



## IN THE NEWS

**Howell Night at the Lakewood Blue Claws  
Coming in June!  
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### Summer Is the Deadliest Time of Year for Teen Drivers: Howell High School Promotes Safe Driving



Howell High School's *It's Worth It* video educates on safe driving choices.

Did you know that the summer months between Memorial Day and Labor Day are the deadliest time of year for teen drivers? An average of 260 teens are killed each month during the summer; the risk of death with a teen driver behind the wheel also increases for passengers, pedestrians, and occupants of other vehicles, according to a *USA Today* online article, "AAA: Teen Drivers Face Greatest Risk in Summer."

Howell High School addresses the risks associated with teen driving by encouraging teens to proactively approach driver safety through its mandatory student parking permit program and participation in the Brain Injury Alliance of New Jersey's *U Got Brains Champion Schools Program*.

"It's all about creating and reinforcing awareness. We are dealing with young, inexperienced drivers who think they are invincible," commented Camille Mussari, Howell High School's student assistance counselor (SAC). "They need to understand very clearly the realities of driving while distracted and driving under the influence and learn to proactively make the right choices every single time they drive to stop these negative consequences that can ruin their lives."

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### Life Empowerment Coach Rob Imperato Delivers Life Skills Development Workshops to Howell Youth



Rob Imperato, CEC, CPC,  
SEICC, ACC

During this past winter and spring, certified life empowerment coach Rob Imperato delivered life skills development programs to Howell and Farmingdale 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders, sponsored by Howell Township and the Howell Township Municipal Alliance. Free to all participants, the programs were held at the Howell PAL/Southard School building. In conjunction with the program, Howell and Farmingdale par-

ents were invited to participate in a free, one-hour webinar on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, *Maintaining the Edge*, to gain insight into the challenges specific to raising children during the often-difficult-to-navigate digital age.

Realizing his personal calling, Imperato became a life coach after experiencing his own life-changing medical event that prevented him from continuing his corporate career. "I always experienced a natural calling to help others, evident during my youth in the military and my corporate management days. In both of these capacities, my focus was team leadership and getting co-workers to want to invest in what was needed, to feel good about themselves and the team, rather than just being a boss and leading through a position of power," said Imperato.

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### Summer Is the Deadliest Time of Year for Teen Drivers: Howell High School Promotes Safe Driving

As part of Freehold Regional High School District's student parking permit program, Howell High School juniors applying for school parking permits must attend a mandatory meeting on driver safety; parents must also participate in a compulsory, hour-long evening meeting. Without both student and parent meeting attendance, a school parking permit will not be issued.

At the safety meetings, driver education teachers, school resource police officers, guest speakers, and videos clearly present the harsh realities of teen drivers who are distracted or driving under the influence and educate about what could have been done differently to avoid tragedy. This year's videos included *Impact Teen Drivers: Donovan Tessmer*, a heart-wrenching, personal story of unnecessary loss and tragedy that could have been avoided by safe, responsible driving, and *Impact Teen Drivers: Graduated Driver Licensing Made Simple, New Jersey*.

For the past four years, Howell High School has earned recognition as a champion high school for the Brain Injury Alliance of New Jersey's *U Got Brains Champion Schools Program*. As part of this program, participating high schools submit a group project promoting safe teen driving. This year, Howell High School students from the Fine and Performing Arts Center program—Peter McGarry, Michael Mann, Zack Rovner, and Ashley Priessnitz—directed a video, *It's Worth It*. The video features students acting out daily choices teen drivers face to illustrate the difference in outcomes between making positive versus negative choices. "It's easy to make mistakes, but we wanted to show that it is also easy to fix these mistakes to be safe," commented McGarry.

Three years ago, Howell High School won first place for their contest submission, earning a driving simulator worth thousands of dollars for the school. They have also won monetary prizes other years for the benefit of their school driving program.

"The goal of the *It's Worth It* video is to show kids simple behaviors they can easily choose that will prevent a lifetime of devastation," said Mussari.

### Life Empowerment Coach Rob Imperato Delivers Life Skills Development Workshops to Howell Youth

After attending an evening workshop on self-motivation facilitated by a life coach, Imperato's passion was ignited; he immediately enrolled in the Institute for Professional Excellence in Coaching, began his journey as a life coach, and has never looked back since. Imperato went on to receive multiple certifications as a life empowerment, professional, associate-certified, and social-emotional intelligence coach.

"In our incredibly fast-moving culture of technology in the digital age and consumerism, many people spend less time working on themselves, leading to a false sense of self," commented Imperato. "It is essential, now more than ever, to know who we are, to identify our personal values and what we truly want in life. Life skills allow us to be who we truly want to be, to visualize what we want and to make choices that help us achieve our identified goals."

Imperato impresses upon parents the need to empower their children to develop independence and a true sense of self while cultivating their inherent strengths. "For our youth, developing life skills allows them to understand their natural strengths and to build upon them, to feel they 'can,' rather than they 'cannot!'" said Imperato. He wrote his first book, *The Digital Age*, to prompt parents to listen actively and empower their children to achieve genuine happiness "from the core, not the store."

Imperato is most rewarded as a life coach by empowering people of all ages to realize their personal power and potential and to achieve happiness, which Imperato calls "a birthright." In addition to working with parents and children of all ages through individual and group sessions, workshops, and webinars, Imperato assists anyone facing a life-changing transition. He also helps small business owners and professionals looking to attain a work-life balance, effective team building, and successful delegating. Imperato is an active member of the Howell Township Municipal Alliance.

# What Are Teens Up to Now? Nationwide 2014 Survey Shows Promising Results from Prevention, Recovery & Treatment Efforts



The Monitoring the Future (MTF) survey\* annually reports data on the drug trends of American youth concerning drug, alcohol, and cigarette use and

attitudes related to these behaviors. Participants are asked to consider these behaviors over the past month, the past year, and their lifetimes. This year, the survey polled 41,551 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> graders representing 377 schools from the public and private sectors. Since 1975, MTF has surveyed 12<sup>th</sup> graders; in 1991, the survey expanded to include 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders as well.

Regarding this year's survey, Michael Botticelli, National Drug Control Policy's director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, commented, "This year's Monitoring the Future data shows promising signs on the declining rates of adolescent substance abuse, and reinforces the need to continue efforts on prevention, treatment, and recovery.... [We] know that the best way to reduce drug use is to prevent it from ever starting."

### Positive Survey Findings

- past-year use of prescription opioid pain relievers dropped by 1% since 2013's survey, decreasing by 3.4% since its peak in 2004
- 56.7% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders disapproved of occasional marijuana smoking
- cigarette smoking on a daily basis decreased for 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> graders, showing a 50% decline over the past five years
- alcohol use continued to decline across all three grades, showing a significant drop over the past five years; binge drinking also decreased to under 20% for 12<sup>th</sup> graders
- Ecstasy/ Molly (MDMA), inhalants, K2/Spice (synthetic marijuana), and bath salts all showed a decrease in use

According to Nora D. Volkow, M.D., director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), "With the rates of many drugs decreasing, and the rates of marijuana use appearing to level off, it is possible that prevention efforts

are having an effect. It is now more important than ever for the public health community to continue to educate teens, parents, teachers, community leaders, the media, and health care providers about the specific harms of drug use among teens, whose brains are still developing."

### Negative Survey Findings

- high e-cigarette use among teens was revealed, this being the first survey to poll teens on e-cigarette use; past-month e-cigarette use was reported as follows: 8.7% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, 16.2% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and 17.1% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders
- 81% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders said it is easy to get marijuana
- only 16.4% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders thought occasional marijuana smoking was risky

NIDA, part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's National Institutes of Health Agency (NIH), sponsors the annual, grant-funded survey.

For more information, visit the *Monitoring the Future Survey 2014* online at [www.monitoringthefuture.org](http://www.monitoringthefuture.org), or follow MTF news on Twitter at @NIDANEWS. To learn more about the substances included in the survey, visit NIDA online at [www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov).

Botticelli encourages "...parents, teachers, coaches, and mentors to have a conversation with a young person in their lives about making the healthy decisions that will keep them on a path toward a successful future."

*\*National Institute on Drug Abuse, "Teen Prescription Opioid Abuse, Cigarette, and Alcohol Use Trends Down," retrieved from <http://www.drugabuse.gov/news-events/news-releases/2014/12/teen-prescription-opioid-abuse-cigarette-alcohol-use-trends-down> on 4-30-15.*



# An Overview of Drug Prevention Strategies

The National Institute on Drug Abuse's (NIDA) *Preventing Drug Use Among Children and Adolescents: A Research-Based Guide for Parents, Educators, and Community Leaders\** provides an educational overview on drug use prevention principles and effective prevention program planning at the individual, family, peer, school, and community levels.

According to the publication, effective prevention programs...

- work to reverse identified risk factors (situations that may increase the chance of drug use) and strengthen protective factors (initiatives that reduce the chance of drug use) at individual, family, peer, school, and community levels
- deliver age-appropriate early interventions that address drug use, including underage use of legal drugs (tobacco and alcohol), illegal drug use, and inappropriate use and misuse of prescription or over-the-counter drugs
- promote the development of life skills (problem-solving, self-worth, and decision-making), as well as discussion, communication, education, academic support, social support, and healthy relationships
- comply with structure, content, and delivery standards and research-based and evidence-based strategies

- coordinate family, school, and community-based programs that work in combination to deliver a consistent prevention message that is delivered and reinforced long-term.

Prevention programs sponsored by the Howell Township Municipal Alliance must comply with the guidelines described in this resource in order to receive grant funding from New Jersey's Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (GCADA), as must all 400 municipal Alliances throughout the state receiving portions of the \$10 million available in program funding.

In the long run, prevention programs cost less than paying for addiction treatment services down the road and spare the struggles, losses, and pain associated with addiction.

(Visit [https://www.drugabuse.gov/sites/default/files/preventingdruguse\\_2.pdf](https://www.drugabuse.gov/sites/default/files/preventingdruguse_2.pdf) to read the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the complete publication on drug prevention.)

*\*National Institute on Drug Abuse, "Preventing Drug Use Among Children and Adolescents, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition," retrieved from [https://www.drugabuse.gov/sites/default/files/preventingdruguse\\_2.pdf](https://www.drugabuse.gov/sites/default/files/preventingdruguse_2.pdf) on 4-30-15.*



**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.**



<http://www.njconsumeraffairs.gov/meddrop/>

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