

# E-Xchange

*"The news source for Florida's Community Coalitions"*



**August 1, 2007**

*"What is the recipe for successful achievement? To my mind there are just four essential ingredients: Choose a career you love, give it the best there is in you, seize your opportunities, and be a member of the team."*  
~ Benjamin F. Fairless

## **MESSAGE FROM DIRECTOR JANES-HIDTA**

I have attached a summary document regarding the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Threat Assessments. Some of the findings include:

- 2007 ranking of regional drug threats in Florida
- General drug trends in distribution
- Powder (HCI) and crack cocaine prices in North FL
- Marijuana prices in North FL
- Reported clandestine labs in Central FL
- Inbound drug flow to South FL
- South Florida HIDTA seizure data, 2004-2006

I am available to answer any questions that you might have.

Bill Janes  
Director  
Florida Office of Drug Control  
(850) 488-9557

## **NEWS**

### **Smoking Ban for Disney Films**

Smoking will no longer be depicted in Disney-branded movies and will be discouraged in films bearing Disney's Touchstone and Miramax brands, the company has announced.

Reuters reported July 25 that Disney CEO Robert Iger also said that the company would place antismoking public-service announcements on DVDs of all future films where smoking is shown and call on theaters to show such PSAs before screening movies with smoking scenes.

Iger announced the moves in a letter to Rep. Edward Markey (D-Mass), whose committee recently held hearings on the issue of movie smoking and children's health. Markey called Disney's decision "groundbreaking," and the company also won praise from the American Legacy Foundation despite some concerns about the "ambiguity" of the policy regarding Miramax and Touchstone.

Iger stressed that the policy only applies to smoking and should not be viewed as a precedent for other issues.

### **Poll: 21 Percent of Americans Smoke**

Just 21 percent of U.S. adults identify themselves as smokers, the lowest rate in 60 years of Gallup polling, the Gallup News Service reported July 25.

Gallup first polled Americans on smoking in 1944, when 44 percent of adults said they smoked. The rate dropped into the 30-38 percent range in the 1970s and 1980s and dipped below 30 percent in 1989.

Statistically, however, the rate reported in the July 2007 poll was unchanged from the 22 percent of Americans who said they smoked in 2004 and the 23 percent who identified themselves as smokers in 1999 and 2006.

Poll respondents also reported smoking fewer cigarettes: a majority of American smokers now consume less than a pack of cigarettes a day; from 1944 to 1999, most cigarette users smoked more than a pack a day. Less than one in 10 smokers reported smoking more than a pack a day (the balance presumably said they smoked exactly a pack a day).

Gallup found that 25 percent of smokers polled in 2007 said they started smoking before age 16, the lowest rate ever reported.

Twenty-three percent of Americans identified themselves as former smokers; 56 percent said they never smoked.

Most smokers acknowledged that they are addicted to cigarettes (79 percent) and want to quit (81 percent).

Gallup polled more than 1,000 adults ages 18 and over.

## LOCAL NEWS

### Prescription Abuse a Growing Problem: Increasing Numbers of Addicts Asking for Help

By Jennifer Booth Reed  
jreed@news-press.com

Lee County has a drug problem. And the source is as seemingly innocuous as the neighborhood drugstore and the family medicine cabinet. Young people in Lee are twice as likely as their peers elsewhere in Florida to misuse prescription drugs, statistics show. "We have a real problem, and we have to get the word out," said Keral Kronseder Vogt, executive director of the Lee County Coalition for Drug-Free Southwest Florida.

A group of experts from Southwest Florida Addiction Services, Lee Memorial Health System, the Lee County Sheriff's Office, the Consumers Healthcare Products Association and the Lee County Coalition for a Drug-Free Southwest Florida teamed up Wednesday to film a 30-minute television special to raise awareness of medication abuse. The special will air next month on government cable stations.

"It's very much a growing part of our business," said SWFAS Executive Director Kevin Lewis. One in 20 patients used to seek treatment because of addiction to opiates. Most of them were heroine users, Lewis said. Today, eight out of 20 report to SWFAS with an opiate addiction. Half are prescription drug users.

The Lee County Sheriff's Office last year started a new unit dedicated to pharmaceutical investigations. Since January, detectives have conducted 55 prescription-related investigations, arrested 11 people, seized 491 pills and uncovered 93 forged, fraudulent or altered scrips. In addition to the sheriff's office, the Health Department has a quality assurance division that checks into reports that doctors are over-prescribing drugs.

Detective Vernon Tyus, who serves on the sheriff's unit, said he's seeing more and more people "doctor shop." Tyus and Lewis said that, because of Florida's lax pharmaceutical regulations, people from out-of-state come here, too, hoping to get their fix from Sunshine State drugstores. For some, popping prescription pills is the same thrill-seeking as smoking a joint or downing too much beer. But for many people, use of prescription drugs starts with a legitimate medical need and a doctor's prescription.

Michael Ramkumar, 25, of Naples suffered from anxiety and depression about three years ago. He saw a doctor, who prescribed Xanax. Ramkumar, who rarely drank alcohol, got drunk one night. The depression lifted. The anxiety disappeared. Ramkumar liked how he felt. He kept drinking. Then, he started mixing alcohol with Xanax. "You feel like you're 10 feet tall and nothing can happen to you," Ramkumar said. "You feel invincible."

The doctor's prescription ran out, and Ramkumar took to the streets. When you suffer from emotional problems, (the drugs) become addictive immediately," Ramkumar said. Ramkumar is now a patient at SWFAS, his fifth recovery program. He completed the detoxification portion of his recovery earlier this week and is now living in SWFAS supportive housing. "I don't want to leave this property," said Ramkumar, who hopes he's finally on the road to recovery.

Shantelle Sepko's battle with OxyContin started with a 2001 rollover accident. A doctor prescribed Vicodin and Percocet for her and her fiance. Both contain the ingredient oxycodone, a powerful pain reliever. Sepko, 25, was living in North Port at the time. She is now a North Fort Myers resident. When the prescription ran out, Sepko realized she and her fiancé were hooked.

They started seeking OxyContin, a more potent form of oxycodone. Sepko said the couple would chase the drug on the streets and in the offices of crooked doctors. Sepko said she turned to methadone as a way of weaning herself off OxyContin, but ended up addicted to that drug, too. She went through SWFAS and is celebrating her 11th month of being clean. Life is looking better — Sepko is in a new relationship and is expecting a baby in November.

But, still, she wonders what her life would have been if she had never been in the crash and been prescribed the painkiller. "If the drugs hadn't been in the picture, we probably would be married," she said of her former fiancé. The two haven't spoken since she got clean. Sepko said he continues to battle addiction.

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### **Recovery Month**

*Dear Coalition Members and Friends,*

*Please help us have the best Recovery Month Event in the nation! We are renting exhibit spaces, looking for food sponsors and activities include music and of course the zoo at night! The sponsorship forms are attached.*

*We are also looking for nominations for four people to be the voice of recovery. These people will be our media representatives, and need to reflect the diversity of our county. If you would like to nominate yourself or someone else, please forward the information to us via email.*

*Thank you,*

*Doris Carroll*

*Palm Beach County Substance Abuse Coalition*

## Red Ribbon Certified Schools Project

The Center for Prevention Research at Florida State University in coordination with the National Family Partnership/Informed Families (NFP/IF) is excited to announce the Red Ribbon Certified Schools website at [www.redribbonschools.org](http://www.redribbonschools.org). This project is a federally-funded initiative designed to assess and then celebrate effective efforts in the prevention of substance abuse among students. This site is intended to serve as an information delivery system of community efforts, school activities, the latest research, and current data.

The Red Ribbon Certified Schools program places prevention as a priority by bringing together parents, educators, young people, and the community. By becoming certified, schools demonstrate that they are dedicated to year-round prevention and are focused on collaboration. For community coalitions who work to connect multiple sectors of the community in efforts to prevent substance abuse, this program can be a great resource and tool. By working to certify the schools within the community, coalitions become the strong partners schools need to sustain the priority importance of prevention.

Last year the pilot project launched in Florida recognized 10 outstanding schools in Miami-Dade, Escambia, and Orange County. This year, the project expanded its impact by working with partnering members in Oregon, Illinois, Mississippi, Kansas, and Wisconsin.

We are thrilled at the impact and reception of this project and hope to encourage other schools and communities to participate. As prevention continues to gain momentum and status, the importance of credible and timely information becomes essential. We need your reaction to the site. Please take a look, forward it to others as appropriate, and let us know your thoughts and ideas.

This is an important initiative that is worthy of the attention of youth, parents, schools, community coalitions, and the community as a whole. If you are interested in learning how a school may be certified, please contact us by phone (850-645-7894) or email ([kmr05g@fsu.edu](mailto:kmr05g@fsu.edu)) or visit us on the web at [www.redribbonschools.org](http://www.redribbonschools.org). We encourage you to take steps now to help deserving schools apply for certification in your county. The rewards and awards make it a worthwhile effort.

## HOT PLACE!

### **Selling Healthy Lifestyles: Using Social Marketing to Promote Change and Prevent Disease**

This Issue Brief focuses on the application of social marketing principles in efforts to motivate people to make the complex and difficult behavior changes that can improve health and reduce the risk of chronic disease.

To download this 44 page document

[http://www.gih.org/usr\\_doc/Selling\\_Healthy\\_Lifestyles\\_Issue\\_Brief.pdf](http://www.gih.org/usr_doc/Selling_Healthy_Lifestyles_Issue_Brief.pdf)

## COOL SPOT!

### **The International Institute for Alcohol Awareness (IIAA) Not In Our House Website** <http://www.notnrhouse.org>.

Not In Our House campaign was developed in partnership with IIAA, The Century Council, a national not-for-profit organization funded by America's leading distillers dedicated to fighting drunk driving and underage drinking, and Scholastic, Inc., was launched in October 2006, in schools located in the each of the nation's state capitals and Washington, DC.

A major goal of Not In Our House is to prevent underage drinking in settings where adults are hosting parties and/or providing alcohol. The program is intended to inform adults of the civil and criminal liabilities, and social hosting and/or providing alcohol to underage youth.

The primary target audience for this program is parents of 9th and 10th grade students. Other audiences are adult influencers like school administrators, teachers, coaches, and PTA leadership.

## FUNDRAISING IDEA

### **Star Party**

Probably not the kind of stars you're thinking of, but they might want to attend! NASA has a complete online guide for hosting your own "Star Party", a sky gazing event with a chance to see planets, seasonal constellations, deep sky objects, and the moon. Time your sky party right and you can see the International Space Station or the space shuttle!

You don't have to be astronomy buffs to host a star party, but it sure wouldn't hurt to have some on hand to answer questions and maybe even set up a telescope or two. No, star parties just make for an interesting event for the curious. And a great opportunity for a fundraiser for almost any group.

NASA's online guide features-

1. Star Party Planning Guide
2. NASA Exhibits and Speakers
3. Decorations
4. Games and Activities
5. Space Trivia
6. Arts and Crafts
7. Star Party Photos
8. Party Supplies

Check it all out here: <http://www.jsc.nasa.gov/sightings/index.html>

### **Teaching Parents Mediation Skills May Benefit Entire Families**

Parents who learn mediation skills may be more likely to have children with better conflict-resolution skills, says a new study from the University of Waterloo in Ontario. The study examined 48 families with sibling pairs between 5 and 10 years old. The study appears in the May/June 2007 issue of Child Development.

Read the full article at:

[http://www.eurekalert.org/pub\\_releases/2007-05/sfri-tms051007.php](http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2007-05/sfri-tms051007.php)

# Calendar of Events

## August

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
|        |        |         | 1         | 2        | 3      | 4        |
| 5      | 6      | 7       | 8         | 9        | 10     | 11       |
| 12     | 13     | 14      | 15        | 16       | 17     | 18       |
| 19     | 20     | 21      | 22        | 23       | 24     | 25       |
| 26     | 27     | 28      | 29        | 30       | 31     |          |

Palm Beach County Substance Abuse Coalition General Membership Luncheon Notice-August 6, West Palm Beach, FL  
FADAA's Annual Conference-August 22-24, Hyatt Grand Cypress, Orlando, FL

*For additional information call Cindy Grant at the Florida Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association at 850-878-2196 or email:[cgrant@fadaa.org](mailto:cgrant@fadaa.org).*