

Lifeline

News from the
Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council of Delaware County

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Winter 2000

Advocacy Movement Takes Root in Delaware and Otsego Counties

Advocates for equal treatment for alcoholics and other addicts met recently to form a new organization, Advocates of Delaware and Otsego Counties (ADO). A main goal of the group is to increase funding for treatment of addictions and reverse the cutbacks that funding for treatment has received in recent years.

ADO has already met several times at St. James Episcopal Church, Main and Elm Streets, Oneonta. At its most recent meeting, the group discussed plans to travel to Albany to meet with local legislators on Advocacy Day on February 29.

ADO was organized under the aegis of both the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council of Delaware County and its Otsego County counterpart, LEAF, and their respective directors, David Ramsey and Elizabeth Currier.

The new organization will also address such related issues as reducing stigma attached to chemical dependency and treatment parity to insure that alcohol/drug addiction is covered as fully as other diseases. It will also work to guarantee that

chemically dependent persons and their families are not denied the treatment they need under the managed care health system.

The decision to organize was taken in December after Ruth Maxwell, director of the Rockland Advocates, spoke locally about advocacy efforts in Rockland and other counties.

Maxwell pointed out that alcohol and drug addiction was the number three killer in the country, but that New York State had decreased funding for the treatment of alcoholics and addicts by \$25 million. A 1998 effort to restore the funds was vetoed by Governor Pataki, she said.

"To my knowledge," she added, addiction is the only chronic illness that does not have its advocates and constituents....Now is the time to make our voice heard."

Directors Currier and Ramsey stress that membership in ADO is open to the general public as well as those recovering from alcoholism and other addictions. For more information about the advocacy movement, contact ADAC in Delhi at 746-8300.



It's Official!!!

After a lengthy selection process, the Council has adopted a new name: The Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council of Delaware County. The new title replaces the old name, which Council members felt was too long, unwieldy, and difficult to remember. It was: The Delaware County Council for Prevention of Alcohol and Substance Abuse, Inc.

The Council received a number of suggestions for a name change. "In the end," explained director Ramsey, "we opted for brevity and simplicity." The new name and logo (shown above) will soon take its place on all Council documents. Adopting a new name was one of the goals outlined in the Council's strategic plan that will guide the organization's growth through the year 2002.

A Letter from the Director

"What's in a name?" Shakespeare famously once wrote. That is a question we have been asking ever since our Strategic Planning Committee determined that the Council should have a new name. Our goal was simplicity, and our new name (see article this page) achieves that. Not only is it shorter, it is more to the point and easier to remember. It also provides us with a convenient acronym, ADAC, and a dandy new logo.

In one sense, this simplicity is misleading. There is nothing simple about the mission of the Council, which, in fact, grows more complex, as do our times. Children, for example, continue to be at risk at younger and younger ages, and experts now are stressing the importance of continuing prevention education from the early grades through high school and even college.

Parents, too, are being brought into the prevention equation on the theory that schools can not encourage abstinence if the child is receiving conflicting messages at home. Our newest program, Parent to Parent (see insert), helps parents take an active role in their children's upbringing, not only regarding drugs and alcohol but in every aspect of their lives.

So, if our name were truly to reflect our mission, it would have become longer and more complicated, not the reverse. But, that consideration aside, let's just say this about our no-nonsense new name: ADAC suits us fine.

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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 harm of substance abuse.

opinion

Passage to Where?

From time to time, the Council, in the course of offering its services, encounters the attitude that adolescent drinking is a "rite of passage" about which nothing much can be done.

Unfortunately this attitude—that "boys will be boys"—is widespread. In fact, it may be a factor limiting public support of prevention programs such as those the Council offers. Many people do believe that some youthful experimentation with alcohol is inevitable, but simply to dismiss the problem as a rite of passage seems to us foolhardy and a convenient way of side-stepping this difficult issue.

On some fronts we can see entrenched attitudes softening. For example, excessive use of alcohol in fraternity hazing is also a rite of passage. But the hazing has also caused so many tragedies that public opinion is forcing colleges to end it on their campuses. Let's also keep in mind that the vaunted rite of passage is often the first step to long-term addiction, serious injury, and death. Let's ask ourselves: Is this a "rite" we want our children to follow? Is this a passage we want them to take?

Word from the (Recent) Past

“There are people out there who don't know they need us.”

Roger Holger Svendsen,

guest speaker, ADAC annual dinner, November 3, 1999

Expert a Hit at Annual Dinner

At the annual dinner, an expert on the prevention of addictions told more than 100 Council friends and members that successful prevention requires "multiple efforts in multiple areas over time." He also stressed that all segments of the community must become involved.

Roger Holger Svendsen, who is training and program development director of the Minnesota Institute of Public Health, titled his talk, "Preaching to the Choir." While the audience probably did not need to be convinced of the value of prevention, he explained, there are many others in every community "who need to be part of the choir."

Svendsen began by having the audience fill out questionnaires on risk and protective factors that either contributed to or helped prevent addictions among young people. (See questions opposite page.) He then based his talk on the correct answers. If a community is tolerant of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug

use, it is "self-explanatory" its youth will be at risk, he said.

Other risk factors are less obvious. Most parents assume, Svendsen said, that a child with a job "is out of harm's way." In reality, however, an employed youth has extra money to spend and is often exposed to older youths who are using addictive substances. The risk increases if the job replaces family, school, community or church activities.

Young people at low risk include those who value school and religion, and "who believe drug use to be dangerous." He added: "If young people regard a behavior as risky, they tend not to get involved."

Svendsen stressed that youths who begin smoking at an early age are at extremely high risk for use of other addictive substances. "Early tobacco use is not only a gateway to other drug use," he said, "it could be a sign that something else is wrong. It could be stress or depression. But whatever it is, we are often missing it."

ISSUES • IDEAS • NOTES • NOTIONS • NEWS

Drug Quiz

Sixth, seventh and eighth graders from most Delaware County schools will be represented at the regional round of the Ekerd Drug Quiz, an annual event to be held at the Alumni Center at Delhi Tech on February 9. Nearly 30,000 students in New York State take part in the all-day competition.

The process begins in September when participating schools receive a packet of information about tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs for students to study. The winner is determined in May when the final four teams compete in the state championships.

In 1999, a team from Walton Central School defeated Sidney Central in the local finals to win the right to compete in the statewide finals in Syracuse. At Syracuse, the Walton team was eliminated before reaching the final round.

A number of the questions required the students to know both the chemical and street names for a variety of drugs. (Question: What is the street name for LSD? Answer: Passion.) Other questions concerned the effect of drugs and alcohol on young people.

The Ekerd Drug Quiz will be held from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Council members and other interested persons are invited to attend. Volunteers are also needed to help run the event.

Board Changes

Three new members have been added to the Council's Board of Directors, Council director Ramsey announced recently. They are: Diane Aznoe, coordinator of the Rural Health Care Alliance; Father Paul Hartt of St. John's Episcopal Church in Delhi, and Susan Hillstrom, a writer living in Delhi.

The new members were introduced at the annual dinner in November and voted upon at the board meeting in December.

At that time board member Ann

Morris became treasurer of the Council, replacing Mary Beth Silano, whose term had expired. The board also voted that the other officers of the board—president John Butler; vice-chairman Scott Gladstone, and secretary Nancy Deming—remain in office for another term.

In other board changes, John Riedl resigned at the expiration of his term, while Michael Durham resigned to join the Council staff as a prevention educator.

Members Wanted

The Coalition for Healthy and Safe Communities, a group of community leaders and concerned citizens formed last summer to examine the problem of underage drinking in Delaware County, is seeking new members. Interested persons can contact the Council: 746-8300.

Last summer members of a newly formed task force attended a conference on underage drinking in Rye Brook New York that was

sponsored by the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS). On its return, the task force formed CHSC and received a grant to conduct a school survey on alcohol use in grades 7 through 12. The results will be incorporated with a survey conducted by a Communities that Care, a national organization.

Who's on First

At the conclusion of the annual dinner, the Council's Jason Stanton paid tribute to speaker Svendsen's passion for baseball by playing a videotape of the Abbott and Costello classic, "Who's on First?" Stanton also took the opportunity to tout his hometown, Bovina, where Svendsen stayed at the Country House bed and breakfast. In reply, Svendsen praised the hamlet and his accommodations and regaled the audience with a story of how he and Stanton had to chase cows out of the road in order to leave town.

RATING THE RISK

Speaker Roger Svendsen presented this questionnaire to the audience at the Council's annual dinner. Explanations of some answers are contained in the article on page 2.

On a scale of 1 to 5, rate the level of risk that you feel each type of youth has for alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use. "1" equals lowest risk; "5" highest. Each question begins: "Young people who..."

- A ...feel school is important
- B ...live in communities with norms tolerant of use.
- C ...work for pay.
- D ...are involved in structured alternative activities
- E ...have friend who use alcohol or marijuana.
- F ...attend worship services regularly.
- G ...have a larger than average amount of spending money.
- H ...report being comfortable talking with their parents.
- I ...spend many evenings a week out for fun.
- J ...begin smoking at an early age.
- K ...have clear educational aspirations.
- L ...feel connected to families, friends, school, and community.
- M ...say their parents would be upset if they used alcohol.
- N ...believe drug use to be dangerous.
- O ...value religion as important.

ANSWERS: A...2; B...3; C...4; D...2; E...5; F...2; G...4; H...3; I...4; J...5; K...2; L...1; M...1; N...2; O...2. Adapted from "Walking the Talk," Minnesota Prevention Resource Center, 1996

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Alcohol Use Levels Off; Drug Reduces Craving

Although there was a steady decline in alcohol consumption in the U.S. in the 1980s, a report shows a leveling off in the 1990s, Reuters reported Jan. 8. A report by Dr. Thomas K. Greenfield of the Alcohol Research Group in Berkeley, Calif., and colleagues from the University of California, Berkeley, found a decrease in heavy drinking from 1984 to 1990, but no change in alcohol consumption between 1990 and 1995. The researchers concluded, "The suggestion that the overall decline is flattening and may be ending should not go unnoticed by the public health community." The report is published in the January issue of the American Journal of Public Health.

Naltrexone Reduces Craving in Heavy Drinkers

Naltrexone, an opiate antagonist used to treat alcohol dependence, works both by reducing the urge to consume alcohol and by making drinking less pleasurable, according to an article published by the journal, Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research. Researchers compared the effects of naltrexone vs. placebo on drinking in a bar setting in a sample of heavy beer drinkers.

Subjects were randomly assigned to receive either 50 mg/day of naltrexone or an identical placebo. After seven days of treatment, subjects' alcohol consumption was tested. Investigators found that the naltrexone group members consumed fewer beers (3 .4 vs. 3 .9) and took longer to finish the beers. The subjects reported less urge to drink, found drinking less stimulating, and reported fewer positive effects while drinking.

Subjects were gathered in a local bar or restaurant and their drinking was videotaped to determine how much they drank; how long to their first sip of beer; and how long it took them to finish a beer.

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