



Downey Council PTA
Thirty-Third District
California State PTA
PTA (National)

Angel Kellogg, President
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Janet Gera, Editor

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Another school year has come and gone – they truly do seem to fly by more quickly each year! As Downey Council PTA president, I wish you a safe and fun-filled summer break. Summer is a great opportunity to relax and rejuvenate but also to prepare for what lies ahead. The nineteen PTA units in Downey Council are already preparing and training for the 2007-08 school year. Several officers attended a Leadership Workshop on June 2nd and many more will attend local Downey trainings in August.



Please consider getting involved in your child's school in some way next fall. Most PTA board members work full-time and volunteer, too. No one will ask you to do more than you are able, but every little bit helps. There are opportunities to help teachers in the classrooms and to volunteer in the libraries. There are many things that can be done at home. Whatever your talents and interests, there is something you can contribute. If you have questions or need more information, you can leave a message for your PTA president in the school office.

Children hear what we say, but what we do makes a much more lasting impression – get involved in your child's education! Don't just tell them that an education is important, show them and remember – JOIN PTA!!

Angel Kellogg
 Downey Council PTA president

ITEMS TO REMEMBER

- **UNIT ROSTERS** ~ please turn them into Council as soon as possible. Thank you.
- **MUST HAVE PRESIDENT, SECRETARY and TREASURER BY JUNE** ~ If this does not happen, you do not have a valid PTA Unit and your books will be held by Council.
- **BUDGETS** ~ you can not write any checks for next year's items until a budget has been completed and voted upon by the Association.

DATES TO REMEMBER

(see Council's website calendar for details)

June 25th

Downey Council In and Out Dinner

June 28 – July 1st

National PTA's Convention

August 20th & 21st

Downey Council PTA Training Workshops

WHAT YOU CAN FIND IN THIS ISSUE

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2007/2008 ELECTED BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Angel Kellogg
Parliamentarian: (open)
Secretary: Julie Bliss
Corr. Secretary: Lynne Warner
Treasurer: Terry Shore
Financial Secretary: Vera Johnson
Auditor: Martha Michael
1st VP, Unit Svcs.: Mareea Philips
2nd VP, Programs Tonya Edwards
Asst. 2nd VP: Rebecca Reyes
Reflection Chair: Janet Gera
3rd VP, Health: Karin Kirkpatrick
4th VP, Ed & Leg.: Beth Gendreau
Asst. 4th VP: Annie Casey
5th VP, Hospitality: Julianna Halasz
Asst. 5th VP: Sue Duran
6th VP, Comms.: Janet Gera
7th VP, H.E.L.P.S.: Stacy Brabant
Historian: Cecilia Hernandez



PTA LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION KEYS TO A SMOOTH TRANSITION

- **Finish the term.**
 Do not stop fulfilling the duties and responsibilities of the position simply because a successor has been named.
- **Complete any final responsibilities.**
 Complete the Annual Report.
 Update your procedure book. Remove old, outdated materials.
- **Meet with current board to evaluate the term.**
 Review successes and include recommendations for next term.
- **Meet with your successor.**
 Review expectations, duties and responsibilities of the position.
 Review your procedure book.
- **Invite your successor to a current board meeting** (if not already a member) and to PTA council and district meetings.
- **Provide your successor with dates for the California State**
 PTA Convention and other training opportunities.
- **Send your successor's name to PTA council/district.**
- **Turn over all PTA materials that relate to the position.**
- **Let go gracefully of the position.**

Communicator, May 2006
 CA State PTA

COUNCIL'S AWARD WINNERS FOR 2006/2007 SCHOOL YEAR***Downey Council PTA's
Reflections Program*****Dance Choreography**

Jazmin Alejos of Gauldin Elementary
Elizabeth Medina of Price Elementary
Jesse Schiffmacher of Downey High

Film/Video Production

George Wickens of Price Elementary
Tanya Laverde of East Middle
Amy Gebert of Warran High

Literature

Isabella Gutierrez of Rio San Gabriel Elementary
Samuel Kim of Price Elementary
Devin Cornair of Gallatin Elementary
Jade Martinez of Alameda Elementary
John Nicolas of Rio Hondo Elementary
Rachel Koeppe of Griffiths Middle
Marina George of West Middle
Joyce Lee of Downey High
Amy Gebert of Warran High

Music

Ashley Armstrong of Gallatin Elementary
Curtis Phillips of Rio San Gabriel Elementary
Fabian Chavez of Griffiths Middle
Todd Aldaco of East Middle
Flora Cheng of Warran High

Photography

Andrew Ascencio of Rio San Gabriel
Elementary
Jerenly Quan of Price Elementary
Joshua Redfox of Rio San Gabriel Elementary
Marcel Rodriguez of Gallatin Elementary
Kara Connors of Price Elementary
Elinor De La Torre of West Middle

Visual Arts

Ian Melendez of Price Elementary
Marcello Frasca of Gallatin Elementary
Rebecca Flores of Lewis Elementary
Jonathan Kim Jin of Rio San Gabriel Elementary
Diego Saldana of Alameda Elementary
Michelle Kim of Unsworth Elementary
Jacob Koeppe of Griffiths Middle
Tiana Hatchie of West Middle
Daniel Hosu of Downey High
Natalie Bertinelli of Warren High

2006/2007

Honorary Service Awardees***Downey Council PTA's***

Annie Casey – Golden Oak Award
Barbara Samperi – Continuing Service Award
Wendy McKinsey – Sally McFarland Volunteer
Award

Alameda Elementary PTA

Mary Long ~ Honorary Service Award
Aide Vasquez-Yepey ~ Honorary Service Award
Robin Martin ~ Honorary Service Award

Carpenter Elementary PTA

Janet Adams ~ Honorary Service Award
Jacob Flores ~ Honorary Service Award
Paula Barnes ~ Continuing Service Award
Barbara Gibbs ~ Continuing Service Award
Liz Schlegel ~ Continuing Service Award

Downey High PTA

Martha Christidis ~ Honorary Service Award
Robert Lopez ~ Honorary Service Award

East Middle PTA

Joe Webster ~ Honorary Service Award
Vicky Arosteguy ~ Honorary Service Award
Marianne Duron ~ Honorary Service Award

Gallatin Elementary PTA

Piedad Roque ~ Honorary Service Award
Julie Yearsley ~ Honorary Service Award
Maria Hurtado ~ Honorary Service Award

Gauldin Elementary PTA

Liliana Bauer ~ Honorary Service Award
Alex Gaytan ~ Honorary Service Award
Patricia Martinez ~ Honorary Service Award
Dolores Chavez ~ Continuing Service Award
Lisa Mitchener ~ Continuing Service Award
Jennifer Toledo ~ Continuing Service Award

Griffiths Middle PTA

Stacy Brabant ~ Honorary Service Award
Karen Brown ~ Honorary Service Award
Sarah Zepatos ~ Honorary Service Award

Imperial Elementary PTA

Debbie Carr ~ Honorary Service Award
Erika Urquides ~ Honorary Service Award

Lewis Elementary PTA

Patty Northcott ~ Honorary Service Award
 Tracy Rodriguez ~ Honorary Service Award
 Maria Salcedo ~ Continuing Service Award

Old River Elementary PTA

Sue Duran ~ Honorary Service Award
 Pam Langford ~ Honorary Service Award
 Ana Pereira-Chase ~ Honorary Service Award
 Katherine Israwi ~ Continuing Service Award

Price Elementary PTA

Ana Fragoso-Tovalin ~ Honorary Service Award
 Jenny Liepitz ~ Honorary Service Award
 Peggy Meehan ~ Honorary Service Award
 Lisa Purdy ~ Honorary Service Award

Rio Hondo Elementary PTA

Macrina Gallegos ~ Honorary Service Award
 Rosana Valdez ~ Honorary Service Award
 Melissa Barger ~ Continuing Service Award
 Carol Somoano ~ Continuing Service Award

Rio San Gabriel Elementary PTA

Mary Dagani ~ Honorary Service Award
 Ray Friedrich ~ Honorary Service Award
 Rocio Jauregui ~ Honorary Service Award
 Alina Miller ~ Honorary Service Award
 Marina Robledo ~ Honorary Service Award

Sussman Middle PTA

Jean McCurdy ~ Golden Oak Award
 Patti Hofstra ~ Continuing Service Award
 Lorraine Neal ~ Continuing Service Award
 Kathy Lamb ~ Honorary Service Award
 Jane Chandler ~ Honorary Service Award

Unsworth Elementary PTA

Wanda Peterson ~ Honorary Service Award
 Karen Smith ~ Honorary Service Award
 Amanda Volk ~ Honorary Service Award

Ward Elementary PTA

Elizabeth Phelps ~ Honorary Service Award
 Brenda Lee ~ Honorary Service Award
 Jamie Muir ~ Honorary Service Award

Warren High PTA

David Niemeyer ~ Honorary Service Award
 Beth Gendreau ~ Continuing Service Award
 Yvonne Martin ~ Continuing Service Award

West Middle PTA

Lynne Corapi ~ Continuing Service Award
 Ron Legasi ~ Continuing Service Award
 Julia Desalernos ~ Continuing Service Award

Williams Elementary PTA

Helen Miller ~ Continuing Service Award
 Gloria Acosta ~ Honorary Service Award
 Kathy Guier ~ Honorary Service Award

**Downey Council PTA's
 Scholarship Awardees**

Sally McFarland Scholarships

Downey High School	Warren High School
Hilary Michael of	Theresa Fiddler
Michelle McLain	Casidy Jackson

Downey Council Scholarships

Downey High School	Warren High School
Alex Carrill	Samantha Castillo
Robert Choi	Ryan Gutierrez
Eleni Christidis	Taylor Kendall
Lauren Davis	Vivan Lee
Ryan Kirkpatrick	Alex Slevcove
Monica Martin	Nick West

Columbus High School

Rachel Garcia
 Angel Jaimes
 Alba Quiles
 Maya Samayoa
 Veronica Trinidad
 Ruben Venegas



*You are everything that is, your
 thoughts, your life,
 your dreams come true.
 You are everything you choose to be.
 You are as unlimited
 as the endless universe.*

By Shad Helmstetter

ARTICLES FROM STATE PTA'S "THE COMMUNICATOR" THAT MIGHT HELP YOUR PTA'S END-OF-THE YEAR ACTIVITIES

PTA TERM END CHECKLIST

Each PTA board should evaluate the term's work and prepare recommendations for the next term.

Some of the questions to ask include the following:

PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS:

- ✓ Did the PTA achieve the goals set at the beginning of the term? If not, what needs to be done?
- ✓ Did the officers and chairmen know what was expected of them?
- ✓ Were efforts made to include more members in planning and working toward achieving those goals?

MEMBERSHIP:

- ✓ Did the PTA increase membership this term?
- ✓ Was an effort made to include more new members?
- ✓ Were telephone calls from members answered promptly?
- ✓ Were the association meetings well-attended?
- ✓ Was the association included in the decision-making process of the organization?
- ✓ Was the membership kept informed of PTA events and programs?

TRAINING:

- ✓ Were the officers and chairmen notified of training opportunities?
- ✓ Was the association represented at PTA council/district meetings and State PTA Convention?
- ✓ Were the resources in *National PTA Annual Resources* and the *California State PTA Toolkit* shared?

May 2006 Issue

BE A GOOD PRESIDENT FROM THE START

- ❖ Start by acknowledging the good work that's already been done.
- ❖ Figure out how things work before you start implementing change.
- ❖ Ask other officers and volunteers what they think ~ the team is better if all members have been a part of the decision-making.
- ❖ Communicate your expectations by letting others know what you want from them and listening to what expectations they have.
- ❖ Motivate the other team members to do the best job possible.
- ❖ Be a leader and let the others on the board handle their own duties and responsibilities. If someone seems to be struggling with a position, meet and discuss what can be done to help.
- ❖ Walk the Walk—do what you say you'll do, respect the opinions of others, be honest, show gratitude, and recognize good work.
- ❖ Take responsibility—acknowledge if an error has been made. Make certain that responsibilities are clearly outlined and that each person is doing his or her share.
- ❖ Keep the communication channels open at all times and in all directions (among administrators, teachers and staff, parents and volunteers, and PTA officers). A strong team is an informed team.

Communicator, July 2005
California State PTA

**ARTICLES FROM STATE PTA'S "THE COMMUNICATOR"
THAT MIGHT HELP YOUR PTA'S END-OF-THE YEAR ACTIVITIES**

PTA PROGRAM PLANNING

◆ **PTA PROGRAM SHOULD BE DEVELOPED BY A COMMITTEE, NOT ONE PERSON.**

- ✓ Survey the membership, the faculty and other PTA board members to determine interests of the unit.
- ✓ Include a questionnaire to find special talents of members and to establish a file of resource people.

◆ **PLAN A VARIETY OF PROGRAMS FOR THE YEAR ~**

- ✓ Vary the format (lecture, panel, video, etc).
- ✓ Consider a project in connection with program.

◆ **ARRANGE FOR PUBLICITY ~**

- ✓ Use local news media, posters, PTA newsletters, flyers, personal telephone calls.

◆ **CONFIRM PARTICIPANTS ~**

- ✓ Contact the program participants a few days prior to the event to remind them of the time and place.
- ✓ Check all equipment before the program time.
- ✓ Arrange for program participants to be met and welcomed.
- ✓ Sit with the participants.

◆ **PRESENT THE PROGRAM ~**

- ✓ Include in the introduction the title of program, name, title and qualifications of participants.
- ✓ At the end of the program, the president thanks participants.

◆ **EVALUATE THE PROGRAM ~**

- ✓ Determine if program met the planned objectives.
- ✓ Determine member participation.
- ✓ Determine if the program will encourage action.
- ✓ Determine how the program might be improved.

◆ **BE PREPARED FOR EMERGENCIES ~**

- ✓ Have an alternate program ready.

LEADERS.....NOT MANAGERS

- The manager administers; the leader innovates.
- The manager is a copy; the leader is an original.
- The manager maintains; the leader develops.
- The manager focuses on systems and structure; the leader focuses on people.
- The manager relies on control; the leader inspires trust.
- The manager has a short-range view; the leader has a long-range perspective.
- The manager asks how and when; the leader asks what and why.
- The manager has his eye always on the bottom line; the leader has his eye on the horizon.
- The manager imitates; the leader originates.
- The manager accepts the status quo; the leader challenges it.
- The manager is the classic good soldier; the leader is his own person.
- The manager does things right; the leader does the right thing.

On Becoming a Leader, Warren Bennis Inc., 1989

ARTICLE FROM NATIONAL PTA'S "OUR CHILDREN"

Safe and Fun After-Prom Parties: How PTAs Can Help

By Marilyn Ferdinand

The date has been made. The perfect outfit found. Transportation arranged. And the corsage or boutonniere waits safely in the refrigerator. With the stage set for prom night, all your teen's worries are over. But yours are just beginning. While you want your teen to enjoy this big night, you know that he or she could be at risk.

You have raised your child well and kept the lines of communication open, but all teens must grapple with independence and responsibility as they move toward adulthood. Prom night may tempt your teen to behave in ways you have warned against; your teen may feel peer pressure, natural curiosity, and a need to test the waters of adult life.

Unfortunately, prom night may pose greater risks than other occasions when your child can assert independence. Alcohol and drug use often accompany prom night, putting your teen at risk for harmful physical side effects, date rape, and traffic accidents. Prom is also a prime time for sexual experimentation, with pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases as possible outcomes.

How can you help ensure that your teen has a special and fun night that is also safe? One option is to encourage your PTA and school to team up to throw an after-prom party. A number of PTAs and schools have successfully employed this option, and in some cases, the party is even more popular than the formal event itself.

After-prom party ideas

After-prom parties come in all sizes and price ranges. For schools and PTAs with the means and desire to pull out all the stops, bringing a supervised group of teens to an alcohol-free comedy club or a harbor cruise can be a memorable way to ensure a special and safe prom night. For something more active, a PTA can rent out an ice-skating or roller-skating rink for its after-prom party, or arrange bowling by

candlelight at a nearby bowling alley. Some skating and bowling facilities will allow you to bring in your own food and will have a party room available for those who want to take a break from the physical activity.

Local YMCAs also can host after-prom parties. Teens can play volleyball, go rock climbing or swimming, or engage in any other activities the Y has to offer. For safety reasons, most Ys arrange for lock-in parties, which controls access into and out of the facility. According to Sabrina Hirschfeld, senior program director of the Lattof YMCA in Des Plaines, Illinois, "We offer basketball, soccer, air hockey, video games, or just a place for teens to hang out. Social time and options like making bead necklaces or playing board games are great for attracting kids who aren't as athletic."

The after-prom tradition of one high school PTA

After-prom parties have been a tradition at Newark High School in Newark, Delaware, since the late 1980s. "They got started as a safety issue," says Karen Kaler, president of the Newark High School PTA. "We are close to the beach, and it had become the thing for kids to drive to the beach maybe as late as 1:00 a.m. The parents were worried not only that their kids might be drinking and driving, but that they were exhausted driving that late at night after prom." The first after-prom party, held at the high school, was themed "Life's a Beach" as a nod to the traditional after-prom beach visit.



The school has played host to most of the after-prom parties, which have had themes such as "Road Trip" (with different areas of the school decorated as different American cities) and "The Wizard of Oz" (with scenes from the movie gracing the cafeteria, gym, and hallways). Parents are the volunteer decorators who very enthusiastically transform the school to be as unrecognizable as possible. "When the kids come in," says Kaler, "they think of [the school] as a different place."

(Safe and Fun After-Prom continued)

"We've had the after-prom for years, and there was always a parent in charge who would round up people," says Kaler.



"Now we have an after-prom committee on the PTA. It has really been a big help getting the whole PTA involved."

The Newark High School after-prom party attracts both prom-goers and those who choose to sit the prom out. "Proms have gotten so expensive. Tickets can be \$50 per person and that's not counting the formal wear, flowers, and all the other expenses," explains Kaler. "We charge \$5 to \$6 for after-prom. We normally get 400 to 500 kids. People come without dates. My older son said that his first after-prom was a lot more fun than the prom."

In addition to decorating the school, the PTA rents such equipment as a portable bungee-jumping tower and rock-climbing wall, and sets up stations for games such as Twister and ping-pong, which are acquired at no cost. Food and refreshments are usually donated for the event.

In the interest of keeping students safe, security is part of the after-prom planning process. "You must be a student at the school, and your name is on your ticket. When we check the ticket, we can check kids to see if they're drunk. If the kids leave, they can't come back in," says Kaler. That process eliminates the problem of students leaving, using drugs or alcohol, and then returning to the after-prom party. The school also has two security people on hand in addition to the parent chaperones. Kaler says the after-proms have all been problem-free.

Safe nights beyond prom

Prom night is a big night for teens, but it is not the only night that will require them to make some difficult choices. The best way for parents to help their children make safe choices is to get involved. Teens report that



parents are their biggest influence when it comes to deciding whether to try alcohol and drugs. When you say nothing, hoping that your parenting to date has been enough to help your teen make the right choices, you actually send the message that you don't care.

Establish rules and consequences for breaking those rules before your child enters into potentially risky territory. Make sure your child knows that he or she can call you no matter what the situation is. Your child should understand that even if you might be angry, you care more about his or her safety than about a broken rule.

Finally, find out what's on your teen's mind. Ensure that he or she has an action plan for sticky situations; for example, know what your teen will do if his or her ride starts drinking during the evening. Help your teen take responsibility for his or her own actions. If you do, you will be teaming with your teen to help him or her stay safe and, in the long run, develop into a responsible adult.

State PTA just sent all presidents a book (in both English and Spanish) entitled "Safety First". Following is an excerpt from that book.

What's A Parent To Do?

By Marsha Rosenbaum, Ph.D.

Today's parents get more advice, too often in excruciating detail, about how to raise their children, than any generation in history. Yet they're open and listening because they're concerned about their teens' safety and well-being, and worried that the world has become a much more dangerous place. They want to know what to do, and are looking for solutions.

There are no easy answers, but for parents who have requested specifics, here are the steps I suggest:

STEP1: LISTEN

The first step is to "get real" about drug use by listening to what teens have to tell us about their lives and their feelings. This will guide us toward intelligent, thoughtful action.

A useful venue is the dinner table. As much as possible, families should eat together once a day so they can "catch up", talk and otherwise connect.

(“What’s A Parent To Do” continued)

There are many other natural openings for conversation, such as drug use in movies, television and music. If we can remain as non-judgmental as possible, teenagers will seek our opinions and guidance. Let them know they can talk freely. Our greatest challenge is to listen and try to help without excessive admonishment. If we become indignant and punitive, teenagers will stop talking to us. It’s that simple.

Remember that advice is most likely to be heard when it is requested. Realize that teens bring their own experiences to the table, some of which you may not want to hear. But breathe deeply and be grateful when they share these experiences because this means you have established trust.

STEP 2: LEARN

Parents and teachers need to take responsibility for learning about the physiological, psychological and sociological effects of alcohol and other drugs. This involves reading and asking questions.

Familiarize yourself with teenage culture through print and electronic media, especially the Internet. Watch MTV. Learn about the array of drugs available to young people, but be sure your sources are scientifically grounded and balanced. Any source that fails to describe both risks and benefits should be considered suspect.

The Safety First Project website, www.safety1st.org, contains balanced information with continuously updated “Drug Facts” about the effects of today’s most prevalent drugs: alcohol, anti-anxiety drugs (such as Xanax), anti-depressants (such as Prozac), cocaine, Ecstasy, ephedrine, GHB, heroin, inhalants, ketamine, LSD, marijuana, methamphetamine, mushrooms, opioids. Ritalin and other ADHD drugs, Salvia, steroids and tobacco. These easy-to-read fact sheets are in PDF format and available for download anytime. For a free hard copy, please email your request to info@safety1st.org.

For an all-around resource that covers nearly every popular drug, you and your teen should read *From Chocolate to Morphine: Everything You Need to Know about Mind-Altering Drugs*, by renowned health expert, Andrew Weil, M.D., and former high school teacher, Winifred Rosen (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 2004)

For information about marijuana in particular, read *Understanding Marijuana: A New Look at the Scientific Evidence* by Mitch Earleywine, Ph.D. (New

York: Oxford University Press, 2002) and/or *Marijuana Myths, Marijuana Facts: A Review of the Scientific Evidence* by Lynn Zimmer, Ph.D. and John P. Morgan, M.D. (New York: The Lindesmith Center 1997).

STEP 3: ACT

Drug abuse prevention is not a curriculum package or a “magic bullet”, so make some plans.

It is important to keep teens engaged and busy, not just during the school day, but from 3 to 6p.m., when the use of drugs by bored, unsupervised teens is highest. Extracurricular programs such as sports, arts, drama and other creative activities should be available to all secondary school students, at low or no cost to parents. Become an advocate for such programs in your community and teens’ school.

Prevention is fundamentally about caring, connected relationships and an open exchange of information. There are no easy answers, just thoughtful conversations.

When it comes to opening the ongoing “drug talk”, some parents don’t know where to begin. Many have started with my “Dear Johnny” letter or other resources listed above. Teens often respond better to these “**just say know**” approaches than to the one-sided messages they’ve been hearing all their lives.

Many parents today are Baby Boomers who themselves experimented with drugs in the 1970s and 1980s. The question, “What should I tell my child about my own past drug use?” comes up in each and every workshop I facilitate – from California to Utah to Connecticut. Many parents are uneasy about revealing their own experience, fearing such admissions might open the door to their own teen’s experimentation.

There is no one simple resolution to this difficult dilemma. While you do not need to rehash every detail, it can be very helpful to share your own experiences with your teen because it makes you a more credible confidant.

Honesty is usually the best policy in the long run. Just as parents often know or eventually find out when their child is lying, teenagers have a knack for seeing through adults’ evasions, half-truths and hypocrisy. Besides, if you don’t tell, you can rest assured that eventually one of your siblings or close friends will delight in recounting your “youthful indiscretions” to your eager child.

(“What’s A Parent To Do” continued)

Trusting relationships are key in preventing and countering drug use. While it is tempting to cut through difficult conversations and utilize detection technologies such as urine testing, think hard before you demand that your child submit to a drug test. Random, suspicionless school-based drug testing – which has been opposed by the California State Parent Teacher Association (PTA) – has been shown to be ineffective and often counterproductive (see www.drugtestingfails.org).

Regarding in-home test kits, researchers at Children’s Hospital in Boston, who studied home drug-testing products, warn that most people are not appropriately educated about the limitations and technical challenges of drug tests (including collection procedures, the potential for misinterpretation and false positive/negative results). They also note unanticipated consequences and the negative effect on parent-child relationships of collecting a urine sample to ascertain drug use.

The reality is that a trusting, open relationship with a parent or other respected adult can be the most powerful element in deterring abusive patterns. And trust, once lost, can be hard to regain.

Perhaps most important, **teenagers need to know that the important adults in their lives are concerned primarily with their safety**; that they have someone to turn to when they need help. If they find themselves in a compromising or uncomfortable situation, they need to know we will come to their aid immediately.

STEP 4: LEAD

PTA leaders and other parent groups often request “Safety First” speakers for their meetings.

In 2005I addressed the National PTA convention, showing parent leaders how they could facilitate a drug education workshop at their own school. I told the attendees that outside “experts” are not necessary. Parent workshops, after all, are fundamentally about opening a discussion to share science-based information and to connect with others in the community. Training resources and information about such workshops are available at www.safety1st.org.

I understand that it is difficult to get parents to come out for evening meetings, but one parent at a middle school in Torrance, California, had a brilliant idea. She was so committed to the importance of parent drug education that she convinced several teachers to offer extra credit to students whose parents attended the workshop. A record 272 parents packed the auditorium that night!

In general, it is important for parents to get to know each other and work together to promote safety-oriented strategies. The emphasis on safety does not mean we are giving teens permission to use drugs. It simply affirms that their welfare is our top priority.

STEP 5: HELP

It is important to know what to do if you believe a teenager (or anyone else) is having a negative reaction to alcohol and/or other drugs.

For instance, do not allow a person who has consumed too much alcohol and is passed-out to lay on their back. Many people in this situation have choked on their own vomit and asphyxiated.

In an acute situation, if you fear something is seriously wrong – such as when a person is unconscious or having trouble breathing – do not hesitate to phone 911 immediately. The lives of many young people could have been saved if paramedics had been called – or called sooner.

Don’t take a chance. If you share nothing else you have read here, please convey this information to your own teen, who may one day need to assist a friend.

Even when it’s not an emergency, there is little more disturbing to a parent than a teenager who is obviously intoxicated, stoned or high. Many parents want to know how to identify problem use, what to do about it and when to seek professional help.

Advice about problem use is outside the scope of this booklet, so **a concerned parent should start by visiting the Get Help section at www.safety1st.org for a discussion of counseling, treatment and a list of references and resources.**

I highly recommend the work of psychologist Stanton Peele, Ph.D., who lays out criteria for deciding whether your child needs treatment, the treatment options and your role as a parent in his new book, *Addiction Proof Your Child*. Keep in mind that there is no “one size fits all” method for dealing with troubled teens that have alcohol and/or other drug problems.

Many of today’s well-meaning programs are still unevaluated and inflexible. Be especially leery of boot camp style programs that can do more harm than good, such as those studied by journalist Maia Szalavitz in her book *Help At Any Cost: How the Troubled-Teen Industry Cons Parents and Hurts Kids*.

In the end, the healthiest kids, whether or not they experiment with drugs, have parents who are present, loving and involved. Carla Niño, immediate past president of the California State PTA (the largest state PTA in America, with one million members), gives the following advice:

(*"What's A Parent To Do"* continued)

"Trust your instincts, which are to love your kids enough to give them the space to explore and grow, to forgive their mistakes and to accept them for who they are. Kids go through tough times, sometimes seemingly prolonged. Those who make it do so because they're embraced and loved by their families."

DON'T MESS WITH MOM

Author Unknown

A Child's Comments and Thoughts

My son came home from school one day,
with a smirk upon his face.
He decided he was smart enough,
to put me in my place.



"Guess what I learned in Civics Two,
that's taught by Mr. Wright?
It's all about the laws today,
The 'Children's Bill of Rights.'

It says I need not clean my room,
don't have to cut my hair
No one can tell me what to think,
or speak, or what to wear.

I have freedom from religion,
and regardless what you say,
I don't have to bow my head,
and I sure don't have to pray.

I can wear earrings if I want,
and pierce my tongue & nose.
I can read & watch just what I like,
get tattoos from head to toe.

And if you ever spank me,
I'll charge you with a crime.
I'll back up all my charges,
with the marks on my behind.

Don't you ever touch me,
my body's only for my use,
not for your hugs and kisses,
that's just more child abuse.

Don't preach about your morals,
like your Mama did to you.
That's nothing more than mind control,
And it's illegal too!

Mom, I have these children's rights,
so you can't influence me,
or I'll call Children's Services Division,
better known as "C.S.D."



Mom's Reply and Thoughts

Of course my first instinct was
to toss him out the door.
But the chance to teach him a lesson
made me think a little more.

I mulled it over carefully,
I couldn't let this go.
A smile crept upon my face,
he's messing with a pro.

Next day I took him shopping
at the local Goodwill Store..
I told him, "Pick out all you want,
there's shirts & pants galore.

I've called and checked with C.S.D.
who said they didn't care
if I bought you K-Mart shoes
instead of Nike Airs.

I've canceled that appointment
to take your driver's test.
The C.S.D. is unconcerned
so I'll decide what's best."

I said "No time to stop and eat,
or pick up stuff to munch.
And tomorrow you can start to learn
to make your own sack lunch.

Just save the raging appetite,
and wait till dinner time.
We're having liver and onions,
a favorite dish of mine."

He asked "Can I please rent a movie,
to watch on my VCR?"
"Sorry, but I sold your TV,
for new tires on my car.

I also rented out your room,
you'll take the couch instead.
The C.S.D. requires
just a roof over your head.

Your clothing won't be trendy now,
I'll choose what we eat.
That allowance that you used to get,
will buy me something neat.

I'm selling off your jet ski,
dirt-bike & roller blades.
Check out the 'Parents Bill of Rights',
It's in effect today!

Hey hot shot, are you crying,
Why are you on your knees?
Are you asking God to help you out,
instead of C.S.D.?"

From a MOM (Mean Old Mother.)

ARTICLES FROM STATE PTA'S "THE COMMUNICATOR"

BLOGGING – What is it?

Blogging is short for “Web logging.” Blogs are not chat rooms or a form of instant messaging. A blog is basically an online journal where the author (the blogger) keeps a running account of whatever he thinks about. Every day or so the blogger posts a paragraph or two on some subject. Hyperlinks to related Web sites may be woven into the text. The activity of updating a blog is “blogging” and someone who keeps a blog is a “blogger.” Blogs are typically arranged in chronological order with the most recent additions featured most prominently. Blogs may be posted by individuals or organizations, some of which may select postings and filter off-task and offensive commentary and protect authors’ anonymity.

Caution is always prudent to avoid online traps or stalkers when using the Internet; however, blogs can be useful educational tools to gather information or opinions on a subject and for journal writing by students. The journal could include the student’s original writing and any response that it elicits online, using a copy-and-paste technique, in addition to reflective writing that the student does not want to disseminate publicly.

Teachers can assign research projects to build a reservoir of knowledge and informed opinions. Weekly questions can be used as springboard for research, panel presentations, debates and multimedia projects that explore issues or expand student’s knowledge.

Blogging, like e-mail, requires ethical and appropriate online conduct. Teachers and parents should facilitate discussions to guide students as they create online journals or blogs. General rules of courtesy should always be observed in academic, social and business settings including email use and blogging.

*Adapted from Access Learning Magazine, February 2004,
“Blogging with C-SPAN,”
Cable in the Classroom Organization, cic@ciconline.org.*

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IM and Your Child

If you don’t know what IM stands for, then you are not aware of how your child is communicating in today’s world. Instant messaging (IM) is becoming an indispensable means of teen socializing. A Pew Internet study shows that three out of four online teens rely on IM to communicate with others. They generally have at least three conversations going simultaneously with the belief that through IM they are cementing relationships that they might otherwise lose.

A “PC World” magazine article stated that while 74% of the parents polled said their child’s activity while IM’ing was supervised, only 37% of the children said that a parent was overlooking their computer activity. Make sure that your child is aware that you are interested in their IM’s.

Consider the physical location of your family’s computer. Does your child have one in his/her own room where it is hard to monitor activity, or is the computer in a location where the rest of the family might see what is transpiring? IM has its own language, various combinations of letters, few vowels, no capital letters, and little punctuation.

Here are some examples:

ur – you are	j/k – just kidding
brb – be right back	y – why
k – ok	bf – boyfriend
omg – oh, my God	nm – nothing much
gg – gotta go	bff – best friends forever
:-(– frown	pos – parent over shoulder

Not only does instant messaging pose a threat to your child’s well being, but according to a news release from Symantec, a provider of computer protection software, instant messaging is a threat as a carrier of destructive software to your system.

With the ability of IM to transfer files, worms and other malicious programs can enter and destroy your computer. Steps are being taken by the Internet Service Providers and anti-virus companies to close these avenues, but you should be aware of this problem.

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(More information can be found on the internet under “web slang”, “acronyms used in chat rooms”, “instant messages” and “text messaging” to name a few ~ www.web-friend.com/help/lingo/chatslang.html has a good list).