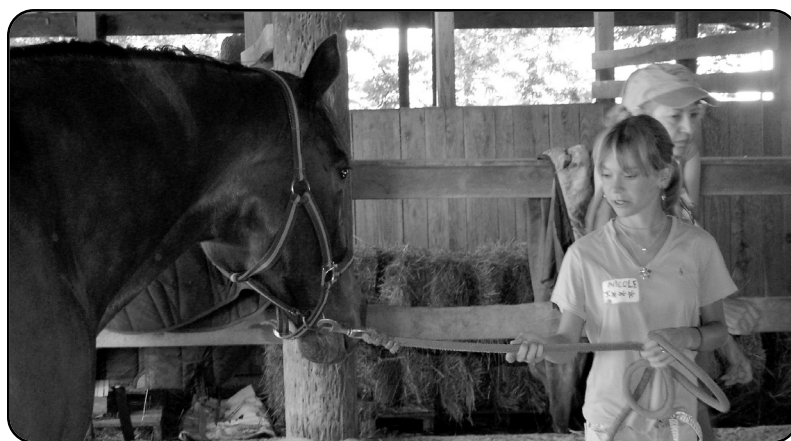
"I've enjoyed so much of the camp. It has brought joy to my heart and mind," said 12-year-old Farragut Middle 7<sup>th</sup> grader Nicole Johnson.

The camp was designed to build resiliency and communication skills in local middle and high school girls. Classes provided skills-based, developmentally appropriate training to build on the strengths of each young woman to enhance self-esteem, decision-making and life skills.

On the first day of camp, the young women were taken to **Riverplains Farm** to participate in team-building activities utilizing horse therapy techniques with **Dr. Angela Masini**. Campers learned how to catch, groom and lead horses

the **Knoxville Institute of Hair Design and Cosmetology**.

The camp was provided to students FREE of charge, made possible by funding from the **East Tennessee Foundation, First Tennessee Bank** and **Community Prevention Initiative**.



*Farragut Middle School 7th grader Nicole Johnson leads Dakota the horse in the "Circle of Friends" activity at Riverplains Farm.*

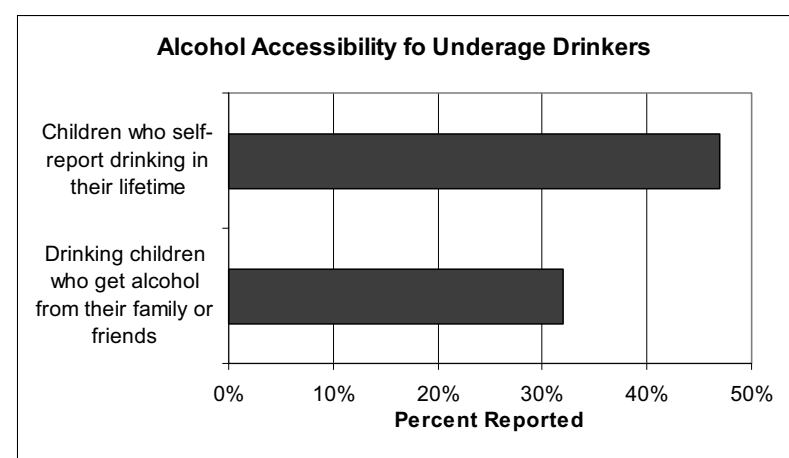
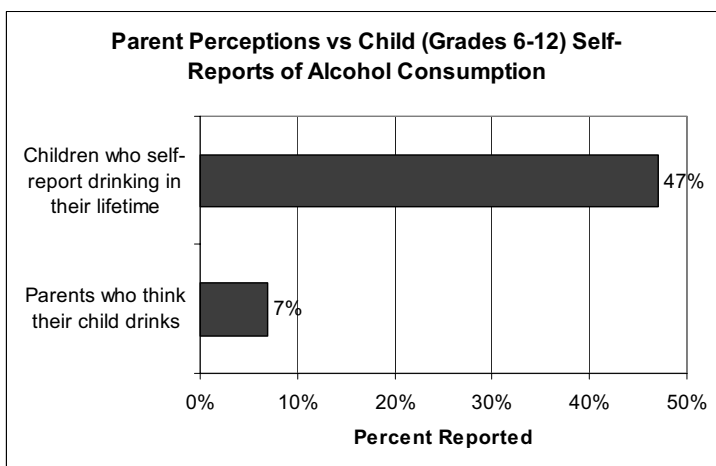


*East Tennessee Foundation's Jan Elston smiles for the camera with campers April Phillips and Velocity Moore. The East Tennessee Foundation provided funding for the camp.*



*Cynthia Hudson of the Knox Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Initiative (K.A.P.P.I.) leads a workshop on drug use and pregnancy utilizing a "crack baby" simulator doll.*

## Parents, Kids, Alcohol and Drugs: A disconnect? *Accessibility factor greatly underestimated by most parents*



Data from PRIDE questionnaire Report for Parents/Grades 6-12 2004-2005 National Summary and the Century Council.

Pride Surveys recently reported that nearly three-fourths of parents viewed themselves as the most effective strategy to prevent adolescent alcohol and drug use. This is good news and they are correct. *Parents are the most powerful prevention tool available.* Unfortunately, a deeper analysis reveals that most parents dramatically underestimate the extent of alcohol and drug use among adolescents. Not only that, but *parents fail to realize that 63% of Knox County youth report obtaining alcohol from family or friends* (Knox Teen Assessment Project Survey, 2004).

Fewer than 5% of parents say that their sixth grade child has tried or is using alcohol. Yet 21% of sixth-graders self-report alcohol use. The disparity is more remarkable when the subject shifts to illegal drugs. Less than 1% of parents with children in the sixth-grade believe that their child has tried or is using an illegal substance.

In fact, 8% of sixth-grade students report they have used an illicit drug in the past year.

The gap between what parents think, and what children say they do, narrows slightly as the child ages, but the two indicators are never reconciled. More than two-thirds of 12th graders (68%) report alcohol use, but far less than half of the parents (41%) say their child drinks.

And once again, when it comes to illicit drugs, the two groups (12th grade students and parents) are far apart. While 36% of 12th graders acknowledge using an illicit drug in the past year, just 15% of parents say that their child has used or is using drugs.

Pride Surveys believes that public dissemination of survey results, at the most localized level possible, is important to overcoming parental denial and forging a grassroots response to adolescent issues like alcohol, drug and violence problems.

## Underage Drinkers, Alcoholics Consume 48% of Alcohol Sold Resulting in a Tidal Wave of Underage Drinking Costs

Underage drinkers and alcoholics consume between 37.5 percent and 48.8 percent of all alcohol sold in the United States, according to an article in the May 1 issue of the Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, conducted by researchers at The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University. The report also showed that 25.9 percent of underage drinkers meet the clinical criteria for alcohol abuse and addiction more than two and one-half times the percentage of adult drinkers.

This groundbreaking study found that underage drinkers and adult pathological drinkers accounted for at least \$48.3 billion and as much as \$62.9 billion in alcohol sales in 2001, the last year for which the necessary data were available. CASA's related white paper, *The Commercial Value of Underage and Pathological Drinking to the Alcohol Industry*, revealed that in 2001 at least \$22.5 billion of consumer spending on alcohol came from underage drinking and \$25.8 billion came from adult pathological drinking.

Former U.S. Surgeons General Julius Richmond (President Carter), Antonia Novello (President George H. W. Bush), and David Satcher (Presidents Clinton and George W. Bush) and former First Lady Betty Ford have joined CASA in calling for federal regulation of the alcohol industry's advertising and marketing practices.

*More young people drink alcohol than use illegal drugs; in fact, alcohol kills 4 times more kids than all illegal drugs combined.*

Each year, underage drinking leads to almost 3,200 deaths and 2.6 million other harmful events, from serious injury to high-risk sex among youth, according to the study published in the July edition of Journal of Studies on Alcohol.

When assigning dollar totals to alcohol-related problems among youth, violence and traffic crashes dominate the costs. In 2001 in Tennessee alone, the cost of underage drinking cost \$1.3 billion. This translates to a cost of \$2,371 per year for each youth in the state. Tennessee ranks 17th highest among the 50 states for the cost per youth of underage drinking.

Minors obtain alcohol in three principal ways: through illegal purchases, at parties and from the family liquor cabinet or refrigerator.

Other findings in the CASA white paper include:

\*Alcohol abuse and addiction cost the nation an estimated \$220 billion in 2005 more than cancer (\$196 billion) and obesity (\$133 billion).

\*Each day more than 13,000 children and teens take their first drink. The 25.9 percent of underage drinkers who are alcoholics and alcohol abusers consume 47.3 percent of alcohol drunk by underage drinkers.

\*The 9.6 percent of adult pathological drinkers consume 25 percent of alcohol drunk by adult drinkers.

\*Children and teens that begin drinking before age 15 are four times likelier to become alcohol dependent than those who do not drink before age 21.

The CASA report also recommends a public health campaign, education of health care providers, more effective prevention and treatment programs, and insurance coverage for treatment. For more information on this study, visit [www.casacolumbia.org](http://www.casacolumbia.org).

## CTV Produces Successful PSAs for MDC Acting Camps

The Metropolitan Drug Commission along with **Community Television** (CTV) and **Smoke-Free Knoxville** recently hosted two weeklong camps for local “tweens” ages 12-15, at CTV. Local professional actor/director **Jenny Ballard** served as camp Director. CTV's **Brian Greer** devoted his expertise to help the campers produce quality work.

Each morning began with warm-up “improv” sessions and acting games. Campers produced their own videos, commercials and television shows though learning how to use cameras, sound equipment and editing software. On the first day, campers developed three 15 minute talk shows discussing substance abuse, teen sex and violence in school. By the end of the week, the teens had developed and produced public service announcements about tobacco, alcohol, marijuana and the importance of parental responsibility. These commercials can be viewed at [www.communityknox.org](http://www.communityknox.org).



Thanks to the **East Tennessee Foundation** for providing funding for this camp.

*Cedar Bluff Middle School 8th grader Blaze Manning filming the "Don't Smoke It" PSA.*



*Camp director Jenny Ballard teaches on-air interview skills with Austin-East High School freshman Dominique Stevens.*

## Drug Alert: 1 in 5 Teens Misuse Prescription Drugs

For the third straight year, a Partnership for a Drug-Free America (PDFA) study has found that about 20 percent of U.S. teens have misused prescription painkillers like Vicodin and OxyContin, even as smoking and drinking decline.

Researchers expressed concern that use of prescription drugs may be becoming entrenched among youth, many of whom believe that using these painkillers to get high is safer than taking illicit drugs. According to the PDFA's 2005 Partnership Attitude Tracking Study, 40 percent of 7th- to 12th-graders said that prescription drugs were “much safer” than illicit drugs, 31 percent said there was nothing wrong with occasional use of these drugs, and 29 percent thought that prescription painkillers were not addictive.

Like alcohol, teens also told researchers that prescription drugs were easy to get: 62 percent said they could get powerful painkillers at home, and 52 percent said the drugs were “available everywhere.”

The trend in Knox County is just as alarming with 8% of 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders reporting using someone else's prescription drugs at least once in the past 30 days (Knox Teen Assessment Project, 2004).

## Teen ER Visits Often Involve Alcohol and Other Drugs

A new study finds that about 40 percent of injured teens treated in a hospital emergency room tested positive for alcohol or other drugs, Reuters reported May 17.

Researchers from the University of Michigan Health System tested 443 patients ages 14-17 who entered the emergency room at the school's hospital for treatment of severe injuries. They found that 29 percent tested positive for opiates, 11.2 percent tested positive for alcohol, and 20 percent tested positive for marijuana.

“The two major preventable health issues facing adolescents are injuries that result in death or disability, and lifestyle choices that have long-term, adverse health consequences,” said lead researcher Peter Ehrlich. “To help alter this risk-taking behavior, it is essential that drug testing and brief substance-abuse intervention programs be included in the treatment of all injured adolescents.” Ehrlich called for comprehensive drug screening in emergency rooms. The research was published in the *Journal of Pediatric Surgery*.

## Websites Selling Prescription Drugs on the rise

For the third year in a row, the number of Web sites selling controlled prescription drugs like OxyContin, Vicodin, Xanax, Valium and Ritalin has increased, according to a new White Paper released by The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University and Beau Dietl & Associates (BDA). CASA and BDA performed the same analysis over the course of a comparable one-week period since 2004, when 157 sites were identified as selling controlled prescription drugs compared with 185 in 2006. One week each year, the number of internet sites dispensing opioid, depressant, and stimulant prescription drugs were documented and dispensing patterns were identified.

“You've Got Drugs!” Prescription Drug Pushers on the Internet: 2006 Update reveals that nine of 10 (89 percent) of those Web sites selling controlled prescription drugs do not require prescriptions. Of those sites not requiring prescriptions, 30 percent advertised that no prescription was needed, 60 percent offered “online consultations” and 10 percent made no mention of a prescription.

Only 20 sites (11%) required that a prescription be faxed or mailed or that the patient's doctor be contacted for the prescription. There was no evidence of any mechanisms in place to block children from purchasing prescription drugs online. As in past years, benzodiazepines such as Xanax and Valium were the drugs most frequently offered on the internet, followed by pain killers (e.g. fentanyl, hydrocodone).

To view the full press release, please visit:

<http://www.casacolumbia.org/absolutenm/templates/PressReleases.aspx?articleid=445&zzoneid=56>.

## Epidemiologist Joins the MDC

Stephanie Armbrister, a graduate of both Emory & Henry College and the University of Tennessee, joins the Metropolitan Drug Commission as Epidemiologist. Earning a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology in 2002 and a Master of Public Health Degree in Health Planning Administration in 2006, Stephanie has had experience in data collection, epidemiological analysis, community assessments, research, and planning. During her tenure at UT, she administered and analyzed the Alcohol and Drug Survey for the University while translating the data into media campaigns for the campus. Additionally, Stephanie assisted in organizing campus-wide environmental management strategies utilizing social norms approaches and also conducted environmental assessments. To contact Stephanie, please call (865) 588-5558.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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VISIT OUR WEBSITE for information about starting or maintaining a Drug-free Workplace Program; parent resources; treatment options; general drug descriptions, including warning signs and effects; and local and national research about drug use.

[www.metrodrug.org](http://www.metrodrug.org)

This project is funded under an agreement with TCCY



## *State of the Children* **Report: Tennessee Fairs Poorly in Most Recent Kids Count Cycle**

KIDS COUNT, a nation-wide tracking project funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, provides benchmarking data on child wellness and ranks states accordingly, using ten measures. These measures reflect a wide range of well-being factors for children, allowing comparison across states. The Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY) spearheads this project in our state.

Since the 2001/2002 reporting cycle Tennessee has steadily dropped in the national rankings where it used to be seated 42<sup>nd</sup>. Tennessee saw its worst standing in 2000/2001 at number 47 and regionally, Tennessee is not alone in this poor showing. Neighboring states in the south, and two in the Southwest, dominate the bottom quadrant of the national ranking. At the same time, the Northern plains states and those in New England lead the nation in the top quadrant.

In the past year, Tennessee has seen increases in low-birthweight babies, infant mortality and teen death rates, percent of children living in poverty, and percent of children living in families where no parent has full-time, year-round employment. Declining statistics for these indicators have propelled the state to its current rank—46<sup>th</sup> of 50.

In addition to the ten ranking measures, KIDS COUNT also follows Youth Behavioral Risk Factors such as binge drinking, marijuana use, and other illicit drug use. Rates in Tennessee for these indicators remain slightly below the national average; however, comprehensively, these data emphasize the need for constant attention focusing on programs to improve the well-being of Tennessee's youth.

Kids Count state level data can be found online at [www.kidscount.org](http://www.kidscount.org).

### **MDC in Action**

During the fourth quarter (April-June), the MDC serviced the community by providing:

- 119 Treatment Referrals
- 737 Prevention Materials & Resources
- 98,455 Website Hits

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*To submit an announcement or article to the Metropolitan Drug Commission's ALERT, please call (865) 588-5550.*



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