

# Alert

## Metropolitan Drug Commission

A PUBLICATION OF NEWS AND EVENTS

### 2007 JUST GIRLS! camp offers young women the chance to shine

The Metropolitan Drug Commission recently hosted a weeklong camp for local "tween" girls ages 12-15, June 11-15, 2007 at the Knox County Health Department. The camp emphasized empowering communication skills, as well as pregnancy prevention education.

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.

The girls participated in a community service project and decorated boxes filled with shampoo, conditioner, soap and other personal hygiene products to donate to the local domestic violence shelter. The girls also focused on team building and positive relationships in a fun and exciting way at the Life Development Center ropes course in Oak Ridge.

Kinnie Riffey, director for the Foundation for Achievement through Education gave a presentation called "Choose Respect," an overview of healthy relationships and dating violence. On the third day, K.A.P.P.I.'s own Cynthia Hudson allowed the girls to take home "reality babies" for a hands-on experience of what it is like to be a mom. FBI representatives Stacie Bohanan, Patty Mash, Kim Payne and Letitia Harper came to speak with the girls about what they do in the community. The campers were also given an overview of STD's and the risks of sexual activity by the Knox County Health Department's Anita Blatnik. Addie Lisby, program director for the Tennessee Conference Community Development Corporation of the AME Zion Church gave a hip-hop presentation about negative views of women in the music industry.

On the last day of camp the girls were pampered to manicures and pedicures and received individual awards based on their outstanding efforts and contributions to the camp atmosphere. The following awards were given to:

Vine Middle School--Kimesha Booker "Most Dependable, Dionte Douglas "Most Comforting," Anna Caswell "Most Creative," and Destiney Cotner "Best Leader."

Whittle Springs Middle School--Katie Beam "Friendliest," Amanda Hartley "Most Helpful," Chrisiya Billingsley "Most Respectful," Akoye Ivy "Most Energetic," and Lyric Combs "Most Considerate."

Gresham Middle School--Kanasha Broyles "Most Talented," Latrice Brown "Best Team Player," Janay Brown "Most Caring."

Carter Middle School--Brittany Wallace "Most Kind."

South Doyle Middle School--Jasmine Riddle "Best Communicator."

*Thanks to the following sponsors for making JUST GIRLS! camp possible:*

**EAST TENNESSEE FOUNDATION**

**KNOX ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY PREVENTION INITIATIVE**

**TN CONFERENCE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
CORPORATION OF THE AME ZION CHURCH**

**KNOX COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

*Thank You!*



FBI Representatives show Gresham Middle School student Latrice Brown how to lift fingerprints from a piece of evidence.



Janay Brown and Chrisiya Billingsley learn how to make masks during the "Arts & Crafts" portion of the 2007 Just Girls! Camp.



Campers worked on team building and leadership skills at the **Life Development Center** in Oak Ridge.



K.A.P.P.I. donated "reality babies" for each of the campers to take home. Pictured above is Vine Middle School student Destiney Cotner.

## Knox Teen Source website debuts at Sundown in the City

A new resource for Knoxville teens is available online at [KnoxTeenSource.com](http://KnoxTeenSource.com), a collaborative project of the Knox County Teen Empowerment Coalition.

The concept for the project grew out of discussions among local youth serving agencies, including United Way of Greater Knoxville, Metropolitan Drug Commission, Junior Achievement and American Red Cross, that pointed to the need for a central directory or “clearinghouse” of information for young people in the community.

“Knoxville is fortunate to have a wide variety of services and opportunities available for youth. The problem is they don’t know where to find that information when they need it,” Ben Landers, United Way of Greater Knoxville President & CEO said. “[KnoxTeenSource.com](http://KnoxTeenSource.com) addresses that need and makes finding information easy and interactive.”

Designed by teens for teens, the site was created to provide youth with access to information of interest to young people and includes news, discussion boards and polls to involve teens in the issues facing Knox County. In addition, teens will be able to find information about employment, volunteer opportunities and entertainment as well as college admissions and scholarship information. The “Support” section of the site will link to social services where visitors can find information on topics such as improving the mental and physical well-being of teens.



[KnoxTeenSource.com](http://KnoxTeenSource.com) volunteers and PRIDE members Jesus Godinez and Tiffany Smith were on hand at Sundown in the City June 21 and 28 to launch the new website.

## Employers can deter risky drinking on and off job

Employees of firms that actively discourage drinking are less apt to drink on or off the job, according to researchers at the University of Texas.

[MedPage Today](http://MedPage Today) reported May 25 that study author Benjamin C. Amick, Ph.D., and colleagues from the school’s Institute for Work and Health surveyed more than 5,000 workers at Fortune 500 companies. They found that those whose employers did the most to discourage drinking — an assessment based on interviews with company managers — were 45 percent less likely to be heavy drinkers, 54 percent less likely to drink frequently, and 69 percent less likely to drink at work, compared to workers at firms with the most permissive attitudes toward drinking.

Researchers said the study suggests that workplace social-norms campaigns aimed at problem drinking can have a positive impact that goes beyond the work hours of the day. Overall, 40 percent of the workers surveyed were drinkers, 19 percent were considered heavy drinkers, 8 percent were classed as frequent drinkers, and 11 percent drank at work.

## Environmental change key in reducing risky behavior in teens

An underdeveloped mechanism in the brain increases the chance that teens will engage in risky behaviors, according to a study released in *Current Directions in Psychological Science*. The study sheds light on how coalitions might best direct their prevention efforts with teens indicating that *communities can have a much greater effect on reducing risky adolescent behaviors by implementing interventions focused on environmental change rather than concentrating on information-driven prevention programs.*

The research is grounded in the theory that there are two neural networks involved in decision making. The first, referred to as the socio-emotional network, attends to the emotional stimuli we encounter and is responsible for the thrill-seeking trait seen among many adolescents. The second, referred to as the cognitive-control network, controls impulse regulation. Researchers explain that during puberty, the socio-emotional network is quite powerful and becomes highly reactive to social stimuli, while the cognitive-control network matures more slowly and, therefore, is much less powerful during adolescence. As a result, the two brain networks are working in opposition of one another, making it difficult for young adults to control their powerful impulses.

***Educating teens and providing them with useful information is important. However, it is not likely to stop them from engaging in dangerous behaviors.*** Strategies such as influencing policy change, or increasing law enforcement, are much more likely to reduce the chances that adolescents will suffer the harmful consequences that can be the result of risky behavior.

While researchers have explored this concept for a number of years, many questions remain. One issue that experts are exploring is whether it may be possible to speed up the psychosocial maturity of young people. For example, are there contextual factors that might contribute to the maturation of self-regulation in adolescents? One thought is to look into the ways that social networks, such as families, influence the neurological development of adolescents.

Coalitions clearly benefit from efforts focusing on implementing change where change is possible. The author of this study affirms, adolescent risk-taking appears to be “normative, biologically driven, and, to some extent, inevitable.” Therefore, coalitions that take advantage of their influence on the community environment and create safe places for their young people to develop will likely produce more positive outcomes for their youth.

## Carnival at Richard Yoakley celebrates reading efforts

The Metropolitan Drug Commission recently treated students at Richard Yoakley School to a Spring Carnival on May 11. Students were eligible to attend by their participation in the newly formed Accelerated Reader program. Activities included a football throw, free throw contest, ring toss, dunking booth and a cake walk. 69% of the students we work with at Richard Yoakley School participated in the Accelerated Reader program. If you are interested in donating books to the Accelerated Reader Program at Richard Yoakley School, contact the Metropolitan Drug Commission at (865) 588-5550. Pictured below is RYS Program Consultant Shirlene Morgan with the dunking booth champion. Shirlene volunteered in the dunking booth as an incentive to get the students to read, read, read! The Metropolitan Drug Commission was truly thrilled with the success of this new program.



# Acting Surgeon General issues National *Call to Action* to prevent and reduce underage drinking

In its first *Call to Action* against underage drinking, the U.S. Surgeon General's Office appealed today to Americans to do more to stop America's 11 million current underage drinkers from using alcohol, and to keep other young people from starting.

Acting Surgeon General Kenneth Moritsugu, M.D., M.P.H., laid out recommendations for government and school officials, parents, other adults and the young people.

"Too many Americans consider underage drinking a rite of passage to adulthood," said Dr. Moritsugu.

"Research shows that young people who start drinking before the age of 15 are five times more likely to have alcohol-related problems later in life. New research also indicates that alcohol may harm the developing adolescent brain. The availability of this research provides more reasons than ever before for parents and other adults to protect the health and safety of our nation's children."

Although there has been a significant decline in tobacco and illicit drug use among teens, underage drinking has remained at consistently high levels.

The 2005 National Survey on Drug Use and Health estimates there are 11 million underage drinkers in the United States. Nearly 7.2 million are considered binge drinkers, typically meaning they drank more than five drinks on one occasion, and more than two million are classified as heavy drinkers.

Developed in collaboration with the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the Call to Action identifies six goals:

- Foster changes in society that facilitate healthy adolescent development and that help prevent and reduce underage drinking.
- Engage parents, schools, communities, all levels of government, all social systems that interface with youth, and youth themselves in a coordinated national effort to prevent and reduce underage drinking and its consequences.
- Promote an understanding of underage alcohol consumption in the context of human development and maturation that takes into account individual adolescent characteristics as well as environmental, ethnic, cultural, and gender differences.
- Conduct additional research on adolescent alcohol use and its relationship to development.
- Work to improve public health surveillance on underage drinking and on population-based risk factors for this behavior.
- Work to ensure that policies at all levels are consistent with the national goal of preventing and reducing underage alcohol consumption.

"Alcohol remains the most heavily abused substance by America's youth," said Dr. Moritsugu. "This Call to Action is attempting to change the culture and attitudes toward drinking in America. We can no longer ignore what alcohol is doing to our children."

Copies of *The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking* and other related materials are available at [www.surgeongeneral.gov](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov) or by calling the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information at 1-800-729-6686.

## 2007 Community Statsbook: Highlight on Law Enforcement

Enforcement of laws surrounding alcohol and drugs is an important method for maintaining and improving safety in our community. In recent years, local authorities have carefully monitored and enforced compliance in accordance with local alcohol regulations. In 2006, Knox County and the City of Knoxville were host to 826 beer outlets and liquor retail outlets. The vigilance of local authorities in conducting beer outlet stings resulted in an 84% compliance rate among such outlets in Knox County and the City of Knoxville. This figure has improved tremendously over the past few years.

In addition to monitoring beer outlets, local authorities increased the safety of our community by making arrests for alcohol- and drug-related criminal charges. Public intoxication is the most common alcohol or drug charge issued to Knox County residents followed by possession of drug paraphernalia, simple possession/causal exchange, driving under the influence, and drug trafficking/manufacturing. Total alcohol and drug charges have risen since 2003, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Alcohol- and drug-related arrests make up 41% of all arrests in the City and County. More than 6,000 arrests were recorded for alcohol or drug offenses in 2005. The age category charged with the most alcohol- or drug-related crimes is 35 to 44 and, of the offenders, 77% are male.

Among juvenile alcohol and other drug charges, drugs account for the largest percent of charges followed by tobacco and alcohol (Figure 2). Comparable to the figure for adult alcohol and drug offenses, 77% of juvenile offenders are male. Among illicit drugs associated with juvenile charges, marijuana ranks highest followed by cocaine, heroin, hallucinogenic mushrooms, and opium. A sizeable list of legend (prescription) drugs was compiled as a result of confiscated substances during juvenile arrests. This list includes prescription drugs ranging from non-scheduled to schedule IV drugs (where schedule is based on potential for abuse, pharmacological effect, pattern of abuse, risk to public health, etc.).

View the *Community Statsbook* in its entirety at [www.metrodrug.org](http://www.metrodrug.org).

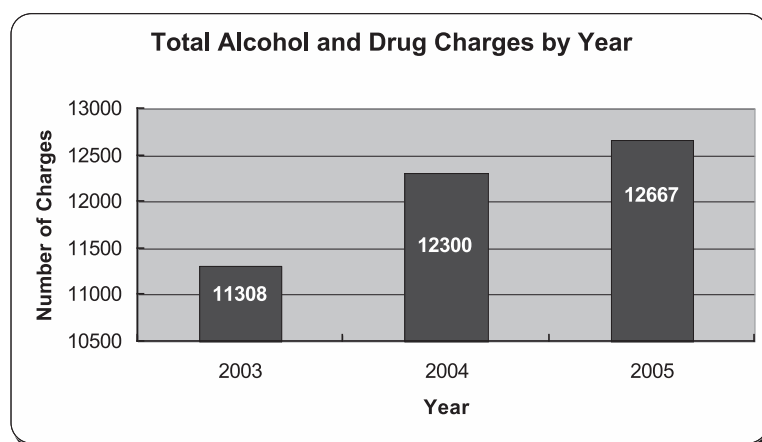


Figure 1: Total Alcohol and Drug Charges by Year (2003, 2004, 2005). Source: Knox County Justice Information Management System.

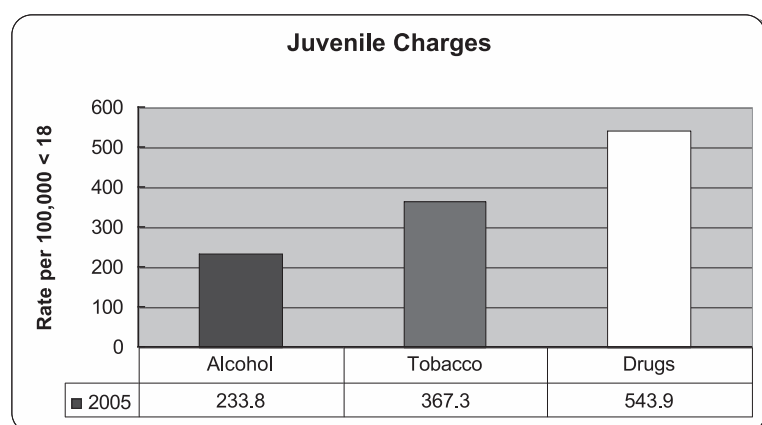


Figure 2: Juvenile Charges by Substance (2005). Source: Knox County Juvenile Court Information System.

## Announcements

Save the date! The **Recovery Prayer Breakfast** is set for Friday, Sept. 14, 2007 from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. at Greater Warner A.M.E. Zion Church (3800 Martin Luther King, Jr. Ave). Knox County District Attorney General Randy Nichols is the keynote speaker. For registration information, contact the Metropolitan Drug Commission at (865) 588-5550.

**Symposium for the Advancement of Family Therapy** will host *Context & Connection: Transforming Life Narratives* Sept. 24-25, 2007 at the Knoxville Airport Hilton. Instructor Monica McGoldrick, Ph.D. will conduct the event. Cost is \$195. To register, contact Margaret Fuqua at (865) 688-0163 or [mhfiqua@comastrnet](mailto:mhfiqua@comastrnet). Attendees will receive 12 credit hours.

The **Metropolitan Drug Commission** now offers the link to Join Together's online drug-screening tool. The tool asks users to answer questions about past and present drug use. Users then receive feedback about the risks of their drug use, and advice about when and where to seek more information, evaluation and help. Visit [www.metrodrug.org](http://www.metrodrug.org) and click "Drug Screening."

**Join our efforts!** Would you like to become a community leader in youth substance abuse prevention? Join the **Drug-Free Community Coalition**. The coalition meets from 12-1 p.m. on the 4th Tuesday of every month at the Knox County Health Department Community Room (140 Dameron Ave, Knoxville, TN 37917.) Participation can increase knowledge of substance abuse and the tough issues our young people are facing today. If you would like to join our efforts, please call (865) 588-5550 or email [mdrugcom@bellsouth.net](mailto:mdrugcom@bellsouth.net). The remaining 2007 meeting dates are: July 24, August 28, September 25, October 23, November 27 and December 18.

The Metropolitan Drug Commission would like to encourage local individuals to submit an **"op-ed"** for an upcoming issue of *ALERT*. An op-ed is a great opportunity to address the more general, yet critical issues related to substance abuse disorders, treatment and recovery. Please email your submission to [mdrugcom@bellsouth.net](mailto:mdrugcom@bellsouth.net) or by fax (865) 588-0891.

## MDC in Action

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

107 Treatment Referrals  
2,490 Prevention Materials & Resources  
600,733 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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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)

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