

Lifeline

News from the
Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council of Delaware County

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Fall 2001

Council Starts Drug-Free Workplace Trainings for County

Beginning in September, the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council began a series of Drug-Free Workplace programs for employees of Delaware County. The presentations, conducted by Council director David Ramsey, are given in accordance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988. The act requires most recipients of federal contracts to conduct drug-free workplace trainings for employees.

The trainings were arranged by the county's personnel department. Its director, Lorna Taber,

heads," Ramsey said. "That is why we gave the first trainings to this group of county employees."

Ramsey added that the department heads are frequently the first ones to observe the signs of alcohol and/or drug problems among their employees. Therefore, the training stressed how to recognize the signs and symptoms of substance abuse in such behaviors as chronic lateness, erratic performance, and the like.

The trainings also stressed that department heads are not responsible for diagnosing substance abuse in others. However, they are responsible for confronting employees once "reasonable suspicion" has been established. The purpose of the confrontation, Ramsey stressed, is to persuade substance abusers to seek professional help for their problem.

To date, Ramsey has spoken to over 50 department heads and their deputies. In

addition, trainings are currently underway for more than 600 non-supervisory personnel. According to the county policy, trainings for all personnel must be repeated every year.

The Council also helped the county draw up a drug-free workplace policy and designed the brochure, (shown at right).

The policy states that "Delaware County is committed to

providing a safe work environment and to fostering the well-being of its employees." The brochure includes a statement that all employees must read, understand, and abide by the policy's provisions. Violations are subject to "disciplinary action up to and including termination."



Lorna Taber, director of personnel for Delaware County, introduces Council director David Ramsey to a group of county department heads.

introduced Ramsey at each presentation.

The county's department heads and the employees working under them are trained separately. "A successful program must have the support of department

Come to Our Holiday Open House

On Tuesday December 11, 2-5 pm at our offices, 72 Main Street, Delhi.

It's the law!

Drug-Free Workplace Policy for Delaware County



Above: Cover of brochure containing county policy.

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LifeLine

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Mission Statement

The Council is a public non-profit organization committed to the prevention of alcohol and substance abuse. We provide information, referral, and educational services to individuals and families to promote personal growth and informed choices. We envision a future in which individuals have chosen to live free from the harms of substance abuse.

Letter from the Director

As director of the National Institute of Drug Abuse, Alan Leshner, who is quoted below, has contributed in important ways to public understanding of addiction. (Therefore, his announcement last month that he is leaving NIDA is unwelcome news.) His words reflect a theme he has stressed during his tenure: that addiction, be it to alcohol or other drugs, is a tremendously complex problem requiring complex – or, as he puts it, "comprehensive" - responses.

Leshner is right. Too often people in the addiction field become overly focussed on their view of the situation, whether it is prevention, treatment, counseling, 12-step and other recovery programs, or law enforcement. As he says, we are only misleading ourselves if we imagine "we can make progress by just dealing with one or two pieces of the problem."

That is one reason why we believe that collaborations are so important in combatting substance abuse. One such local effort, the Coalition for Safe and Healthy Communities, has recently received a grant that will, we believe, breathe new life into the campaign to combat underage drinking. The grant is being administered by the county's Stop-DWI program, but the Council, along with many other individuals and agencies in the county, is planning to play an active and enthusiastic role in the effort.



Quote of the Day

"Thinking about drug abuse and addiction in overly simplistic, polarized terms ... misleads us into imagining that we can make progress by dealing with just one or two pieces of the problem. We will truly progress only when our responses are as comprehensive as the problem itself."

Alan Leshner

Director, National Institute on Drug Abuse

Teen Drinking Dangers

A new study shows that heavy drinking among adolescents could be dangerous for the still-developing brain.

"The frontal lobe, where our brain does things like planning and problem-solving and judgment, is still developing until we turn 16," said Dr. Susan Tapert, a psychiatric research fellow at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD). "Drinking heavily during this time could mean life-long problems."

Tapert and colleagues arrived at their conclusions after conducting a variety of thinking and memory tests on 15- and 16-year-old problem drinkers and non-drinkers.

"The alcoholics performed more poorly in trying to remember the information we had just taught them," Tapert said. "While most of the non-drinking kids remembered 95 percent of information, the drinkers remembered only 85 percent. That would be the difference between an A and B grade or a C and D."

Researchers found that problems with memory intensified if adolescents continued drinking throughout their teen years.

Tapert added, "The alcoholics also showed less use of oxygen in regions of the brain important for tasks like doing mechanical things or using a map. We didn't have to look hard to see these differences."

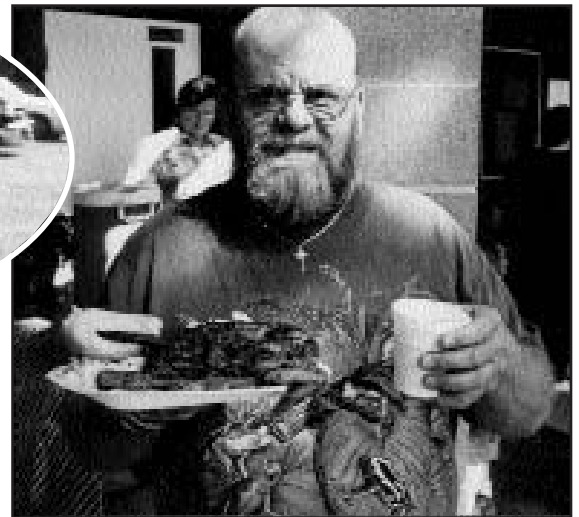
ADAC's first annual

PICNIC!!



The Council's first annual picnic was held on a crisp, sunny fall afternoon (September 21). Intended as a replacement for the traditional and more formal fall dinner, the picnic was marked by the easy-going atmosphere of Camp Shankitunk, the well-known 4-H retreat outside of Delhi. In keeping with the low-key nature of the event, speechmaking was kept to a bare minimum; only Council director David Ramsey and Rev. Paul Hartt, a board member, spoke and then only briefly. The event was particularly well attended by children of Council members, staff and guests. While parents lingered, eating and talking around the picnic tables, the kids enjoyed having the run of the camp.

Above: Picnickers at the table enjoy good food and good conversation. Right: Susan and Roger Hillstrom arrive, smiling, at the annual picnic.



Above: Adam Billek, a happy and well-fed camper, heads for the picnic table.



Above: Sara Bowley at the food table. Right: Samuel Harrt with a winning smile.



Old friends reunite: from left, Rachel Duffy, Sara Pondolino, Gerald Johansen.



Davionne Price and Michael Billek on swinging rope.



Above: Livvi and Jordan Ramsey at the tether ball.

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There is no charge to become a Friend of the Council. Voluntary contributions, however, are welcomed and are tax deductible.

CONTRIBUTION \$ _____
(Make checks payable to ADAC)

Return this form to the
Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council
72 Main Street, Delhi, NY 13753

REALITY CHECK



We Are Targeting Big Tobacco

We are, from left, Zack Backus, Elizabeth Breese, Bethany Austin, Katie Hodges, Jamie LePinnet, Brad Northrup, Anthony Romeo.

This group of Walton High School students is the nucleus of an anti-tobacco effort, Reality Check, that empowers teenagers to mobilize against the efforts of tobacco companies to recruit youths as smokers. Reality Check recently sponsored a free bowling night in Walton, "Lucky Strike against Big Tobacco," and is in the process of signing up youth throughout the county. Last spring the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council received an annual grant from the New York State Department of Health to implement the Youth Empowerment Project in Delaware County. Chris Hodges is the coordinator for the project.