



Metro Jackson Community Prevention Coalition

QUARTERLY ALERT

Prevention News to Use

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Metro Jackson Community Prevention Coalition is to reduce factors that lead to alcohol, tobacco and other drug use and increase resiliency factors of adolescents, children and families in high-risk environments in Jackson, Miss.

CALENDAR

Bi-Monthly Coalition Meeting

- June 2, 2007
- August 4, 2007
- October 6, 2007

Summer Teen Camp

- July 21 - 25, 2007
- Wall Doxey State Park
- Holly Springs, Miss.

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“Closing out 2007, looking toward 2008”

Metro Jackson CPC holds annual year-end celebration

On Friday, Dec. 14, 2007 at 7 p.m., Metro Jackson Community Prevention Coalition (MJCPC) held its 16th Annual End-of-the-Year Celebration at Center Stage of the Jackson Medical Mall.

The celebration’s theme: *“Closing Out 2007 - Looking Toward 2008,”* was inspired by the words of Dr. Martin L. King Jr., *“Faith can give us the courage to face the uncertainties of the future.”* MJCPC celebrated the successes the coalition accomplished in 2007 and looked toward the challenges of 2008.

Dr. Eileen Ewing, State of Mississippi Department of Mental Health/Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Abuse special projects coordinator, who served as the keynote speaker presented an inspiring message. She pointed out that we should use our God-given gifts. *“God has blessed us all with gifts. When you have a gift, He wants you to use it,”* she said.

Dr. Ewing’s presentation emphasized how Metro Jackson Community Prevention Coalition staff members used their gifts in 2007 and offered advice for the coming year. *“As we go into 2008, if we just use our gifts for the benefit of the whole, we will most definitely have a much, much better 2008,”* she said.

Dr. Ewing reminded us that *“all He wants us to do is be faithful, not just take our gifts and bury them in the sand,”* which is why MJCPC was celebrating.

Reflecting on the accomplishments of the past year, Alvin L. Clark, MJCPC program manager, said, *“As we know, the number seven represents completion. We have completed the task that was set before us for 2007. We will now initiate new beginnings that will enhance and revolutionize the attitudes and energy of the youth, their communities and future undertakings.”*

“A special thanks to the Walton

Elementary School Choir for their angelic voices which uplifted our spirits, to William King, Walton Elementary School music teacher, the parents, family and friends who gave so willingly of their time and support and to our guest speaker, Dr. Ewing, who spoke eloquently about the need for knowledge,” said Angelia Gooden, training specialist.

“Our End-of-the-Year Celebration has really grown. Since the start time was changed from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m., more of our constituents are coming out to support this event. As we continue to grow, we remain very committed to providing our partners and constituents with outstanding service. So, when I looked out over the audience, I was thrilled that the people we provided services to were right there supporting us for the End-of-the-Year Celebration,” said Terry Bennett, outreach worker.

The program was dedicated to the late Ora Perkins in honor of her contributions to MJCPC during her longtime membership.

“I knew by the expressions on the faces of the Perkins family members that they were pleased and appreciative to MJCPC for dedicating the program to their mother and sister. Also, Dr. Ewing touched the audience with her presentation. I would like to give a



Terry Bennett, Angelia Gooden, Dr. Eileen Ewing, Brenda Lexing Gilmore, Velesha P. Williams and Alvin L. Clark attended the MJCPC year-end celebration.

“Closing out 2007, looking toward 2008”

Metro Jackson CPC holds annual year-end celebration continued

special thanks to our Peer Educators and their parents who participated on the program. I know next year, if it is the Lord’s will, we will need to prepare for more people at the End-of-the-Year Celebration,” Bennett added.

What were we celebrating? MJCPC had a number of achievements to celebrate. Most notably, MJCPC was consistent in holding its bi-monthly coalition meetings throughout 2007. Strategy meetings to create a drug-free Jackson were held Feb. 19, April 16, June 11, Aug. 13 and Oct. 8 with excellent attendance and member participation.

Leadership development for the staff has empowered them with information and confidence to deliver evidence-based interventions to our community. The staff was able to attend and receive ongoing prevention certification training at the CADCA Mid-Year Training Institute held in Washington, D.C., and at the 31st Annual Mississippi Summer School of Alcohol/Drug Studies held in Choctaw, Miss.

Student leadership training was conducted through ongoing Prevention Education Training-of-Trainers (TOT) for our Peer Educators and their attendance at the Youth Leadership

Conference hosted by DREAM, Inc. of Hattiesburg. These leadership development activities helped to ensure new leadership in the ongoing battle to make Metro Jackson violence- and drug-free. The Peer Educators also were trained during the Summer Teen Camp, in Hattiesburg at Paul B. Johnson State Park. Forty young people spent a week in the woods in communal cabins getting the TOT to prepare themselves to train their peers in substance abuse prevention.

MJCPC was also celebrating the implementation of its Life Skills Training Program at Johnson Elementary School and at Walton Elementary School’s 21st Century After-school Program. After being absent in the Jackson Public Schools for a couple of years, MJCPC is again promoting health and personal development with the Life Skills Training curriculum. Life Skills empowers students to resist the temptation of ATOD (alcohol, tobacco and other drugs) use and abuse by teaching self-esteem, decision-making, providing smoking information, understanding advertising, dealing with stress and communication skills. In addition, MJCPC implemented Project ALERT Training at the Farish Street YMCA to instill in youth the same values and character traits that are taught in the Life Skills Training Program.

At the Henley-Young Juvenile Justice Center, MJCPC implemented its Adolescent Prevention/Intervention Program (AP/IP). The AP/IP is a series of ten training workshops designed to help adolescents develop life coping skills that reduce drug use, violence, school dropout and teen pregnancy. MJCPC’s relationship with the Henley-Young Juvenile Justice Center dates back to 1998.

Another point of celebration was the Summer Enrichment Community Prevention Education presentations.

The sites for these presentations included: Medgar Evers Community Center, Powell Middle School, Battlefield Community Center, Whitten Middle School, Farish Street YMCA, Grove Park Community Center, Neighborhood Christian Center and Boyd Elementary School. MJCPC staff were quite busy providing prevention education for these summer programs.

MJCPC gave Red Ribbon Week presentations at Galloway Elementary School and the Henley-Young Juvenile Justice Center.

“Our history with the Henley-Young Juvenile Justice Center, Galloway Elementary School and others makes doing these presentations special and worth celebrating,” Clark stated.

The public relations strategies for MJCPC were also a cause for celebration. “The airing and re-airing on the Public Access Channel of MJCPC’s special appearance on *Harambee For Reparations* to discuss MJCPC’s mission to reduce substance



Nakia Walker, peer educator, provided entertainment during the MJCPC year-end celebration. Walker, who was an 12th grade student attending Jim Hill High School at the time, performed a stirring rendition of *O Holy Night*.

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MJCPC year-end celebration continued

use and abuse in the Metro Jackson area gave us reason to celebrate, as did the taping and airing of our peer educators' special appearance on the show to discuss the Youth Advocacy Initiative on substance use/abuse prevention. We also were excited about the three issues of MJCPC's newsletter, *The Quarterly Alert*, two of which were posted on the Jackson State University Web site by the JSU Public Relations Office," said Clark.

MJCPC staff disseminated prevention information at several venues: the National Alcohol Screening Day; the Jackson Public School District-wide Annual Parent's Conference, National Alcohol & Drug Addiction Recovery Month, Jackson State University Social Worker Conference, Presidential Hills Youth Rally and the Spirit of Safety Conference.

The 2007 Peer Educator Graduation Ceremony was emotional and inspiring. Having three intelligent, beautiful and personable young ladies praise MJCPC for contributing to their growth, development and drug-free status is reason for everyone to celebrate. As always, the annual Take Our Daughters and Sons To Work Day event was a major hit with students and the professionals who adopted a student for the day. Both the students and the professionals were impressed with and learned much from one another. The shadowing of the professionals, the luncheon and the awards ceremony made the day memorable and worth celebrating at the end of the year.

Finally, the collaborations MJCPC had throughout the year solidified the merits of the coalition. The Region IX Prevention Coalition's Youth Working Together for a Healthy Lifestyle Festival - Fun Day, Mississippi Meth Watch Merchant's Training and Synar Merchant's Trainings strengthened the messages of substance abuse prevention dispersed all year long by Metro Jackson Community Prevention Coalition. "We had a lot to celebrate and we celebrated a lot!" Clark stated.



Michael Perkins (center) was presented a plaque during the year-end celebration in honor of his late mother, Ora Perkins, who contributed outstanding service to MJCPC. Looking on are: Terry Bennett, Angelia Gooden, Bettye Lyons, Dr. Eileen Ewing, Velesha P. Williams, Sharon Perkins, Alvin L. Clark and Brenda Lexing Gilmore.

Peer educator Kenisha Bennett profiled



Kenisha C. Bennett

Kenisha Chante Bennett became involved with the Peer Educator Program in August 1999 thanks to her mother, Terry Bennett, who is employed as an outreach worker with the Metro Jackson Community Prevention Coalition. Bennett will graduate from Provine High School as a member of the Class of 2008. Her hobbies include going out with friends, talking on the phone, reading, babysitting and shopping.

Bennett plans to become a traveling nurse after finishing at either Hinds Community College or the University of Southern Mississippi. Her favorites include: "Live Life to the Fullest" (quote), math (school subject), R&B (music), *Saw II* (movie), pizza (food) and yellow (color). She calls Markus Wells her best friend and her cousin, Marie Hamilton, as the person she most admires.

Kenisha said, "I like my role of being a peer educator because I enjoy helping others. I love having people look up to me."

"There is no doubt that people will look up to Kenisha," said Alvin L. Clark, MJCPC program manager. According to Clark, "Kenisha is destined for success because of her desire. Kenisha makes me think of the words of Roscoe Dunjee who said, 'Some people succeed because they are destined to, but most people succeed because they are determined to.' MJCPC's challenge was to get her to decide what she wanted to succeed at. Time will be the judge of our success, but preliminary indications are she is on her way."

According to Angelia Gooden, MJCPC training specialist, "Kenisha Bennett is a very active peer educator. She exemplifies strong leadership skills and she has an excellent rapport working with her peers. She demonstrates the ability to complete assigned tasks and is a strong initiator. I feel that she will excel in any endeavor she chooses. I am grateful to have had an opportunity to educate and advise Kenisha as one of our peer educators."

Bennett said, "Kenisha started coming to work with me at the age of eight. She always wanted to give assistance and participate in the peer educator activities but I would tell her that she had to wait until she got old enough. Kenisha is always willing to give a helping hand and do whatever she can."

Bennett said, "The message that I send to my daughter, Kenisha, is that I do not love you because of what you have done, but because of what you do, even when you did not have to do it."

Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drug Use Prevention Links

Freevibe.com

Freevibe.com is a service of the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign, which is a multi-dimensional effort to educate and empower youth to reject illicit drugs. The campaign uses a variety of media to reach parents and youth, including TV ads, educational materials, Web sites, and publications. The campaign's messages reach Americans wherever they live, work, learn, and play.

Freevibe.com compiles and shares the most interesting news stories from around the country. It features tales of teen heroism and courage as well as hard-hitting true life accounts of abuse and addiction. New stories are added on a weekly basis, so check back often... or send them a link if you know about a story that should be featured.

The AntiDrug.org

TheAntiDrug.com was created by the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign to equip parents and other adult caregivers with the tools they need to raise drug-free kids. Working with the nation's leading experts in the fields of parenting and substance abuse prevention, TheAntiDrug.com serves as a drug prevention information center, and a supportive community for parents to interact and learn from each other. The site provides parents and other adult caregivers access to: helpful articles and advice from experts in the fields of parenting and substance abuse prevention; science-based drug prevention information, news and studies; support from other parents striving to keep their children drug-free and perspectives of teens themselves.

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