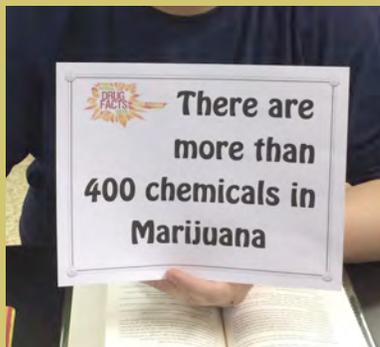


Stop Heroin.
Start Talking.
Say No.

IN THE NEWS

THE DANGEROUS REALITIES OF UNDERAGE DRINKING AND MARIJUANA USE

Underage drinking and marijuana use by teens are often considered inevitable, harmless behaviors everyone does. By nature, teens are curious and possess a strong desire to try new things and take risks; peer pressure and academic stress can spark interest in drinking and drugs to fit in and relax.



Some teenagers turn to these vices to cope with depression, anxiety, raging emotions, and boredom. Regardless of the reason for starting, the consequences of young people consuming alcohol and marijuana can be dangerous and deadly.

Marijuana Dangers

(from the National Institute on Drug Abuse/ NIDA):

- in 2013, almost 23% of high school seniors were using marijuana
- more than 45% of teens used marijuana before graduating high school
- long-term research on drug use indicates that most high school students who use illegal drugs start off with marijuana first
- by ages 12 and 13, some preteens are already abusing substances such as tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, inhalants, and prescription drugs, increasing their vulnerability to addiction and harder drug use

Underage Drinking Dangers

(from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism/ NIAAA):

- 16% of 8th graders reported drinking alcohol in the past month; 64% of 8th graders said alcohol is easy to get (in a recent national survey)

Meet Howell School District's Student Assistance and Anti-Bullying Coordinator Jeanna Corrigan-Ribon



(left to right) Sergeant Chris Hill, Howell Police Department and Howell PAL; Camille Mussari, Howell High School SAC; Jeanna Corrigan-Ribon, Howell School District SAC; and Chief Ronald Carter, Howell Police Department.

The student assistance coordinator (SAC) of a school or district plays a very significant role in promoting the mental, emotional, and social well-being of students; however, too many parents and students are unaware of the vital assistance SACs can offer during upsetting problems or crises. SACs provide counseling and support for students struggling with issues such as substance abuse, suicide, physical abuse, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, bullying, and family crises. They also refer students and their families to appropriate community resources for further treatment and assistance.

In addition to assisting students, SACs arrange in-service training for teachers and school staff and implement district policies regarding the above-mentioned issues. They collaborate with staff during interventions, referral service implementation, and child study meetings. Furthermore, SACs

THE DANGEROUS REALITIES OF UNDERAGE DRINKING AND MARIJUANA USE

- teens who drink are at greater risks of alcohol dependency, crime victimization, alcohol-related car accidents, and school problems
- parents have a greater influence over their children's values and decisions about drinking before alcohol use begins
- experimenting with alcohol can begin as young as 10 to 14 years old
- teens who drink tend to binge drink (5 or more drinks in a row)

All teens who use alcohol or pot do not progress to harder drugs or addiction, but these behaviors do increase their odds, in conjunction with risk factors such as early aggressive behavior, lack of parental supervision, poverty, peer pressure, and drug availability. Genetic predispositions to addiction; emotional, social, and academic stresses; and transitions like changing schools, moving, and divorce also make teens more vulnerable to alcohol and drug use. As students advance in school, they meet new peers, which can increase their exposure to drugs.

Underage consumption of alcohol and marijuana are dangerous. Physically, the adolescent human brain is not fully matured, which means that teens are not able to consider decisions and consequences like adults can. Because the teen brain is still forming, using alcohol and marijuana can inhibit proper development, causing permanent damage. Also, drugs and alcohol can blur proper decision-making, leading to risky, life-threatening behaviors such as harder drug use, binge drinking, unprotected sex, and driving under the influence.

It is important that adults and teens understand the hazards and lifelong negative impacts that can result from drinking underage and using marijuana. Parents and guardians should communicate and stay involved in the lives of their preteens and teens; regularly discuss the dangers of underage drinking and drug use with their kids; set clear boundaries against these behaviors; and consistently follow through with discipline if the boundaries are broken.

See the back cover for "Prevention Tips: Possible Signs of Underage Drinking or Marijuana Use."

Meet Howell School District's Student Assistance and Anti-Bullying Coordinator Jeanna Corrigan-Ribon

coordinate student programs and events to educate and empower students on drug and alcohol prevention and anti-bullying.

In the Howell School District, Jeanna Corrigan-Ribon has served as the SAC for the district's nine elementary and three middle schools since 2011. She is also the district's anti-bullying coordinator. Mrs. Corrigan-Ribon has a teacher of the handicapped bachelor's degree, a master's degree in educational counseling, and NJ Department of Education certificates to serve as a student assistance coordinator, director of school counseling, supervisor, and principal. She is also the newly-appointed chair of the Howell-Farmingdale Alliance.

During the 2013-2014 school year, Mrs. Corrigan-Ribon focused on making sure students' academic, social, emotional, and physical needs were identified and effectively met by teachers so all learners could achieve success. She collaborated with school resource officers and the Howell High School SAC Camille Mussari to bring various life skills, prevention, and awareness programs such as Heroes & Cool Kids, the NJ Department of Corrections' Project Pride, and Safe Kids America to the district. She also ran presentations, programs, and lessons on the recent NJ harassment, intimidation, and anti-bullying (HIB) laws and the current trends in substance abuse among teens.

In response to the heroin and opiates epidemic plaguing Monmouth and Ocean counties, Mrs. Corrigan-Ribon, alongside the school resource officers and Mrs. Mussari, spearheaded "Your Kids Count, We Need to Talk," a Howell community drug awareness forum that included the cooperation of Howell Township's schools, municipal government, police department, PAL, and other community organizations. "As the district's only SAC and anti-bullying coordinator covering 12 schools, I know I can be called upon at any given time without notice to handle a crisis or problem, which means I have to be prepared every second of the day. I work hard to build and maintain meaningful partnerships with colleagues, administrators, staff, and community members so that I can truly be of assistance and effectively support all students whenever needed," commented Corrigan-Ribon.

IN OUR COMMUNITY

The mission of the Howell-Farmingdale Alliance is to eliminate drug addiction, underage drinking, and tobacco use by our community members by collaborating with other sectors from across our community (police, government representatives, educators, businesses, community service groups, and the public) to promote public awareness and education about the problem; to provide a viable network of public outreach resources to combat addiction; and to extend life skills training opportunities to empower youth to make the right choices when confronted with life-impacting decisions. To accomplish our mission, we will fundraise and apply for available grants and donations.

A WORD FROM ALLIANCE COORDINATOR RALPH HOFFMAN

The goal of the Howell-Farmingdale Alliance, in conjunction with Howell Township's governing body, police department, education system, community service groups, businesses, and residents, is to create a prevention-prepared community. Many residents are still unaware that Monmouth and Ocean Counties have the highest rate of heroin deaths in NJ, and that Howell leads Monmouth County in the number of residents admitted to treatment facilities for heroin and opiate abuse.



Ralph Hoffman, Alliance coordinator (center) with retired corporal Harvey Cohen (left) and retired captain Robert Scott (right) both formerly with the Howell Township Police Department).

I want people to know that there are components of prevention and that the Howell-Farmingdale Alliance has been a dedicated front-runner in bringing new prevention strategies to our community to stop the use of heroin. I believe that eventually, the heroin epidemic we know will come to a halt as we continue to educate and promote prevention techniques.

My role as the coordinator of the Howell-Farmingdale Alliance for the past 15 years and passion for the fight against drug abuse are a continuation of my law enforcement career in juvenile justice for over 30 years. Our Alliance, thanks to dedicated volunteers, is one of the best in the state, and we will continue our efforts to protect our youth from this deadly outbreak of heroin use.

Support the Howell Holiday Giveaway Program to Benefit Howell Township Youth



(left to right) Dr. Jasen Langley and Dr. Hal Ornstein of Affiliated Foot & Ankle Center, L.L.P. collect gifts for Howell Holiday Giveaway Program.

The team at Affiliated Foot and Ankle Center, L.L.P. would like to ask the Howell community to join together in an effort to collect as many new, unwrapped gifts or gift certificates as possible to be distributed during the upcoming holiday season.

The annual Howell Holiday Giveaway program is run by local volunteers and sanctioned by township officials to provide gifts for hundreds of less-fortunate families in Howell. Many gifts are needed for children ages infant to 17 years.

Howell Holiday Giveaway involves and relies upon the participation of many neighborhoods, residents, non-profit groups, and local businesses.

Donations can be dropped off year-round to Affiliated Foot and Ankle Center, L.L.P., 4645 Route 9 South in Howell. For more information and to get involved, please call 732-905-1110 or email wecare@footdoctorsnj.com.

Prevention Tips:

What Can I Do? What Should I Know?

Parents: Did you know that constant communication, active parental involvement, clearly defined rules, and enforcement of consequences for breaking rules can make your preteen or teen less likely to drink underage or use drugs?

Parents and teens can visit the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), www.drugabuse.gov and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), www.niaaa.nih.gov online for more pointers and information regarding drug and alcohol abuse.

“Possible Signs of Underage Drinking or Marijuana Use”

- changes in appearance and personal hygiene
- differences in eating and sleeping
- mood changes
- short-term memory loss
- lack of motivation
- uncoordinated, silly behavior or slurred speech
- bloodshot eyes
- pot or alcohol smell
- possession of drug paraphernalia or alcohol bottles
- disinterest in usual sports and activities
- relationship trouble
- changes in friends or social behaviors
- failing grades and skipping school
- trouble with school authorities and police
- missing money

Note these warning signs; be sure to intervene early and get help if you suspect your teen is abusing any substance.

Save The Date

4-27-15: The Howell-Farmingdale Alliance and Howell Optimist Club will host their 20th anniversary Mayor’s Cup Golf Outing at Eagle Oaks Country Club. The Alliance’s fundraised money will be used for drug prevention efforts in our community, including our fight against the heroin epidemic. Contact Alliance coordinator Ralph Hoffman to participate (732-938-4500 ext. 4012).



**Empty your medicine cabinet and save a life!
Drop unwanted prescriptions in the Project Medicine Drop box at the Howell Police Department. Anonymous and available 24-7.**

Thank you to our sponsor, who makes this newsletter possible.



**For more information and volunteer opportunities visit:
www.twp.howell.nj.us
click on Departments, then Municipal Alliance.**

Howell Farmingdale
municipal Alliance



(Newsletter writing by Christa Riddle of All About Writing and production by Linda Coppolino of Little Hat Marketing & Design.)