



"Don't let anyone speak for you, and don't rely on others to fight for you." - Michelle Obama

Happy and Safe Holidays to all! May all you New Year's Wishes come true!



Follow us on http://twitter.com/gateamerica



Word of the Month LEADERSHIP

Leadership is the art of motivating a group of people to act towards achieving a common goal. Effective leadership is based upon ideas, but won't happen unless those ideas can be communicated to others in a way that engages them.

In this Issue

Table listing articles: Dinner equals Drug Prevention (1), 2011 National Gang Threat Assessment (1), Happiness Deters Crime (3), Carbonated drinks linked to Teenage Violence (3), Parent Tips: Recognizing Teen Drug Use (4)

End of Year Edition



Dinner equals Drug Prevention?

Do you remember your childhood experiences surrounding the dinner table. Did you have a set time when you sat down with your family? Did mom or dad tell you "don't be late for dinner?" You knew the rules, hurry up, when mom called for dinner, clean up what you were doing, wash your hands and sit down at that the table. No fuss, no argu-

ments, it just wasn't allowed.

Three times more likely to try marijuana.

What were the discussions like around the dinner table, if it was like my house, they were lively. Sometimes they were over sports teams, other times, current

events, activities at school or what chores we were supposed to do that we had not finished yet. There were good times, funny times and sometimes, in my home there was a bit of yelling. I mean after all I grew up in an Italian household. Yelling was like a religion for some. But I will say this at that time, while

(Continued on page 2)

National Gang Threat Assessment released by the FBI

The National Gang Intelligence Center recently released the 2011 National Gang Threat Assessment. This report is released annually to examine emerging trends and threats posed by criminal gangs to communities throughout the United States.

The study found that there are 1.4 million active street, prison and Outlaw Motorcycle gang members comprising more than 33,000 gangs in the United States. This is a 29 percent increase from the previous 2009 National Gang Threat Assessment. This increase should be more closely evaluated to determine why such an increase occurred. The report does indicate that Neighborhood-based gangs, hybrid gang members, national-level gangs such as the Surenos are rapidly expanding in many jurisdictions. African, Asian, Caribbean and Eurasian Gangs have been reported to be increasing in communities.

Major cities and suburban areas experience the most gang-related violence. Local neighborhood-based gangs and drug crews continue to pose the most significant criminal threat in most communities. Aggressive recruitment of juveniles and immigrants, alliances and conflict between gangs, the release of incarcerated gang

members from prison, advancements in technology and communication, and Mexican Drug Trafficking Organization (MDTO) involvement in drug distribution have resulted in gang expansion and violence in a number of jurisdictions.

Gangs are increasingly engaging in non-traditional gang-related crime, such as alien smuggling, human trafficking, and prostitution. Gangs are also engaging in white collar crime such as counterfeiting, identity theft, and mortgage fraud, primarily due to the high profitability and much lower visibility and risk of detection and



punishment than drug and weapons trafficking.

US-based gangs have established strong working relationships with Central American

and MDTOs to perpetrate illicit cross-border activity, as well as with some organized crime groups in some regions of the United States. US-based gangs and MDTOs are establishing wide-reaching drug networks; assisting in the smuggling of drugs, weapons, and illegal immigrants along the Southwest Border; and serving as enforcers for MDTO interests on the US side of the border.

Gangs encourage members, associates, and relatives to obtain law enforcement, judiciary, or legal employment in order to gather information on rival gangs and law enforcement operations. Gang infiltration of the military continues to pose a significant criminal threat, as members of at least 53 gangs have been identified on both domestic and international military installations. Gang members who learn advanced weaponry and combat techniques in the military are at risk of employing these skills on the street when they return to their communities.

Gangs on Indian Reservations often emulate national-level gangs and adopt names and identifiers from nationally recognized urban gangs.

Gangs are becoming increasingly adaptable and sophisticated, employing new and advanced technology to facilitate criminal activity discreetly, enhance their criminal operations, and connect with other gang members, criminal organizations, and potential recruits nationwide and even worldwide.

To read more go to http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/2011-national-gang-threat-assessment

Dinner equals Drug Prevention?

(Continued from page 1)

we were eating, we were a "family", bonded, strong and one.

What happened after dinner? Was it someone's chore to clear the table, washes the dishes. Did you play a game, talk, laugh or tell stories.

Did you know that between 1999 and 2011, teens were asked, other



than food, what did they consider the best part of family dinners? More than half surveyed said "that talking, sharing, catching up and interacting with family members is the best part."

The study was conducted by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University. The founder of the program states that "As the quality of teens relationships with their parents declines, their likelihood of using tobacco, alcohol and marijuana rises. Simple are important, too: teens who believe their older siblings have tried illegal drugs are more likely to say they expect to try drugs in their future."

CASA found that there is a relationship between the frequency of family dinners and teen drinking, smoking and other drug use.

The research said those teens that ate two or less family dinners were:

- Three times more likely to try marijuana.
- Two-and-a-half times more likely to smoke cigarettes
- One and a half times more likely to drink alcohol

They also found that frequent family dinners also helped:

- Lower levels of family tension.
- Teenagers who often said their parents are proud of them.
- Teenagers who more often said that they can confide in their parents about serious problems.

The CASA's research confirms the common-sense notion that shared dinners make for stronger families. Yet many parents are challenged to put this simple idea into practice. The challenges that parents simply do not have enough time in to go around. Between after school activities, schedules, parent's work schedules and a variety of other

Family Dinners meant:

Teenagers who more often said that they can confide in their parents about serious problems.



activities, in order to make those family connections it requires a concerted effort.

Here are some tips to help:

- Make it a requirement – Set a non-negotiable rule about the number of dinners that your teenager is expected to eat with you each week.
- Involve teenagers in all phases of the meal – Whenever possible, involve teenagers in planning and preparing the meal. Your children will more often come to the dinner table as willing participants if you do this.



- Make meals enjoyable – While it isn't always possible to avoid discussions on controversial topics – for examples, homework and peer groups – effort should be made to talk about things that interest all members of the family and won't cause conflict.

The research shows that teens that have a good relationship with Mom and or Dad are less likely to abuse harmful substances. It also shoes that teens that eat dinner with their families are also more likely to attend religious services that contribute to stronger family values as well.

Happiness Deters Crime

A new study reports that a happy teen is less likely to be involved in criminal activities or use drugs.

UC Davis researchers Bill McCarthy, Ph.D., and Teresa Casey report their findings in a paper titled "Get Happy! Positive Emotion, [Depression](#) and Juvenile Crime."

"Our results suggest that the emphasis placed on happiness and well-being by positive psychologists and others is warranted," McCarthy said. "In addition to their other benefits, programs and policies that increase childhood and adolescent happiness may have a notable effect on deterring nonviolent crime and drug use."

The researchers evaluated results from a 1995-1996 federally funded study of Adolescent Health — the largest, most comprehensive survey of adolescents ever undertaken.

Investigators compared self-assessments of emotional well-being to criminal activity or reports of drug use. They discovered about 29 percent of the youth surveyed reported having committed at least one criminal offense, and 18 percent said that they had used at least one illegal drug.

The review is important because research on

the value or consequences of happiness, in relation to juvenile crime, has not been studied. Currently, experts believe adolescents' decisions about crime emerge from attitudes and emotions.

Experts believe reflective thought discourages



offending while negative emotions — such as anger or rage — contribute to the decision to commit a crime.

An example of this could be the riots that recently roiled London.

McCarthy and Casey argue that positive emotions also have a role.

"We hypothesize that the benefits of happiness — from strong bonds with others, a positive self-image and the development of socially valued cognitive and behavioral skills — reinforce a decision-making approach that is informed by positive emotions," they write in

their study.

Depression may also play a role in unfortunate behavior as the researchers discovered adolescents with minor, or nonclinical, depression had significantly higher odds of engaging in such activities.

Conversely, happier adolescents were less likely to report involvement in crime or drug use.

The study also found that changes in emotions over time matter. Adolescents who experienced a decrease in their level of happiness or an increase in the degree of their depression over a one-year period had higher odds of being involved in crime and of using drugs.

Further, the intensity of emotions is important as most adolescents experience both happiness and depression.

The odds of drug use were notably lower for youth who reported that they were more often happy than depressed, and were substantially higher for those who indicated that they were more depressed than happy.

Source: psychcentral

Carbonated drinks linked to Teenage Violence

Researchers believe they've found an association -- if only a statistical one -- between violence by teenagers and the amount of soda they drink.

The study that was conducted followed high-school students in inner-city Boston who consumed more than five cans of non-diet, fizzy soft drinks every week were between nine and 15-percent likelier to engage in an aggressive act compared with counterparts who drank less.

The professor who conducted the study stated, "What we found was that there was a strong relationship between how many soft drinks that these inner-city kids consumed and how violent they were, not only in violence against peers but also violence in dating relationships, against siblings," said [David Hemenway](#), a professor at the Harvard School of Public Health.

But he stressed that only further work would confirm -- or disprove -- the key question whether higher consumption of sweet sodas caused violent behavior.

The new study was based on answers to questionnaires filled out by 1,878 public-school stu-

dents aged 14 to 18 in the inner Boston area, where [Hemenway](#) said crime rates were much higher than in the wealthier suburbs.

Overwhelmingly the majority of respondents were Hispanic, African-American or mixed; few were Asian or white.



Among the questions were how much carbonated non-diet soft drink, measured in 12-ounce cans, the teens had drunk in the previous seven

days.

They were also asked whether they drank alcohol or smoked, carried a weapon or showed violence towards peers, family members and partner.

What emerged, said [Hemenway](#), was evidence of "dose response," in other words, the more soda was consumed, the likelier the tendency towards violence.

Among those who drank one or no cans of soft drink a week, 23 percent carried a gun or a knife; 15 percent perpetrated violence towards a partner; and 35 percent had been violent towards peers.

At the other end of the scale, among those who drank 14 cans a week, 43 percent carried a gun or a knife; 27 percent had been violent towards a partner; and more than 58 percent had been violent towards peers.

G.A.T.E. AMERICA INC.

410 Cardinal Drive
Bartlett, Illinois 60103

Phone: 630-398-4811
Fax: 630-233-8312
Email: info@openthegate.org

www.openthegate.org

Order Gang Manual

Our updated gang manual covers over 120 street gangs from the Midwest region of the United States. Each year we expand upon this manual to cover gangs as we encounter them. To get our newest version please go to our website to order.

2012 Training

2012 Training Calendar Due out January 1, 2012

UPCOMING PREVENTION ACTIVITY BY MONTH

January

Stalking Awareness
Crime Stoppers Month

February

National Teen dating Awareness

March

National Problem Gambling
Poison Prevention Month

Recognizing Signs of Teen Drug Use

As parents, we say that we want to know everything about our children but we are often uncomfortable or choose to ignore certain attitudes and behaviors in hopes of preserving peace in the family. We rationalize to ourselves that it is just a phase our teenagers are going through and will grow out of. By doing this we often overlook the warning signs that identify teen drug use.

How to Recognize the Signs of Teen Drug Use

1. Observe the appearance and personal hygiene of your teen. Consider whether it has changed. Drug abusers often stop caring about their appearance and personal hygiene.
2. Monitor school grades of your teen. Drug abusers lose the ability to focus and their grades begin to drop.
3. Question unexplained weight loss in your teen. Drug abusers often experience weight loss. Determine if your child has been ill or recently began a new physical activity or diet. If not, weight loss is certainly a cause for concern.
4. Discover who your teen is friends with. Drug abusers often change friends because their old friends don't understand or approve of their drug use.
5. Examine the spending habits of your teen. Ask yourself if your teen suddenly needs extra money for lunch, school activities and such. Drug abusers can never get enough and need more and more money to support their habit.
6. Scrutinize any sneaky, deceptive behavior of

your teen, like lying about where she is going and who she is with. Drug abusers know that drug use is unacceptable, especially to parents so they try to hide any and all evidence.

Tips & Warnings:

- If any of these warning signs seem to apply to your teen it is time for you, as a parent, to take a closer look.
- If several of these warning signs apply to your teen, intervention is necessary immediately.
- Teen drug use often begins months, or even years, before parents actually become aware of it.
- The consequences of teen drug use can be devastating, possibly even fatal.

G.A.T.E. America Inc, is an organization that works daily to protect America's young people from violence. Our goals are to provide law enforcement, educators and parents with the appropriate training and resources to reduce gang activity in and around their communities. We achieve this through programs such as G.A.T.E., a school based gang education intervention/prevention program for grades 5th through 8th. The G.A.T.E. program has two new programs available GATE Kids for grades K-4 and RADICAL for teenagers.

Check out our new website, we have a new improved look, with easy navigation bars and the resources for parents, instructors and teachers.

Opening the GATE for our youth's Future!