

9th Annual Middlesex County Prevention Education Summit Held

130 professionals, including educators, law enforcement officials, municipal alliance members and health care and substance abuse providers attended the ninth annual Middlesex County Prevention Education Summit (formerly known as the Middlesex County Drug Summit) held June 10th at the Middlesex County Fire Academy.

As in previous years, this year's event focused on several important addiction prevention issues including gangs in New Jersey, cyberbullying, substance abuse treatment trends, and overall trends in drug use and abuse.

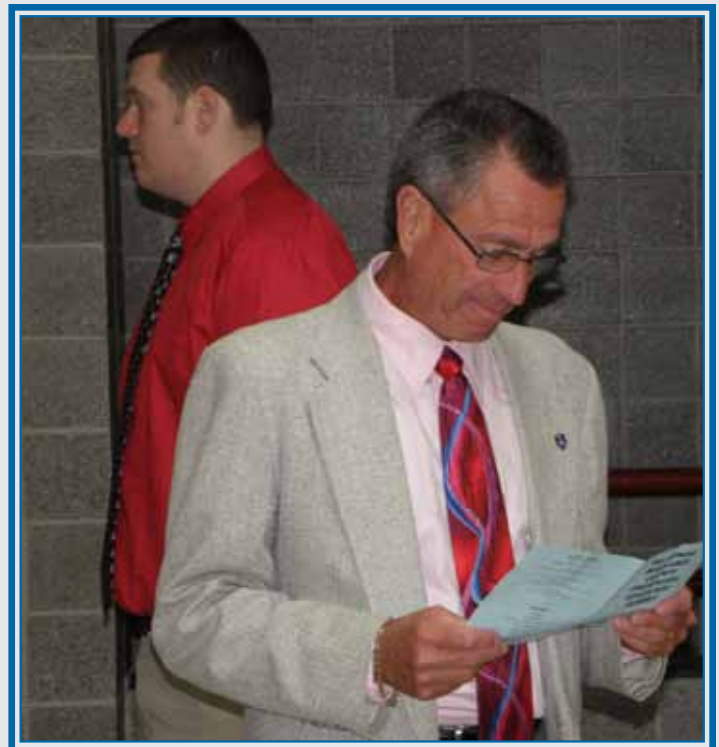
The event was sponsored by the Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) New Jersey Division, the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office, the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD) of Middlesex County, Inc. and the Coalition for Healthy Communities, Princeton House Behavioral Health, Rutgers University Police Department and Jannarone Consulting Services.

Attendees were welcomed to the event by Middlesex County Freeholder Ronald Rios and Brian Crowell, Special Agent in Charge of the DEA's New Jersey Division.

Investigator John Marotta of the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office delivered a presentation on gangs in New Jersey. In addition to discussing the latest trends, Investigator Marotta also provided tips on the different gang identifiers, including tattoos, graffiti and clothing.

Two afternoon breakout sessions featured a

presentation on treatment trends by Jackie Zaremba, Doctorate Nurse Practitioner from Princeton House Behavioral Health, as well as a presentation titled "Sticks & Stones/Cyberbullying" presented by Investigators Suzanne Kowalski and Nicole Ducca of the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office. The program featured a presentation of the "Sticks & Stones" video created by the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office. The final presentation featured DEA Special Agent Doug Collier who spoke about current drug trends.



Freeholder Ronald G. Rios preparing to welcome attendees to the 9th annual Middlesex County Prevention Education Summit

Additional event images are on page 2

Images From the 9th Annual Middlesex County Prevention Education Summit



Pictured above are: (left top) Brian Crowell, Special Agent in Charge DEA-NJ delivering welcoming remarks; (left middle) Investigators Suzanne Kowalski and Nicole Ducca of the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office during their "Sticks & Stones/Cyberbullying" presentation ; (left bottom); Jackie Zaremba, Doctorate Nurse Practitioner from Princeton House Behavioral Health speaking on treatment trends; (above top) Summit attendees visiting information tables staffed by various area organizations; (above middle) Lt. Andrea Crapparotta, Middlesex County Prosecutors Office speaking to attendees during welcoming ceremonies; (below left) Investigator John Marotta of the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office speaking to "Gangs in New Jersey"; (below right) and DEA Special Agent Doug Collier who spoke about current drug trends.



YCLA Members Say Adios.....But Never Goodbye

By Melissa Paulino, YCLA member

On a hot June day, two dozen members of the Youth Community Leadership Academy (YCLA) in Perth Amboy High School got together at the Perth Amboy Community Center to celebrate graduating seniors while bringing to a close another successful year.

The YCLA is an after-school program for Perth Amboy High School students. It features a curriculum intended to educate and empower students to engage in civic process, so they can act as effective youth participants in community bodies that impact the revitalization of Perth Amboy.

The group's focus is on community issues important to teens. Participants identify the YCLA's legislative priorities for the year, determine which community bodies students will seek to join, and plan YCLA activities to be undertaken independently of the community bodies.

Participants in the year-end finale shared memorable moments of the past year's many after-school meetings and events. The students were able to play board games, video games and pool. They enjoyed a meal together and graduating seniors received parting gifts from Jason Victor, NCADD Preventionist and group leader.

In my opinion, this event stood out the most because we all had fun as a team and as a family. Because of this wonderful event, I strongly believe that we will all work hard together, be there for each other, and communicate as a whole in any YCLA-related events to serve our community. I know that with our hearts and minds we won't fail, we will succeed.



Pictured in top image on right and getting ready for dinner are: Emily Collado, Liliana Riberio, Melissa Paulino, Thuy Tran, Jeniffer Roldan, Monica Santos, Stevi Guzman, Cheryl Estetevez, and Margie Gutierrez. Pictured in the middle image playing board games are Liliana Riberio, Chung Cheng, Stevi Guzman, Roberto Cardoso, Monica Santos, and Rosa Luna. And playing pool in bottom image are Chang Cheng, Jason Victor, Rosa Luna, and Kevin Leitan.

WISE Program Graduates Senior Adults in Highland Park

Recently, NCADD of Middlesex County completed delivery of a Wellness Initiative for Senior Education (WISE) program at the Highland Park Senior Center. With the help of Kim Perkins, senior program coordinator at the Highland Park Senior/Youth Center and her staff, over 30 area residents attended the weekly classes.

Evaluations provided by some of the participating seniors indicate that they truly enjoyed the experience. Some of their comments included: "I found the program very valuable because it provided a better understanding of aging and the physical, emotional and societal changes associated with aging"; or, "That all people are equal and you should respect the elderly. That if you keep yourself young on the inside the better you will fair on the outside." Finally, one senior participant noted "Older people have wisdom they can pass on to younger people."

The WISE program is a wellness and prevention program targeting older adults created by the New Jersey Prevention Network

(NJPN) and implemented locally by NJPN member agencies such as NCADD.

WISE promotes health through education concerning high-risk behaviors in older adults. The WISE Program is designed to help older adults in New Jersey celebrate healthy aging, make healthy lifestyle choices and avoid substance abuse. The curriculum is designed to take place once per week over a six-week period. Each lesson is two to three hours and includes breakfast or lunch.

Since the program was launched in 1996, WISE has reached over 40,000 senior adults in New Jersey. It has provided valuable educational services to older adults on topics including nutrition and exercise, medication use, stress management, grief and loss, depression and substance abuse.

Interested in having WISE delivered at you senior center or retirement community in Middlesex County? Call NCADD at 732-254-3344 or email us at mail@ncadd-middlesex.org.



Pictured above are many of the senior adults who recently participated and completed the WISE program at the Highland Park Senior/Youth Center.

Acts of Prevention Troupe “Wows” Audiences Throughout County

Thanks to a grant from the United Way of Central Jersey, NCADD’s *Acts of Prevention* has been performing at various Middlesex County high schools.

Acts of Prevention is a unique and exciting program developed in response to the changing needs of our youth. It is based upon a collaborative relationship between the arts and prevention and NCADD offers this program to schools, communities and agencies. The program is educational, fun and empowering for individuals of all ages. The script chosen for this grant is FADE, an original one act drop-out prevention play for ninth graders.

Like all the one act plays for the *Acts of Prevention* troupe, FADE is designed to link education to an emotional impact, anchoring its message in the minds of the students who view the performance. By depicting multiple situations that could lead a student to consider dropping out of high school and the consequences associated with those decisions, FADE hopes to improve students’ connection and commitment to school, reducing the dropout rate.

NCADD has found that the effects of the program last well beyond the day of the performance. Teachers and school counselors consistently report back that the play has prompted in-class discussions in multiple class subjects, as well as increased referrals to school counselors, both by classroom teachers and student self-referrals.

Acts of Prevention delivers FADE performance to the ninth grade student bodies at area high schools because research points to the ninth grade as the most significant year related to drop out rates, with over thirty percent of student dropouts occurring in the ninth grade – at least a year before they turn sixteen. Ninth grade is a particularly difficult transition time for youth, as students from multiple elementary or middle schools come together in a much larger environment. Personal attention is reduced and students who are behind fall further behind quickly. In addition to academic difficulties, lack of social engagement

is also highly correlated with dropping out.

Since January, FADE performances have taken place at the Middlesex County Vocational and Technical High Schools in East Brunswick, Piscataway and Woodbridge, New Brunswick High School, North Brunswick High School, Perth Amboy High School, Wardlaw-Hartidge, Raritan Academy and South Amboy High School.

Programs are available to an agency, school or organization please contact us 732-254-3344 or via email at actsofprevention@ncadd-middlesex.org.



Above picture was taken at Rartian Valley Academy on May 18th and features: (back row) Abena Mensah-Bonsu, Johnathan Carratura, John Katchisin, Travis A. Morgan, as well as (front row) Chris Mallari, Marites Mallari, Nicole Brown, Denise Reed, Keri Brown



Taken at South Amboy High School on May 24th, the above picture features: (back row) Nicole Brown, Keri Brown, Travis A. Morgan, Johnathan Carratura, Chris Mallari, Karen Agatep and (front row) Denise Reed, Marites Mallari

Coalition for Healthy Communities News

Coalition to Hold Second Annual “Shop ‘Til You Drop” Event

The Coalition for Healthy Communities invites area businesses to participate in its second annual Shop “Till You Drop” fundraiser. The event will take place on Sunday, November 20, 2011 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Princeton Hotel in South Brunswick.

This is a great opportunity for local businesses to offer their products to hundreds of individuals and families from the surrounding area, during a time when holiday shopping is on their minds. Advance marketing will promote each vendor’s participation and draw shoppers. The Coalition’s 200-plus members will promote the event through their organizations and communities.

Vendors’ donations will support the Coalition for Healthy Communities, an initiative of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD) of Middlesex County, Inc. The Coalition is committed to reduce substance abuse among youth and strengthen the community through education, advocacy, networking, and collaboration.

The public is invited to this unique event where they can browse among vendors offering popular and unique gift items. Massage therapists will be on hand to offer chair massages and there’s even a special kid’s section for young shoppers to select gifts for family and friends. Girl Scouts will serve as special personal shoppers to assist the children. Snacks and beverages will be available for purchase by event attendees.

For information and to obtain a vendor agreement, contact Linda Surks at 732-254-3344.

Pharmacist Dinner Workshop Held

By Megan Knecht, Coalition Member

Over 30 pharmacists attended the Coalition’s “Pharmacist Dinner Workshop, Addressing the Issues of Prescription Drug Abuse,” which was held earlier this month at the East Brunswick Chateau. A wide range of community pharmacists attended including from the areas of retail, hospital, and industry.

Co-sponsored by NCADD’s Coalition for Healthy Communities and Reckitt Benckiser, pharmacists were provided with two C.E. credits and a valuable toolkit filled with pharmacy bags, stickers, and information on federal disposal guidelines to bring back to their site of practice.

Speakers included Dr. Jeff Berman from Bergen Regional Medical Center and Linda Surks, Coalition Coordinator and NCADD Preventionist. Dr. Berman provided a detailed presentation on pain management and the opioid dependent patient. His presentation highlighted the reward center of the brain and the effects of these drugs.

Mrs. Surks shared local and national trends of prescription and over-the-counter drug abuse in the population, including alarming statistics of teen use and the take back programs established for both prescription and OTC drugs.

“For many pharmacists this workshop provided them with insight into prescription drug abuse,” said Mrs. Surks, “we hope these workshops provide them with the tools and information they need to combat this problem.”

Due to the program’s success, NCADD and Reckitt Benckiser are hoping to provide an additional workshop during the fall 2011 timeframe.

Underage Drinking Task Force Holds “Spring Fest” for Alcohol Awareness at Rutgers

By Lauren Johnson, Intern

Whoever said it was impossible to talk to college students about responsible drinking must not have heard about NCADD’s Spring Fest for Alcohol Awareness.

Earlier this spring, an outdoor tabling event was held at Rutgers University in New Brunswick to shine light on the issue of dangerous drinking. Students and other passersby were drawn to the colorful tables, where they received an NCADD water bottle with a useful Lifeline Legislation wallet card inside.

These cards provided brief tips for students who go out, such as “Eat a meal before you leave,” and “Have a code word with your friends to signal that it’s time to go or someone is in trouble.” The card also lists signs of alcohol poisoning and steps to take if someone is in trouble. We hope that students keep these with them or share them with their friends.

NCADD interns, volunteers, and staff helped to make this event a success. 200 students responded to our survey regarding their opinions about the culture of college drinking.

Aside from providing helpful brochures, NCADD

representatives answered students’ questions and demonstrated how someone would walk a line wearing Fatal Vision Goggles, which simulate intoxication.



NCADD intern Agnes Radziszewska dons Fatal Vision Goggles and shows attendees “how it is done.”

With a generous beverage donation from Pepsi and an abundance of other snacks and giveaways, our event drew a lot of interest, despite the fact that it was held on a not-so-sunny Friday right before a holiday weekend.

To implement the Spring Fest for Alcohol Awareness event, NCADD partnered with Rutgers’ Residence Life, Rutgers Health Services, and the Rutgers University Programming Association (RUPA). With the long term goals of raising awareness and decreasing alcohol-related harms, we hope to hold similar events in the future and get students involved in our efforts.



Pictured above are tables staffed by NCADD interns and volunteers at the Spring Fest for Alcohol Awareness event held on the Rutgers University campus in New Brunswick. Students who stopped by participated in completing a survey, enjoying refreshments and partaking of the many giveaways provided. In the image on right, NCADD interns Lauren Johnson and Agnes Radziszewska display some of the giveaways that were available to students who stopped by.

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Since 2003, the mission of the Middlesex County Coalition for Healthy Communities has been to reduce substance abuse, especially among youth. Individuals from many disciplines come together at Coalition meetings to network, share ideas and experiences, and collaborate on events for the benefit of the community at large. The Coalition is seeking new members to join the Underage Drinking Task Force.

Underage drinking is a serious public health issue, which is often minimized by the media, youth, and even parents. Often dismissed with statements such as, "It's just a beer," or "At least he/she isn't doing drugs," the truth is that alcohol is a drug—the drug of choice among children and adolescents. In fact, the average age of first use in New Jersey is 11 years old. Furthermore, nearly half (48.1%) of Middlesex County middle school students have used alcohol sometime in their lifetimes, according to the Coalition's own survey of middle and high school students in Middlesex County. Additionally, many underage drinkers obtain alcohol easily, usually from their parents, in their homes, or from other adults.

By joining the Coalition, you can help spotlight this problem and help to change community norms regarding its acceptance. Your efforts can help to educate parents about how to talk to their children about alcohol use; to persuade local municipalities to pass ordinances which deter underage drinking; to work with local businesses to decrease marketing strategies to attract those under age 21; and to help promote friendly, alcohol-free places where teens can gather.

Remember, even a little time, coupled with a passion for prevention, can effect big change. For more information or to join, please contact Christina Vanpala at NCADD at 732-254-3344 or via email christinav@ncadd-middlesex.org.