



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

Peer Educator Training of Trainers
Nov. 19-20, 2007
Dec. 8, 2007

End-of-the-Year Celebration
Dec. 14, 2007

CONTENTS

Page 1
MJCPC holds training of trainers at Paul B. Johnson State Park

Page 2
MJCPC holds training of trainers at Paul B. Johnson State Park continued

Page 3
MJCPC holds training of trainers at Paul B. Johnson State Park continued

Page 4
Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drug Use Prevention Links

The Summer Teen Camp Experience

MJCPC holds training of trainers at Paul B. Johnson State Park

Who knew that getting out of Jackson for a weeklong training of trainers would have such a profound impact on 35 youngsters traveling to Paul B. Johnson State Park in Hattiesburg, Miss. The beauty of nature seems to have had a soothing effect on them. The Peer Educator candidates immediately settled into the tranquil environment and were ready for the substance abuse prevention training experience they were promised by Metro Jackson Community Prevention Coalition

After some preliminary housekeeping chores, the MJCPC staff and camp counselors got right into the week-long training-of-trainers curriculum. Project Director Velesha P. Williams kicked it off with a session titled, *Ethnic and Gender Pride*. According to Williams, this session was important because it addressed issues of practicing healthy life choices by teaching the youth to look within themselves and recognize the pride that exists in being a male or female African-American.

Students participated in an activity in which they defined for themselves what it means to be a "strong black man" and a "strong black woman." Additionally, students played "African American Achievements: The Game," which displayed their knowledge of black history. A very important component of Peer Educators' prevention training is language familiarity. Oftentimes, MJCPC uses games to reinforce learning. In this case, MJCPC set up a password competition using vocabulary words from the prevention field. "The students seem to really enjoy the competition. But more importantly, they gained a better grasp of the words and their meanings," said Alvin L. Clark, MJCPC program manager. After three rounds of competition, Shelby Ford and Coby Michael emerged as the winners. Ebony Greenfield and Ariel Kinsey were the runners-up.

The Talent Showcase gave the students the opportunity to show off their skills. Singing, dancing, poetry recitals, biblical quotations were the talents of choice for the students. Unfortunately, they could not compete with the staff and counselors who had age and experience on their side. Williams teamed up with some of the students for an original rap titled "Stay In School."

After a night of recreation, the business of prevention training resumed. *Drug Abuse and Violence: Causes and Effects* was the topic. Terry Bennett, MJCPC outreach worker, took the students through the standard regimen of coming to understand the consequences of substance abuse and the subsequent possibility of violence that results from alcohol, tobacco and drug use. This session provided students with the tools to teach the prevention message to their peers.

A session on *Media Influence* followed the *Drug and Alcohol: Cause & Effects* session. Clark informed students about how the tobacco and alcohol industries use the media to entice young people to initiate first-use of their products. After looking at the various media sources,



MJCPC youth leaders strategize during a summer teen camp breakout session.

*The Summer Teen Camp Experience***MJCPC holds training of trainers at Paul B. Johnson State Park continued**

these companies use to get their messages out and the life-long impact of substance use, the students put big tobacco and liquor manufacturers on trial.

During the mock trial, testimony from victims of the subliminal messages in television and magazine advertisements and survivors of disease caused by substance use showed the impact that the target marketing by tobacco and liquor manufacturers had on their lives. The unwillingness of the manufacturers to take the stand further convinced the jury of the



Dr. Linda Vasquez, (left) Dream, Inc., Hattiesburg, demonstrates an energizer exercise with Ja'Ohn Bennett (right) during a summer teen camp group training .

The Quarterly Alert is published by the Metro Jackson Community Prevention Coalition, Mississippi Urban Research Center at Jackson State University, for its members and the general public. Inquiries regarding *The Quarterly Alert* may be directed to: MJCPC, JSU Box 18120, Jackson, Mississippi 39217; Telephone: (601) 982-0861; Fax: (601) 982-0795; Web site: www.murc.org/mjcpc/mjcpc.

Velesha P. Williams: Executive Editor

Angelia Gooden: Managing Editor

Pamela McCoy: Copy Editor

Terry Bennett, Alvin L. Clark: Staff Writers

Lee E. Campbell II: Graphic Artist

unscrupulousness and liability that the accused had for targeting youth consumers.

In the end, the jury convicted the “big-timers” of product liability and social endangerment and awarded the community \$100 billion to be used in community rehabilitation and legitimate prevention and education projects. The MJCPC Peer Educator Project was designated as a model prevention/education project for youth education and intervention by the court.

One special event at the Summer Teen Camp was the Leadership Development workshop provided by Dr. Linda Vasquez, DREAM, Inc., Hattiesburg. Dr. Vasquez brought several members of her youth leadership development crew to assist in presenting energizers and icebreakers for group training. The workshop had the youth on their feet and on their “p’s and q’s” as they experienced and learned the nuances of controlling a training session. Dr. Vasquez seemed as impressed with the peer educators as they were with her and her crew.

As a change of pace from the classroom setting, the students competed in the MJCPC Olympics. Divided into two teams, the students competed in the belly ball race, the balloon inflation race, the wheelbarrow race, the hula hoop race and kickball. The MJCPC Olympics allowed the students to get outdoors for some much needed physical fitness excretion.

The final few days of the weeklong excursion were heavy with prevention/education training. Jonathan Harris, senior peer educator, conducted the *Power of Peer Pressure* session. The emphasis of this session was on understanding the subtleties of the negative influences cohorts can have on you. Especially important were the counter strategies students can use to battle negative peer pressure.

The *Assertiveness* session was conducted by Angelia Gooden, MJCPC training specialist. Gooden said, “Assertiveness is being able to stand up for yourself calmly and firmly. We discovered that by practicing assertive skills, students may begin to feel comfortable with them. We found a lot of our students were passive, several of them were assertive and a couple of them were aggressive. When we got down to each behavior and its definition, the students learned that when faced with real situations, they may be more likely to call on the behaviors we practiced in class and feel capable of reacting in the appropriate way.”

Jean Michael, camp counselor, conducted the

The Summer Teen Camp Experience

MJCPC holds training of trainers at Paul B. Johnson State Park continued

Abstinence Education session. Understanding the correlation between substance use and sexual activity was pointed out to the students, as well as the importance of treasuring your temple. Michael gave them examples of the emotional consequences and life-changing impact of becoming sexually active too early.



Terry Bennett, MJPCPC outreach worker, and Jean Michael, demonstrate the belly ball race.

During the wrap-up of the summer teen camp, Clark was charged with the responsibility of connecting each of the topics to prevention/education. The title used to convey this was *Youth Coalition-Building*. Clark

explained to the students the importance of being able to rationalize and articulate the connection of substance use/abuse prevention to training they received during the camp. As peer educators, the students understand the importance of educating their cohorts about the topics discussed during the training camp.

“The sense of understanding and commitment that we got from the students affirmed the staff’s confidence in the students and the summer teen camp training approach,” said Williams.

At the close of the summer teen camp, students participated in a Team Talent Competition which gave them the opportunity to form teams and take the lessons of the week and present them as an “edutaining” theatrical production. Both teams did an outstanding job of capturing the overall theme of all the workshops into a single message. Team A dramatized a scenario which depicted a teenager attending a party at which alcohol and other drugs were used and then deciding to drive drunk. The prevention message was explicit and powerful; substance abuse and driving can cause excruciating pain, unchangeable dismemberment and debilitating emotional stress to self and others. The team dramatized that prevention is the best option for these conditions.

Team B preformed a dramatization of what happens at a party when a young lady has a “mickey” slipped into her drink. From dangers associated with “date rape drugs” to the retaliatory response of a rape victim’s loved one, this dramatization also had a definitive and authoritative message: caution in a party setting is the best prevention to personal harm and retaliatory violence.

The MJPCPC staff praised the students highly for their creative and vigorous spirits in putting together the superb messages. The challenge to the staff is to identify outlets for the students to get the message out to their peers, parents and the community in order to reduce the factors that lead to alcohol, tobacco and other drug usage in the metro Jackson area.



Peer educators acquire skills needed to communicate information to their peer groups by practicing their presentation techniques. (Left photo) Ariel Kinsey and Daniel Russell and (right photo) B. J. Williams and Wyatt Sutton take turns during a “teach-back” session to demonstrate the skills they learned.

Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drug Use Prevention Links

The Parent Corps

The Parent Corps is a new, national effort dedicated to helping parents prevent their children from using alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs. Modeled on the same principles as the Peace Corps, it harnesses the power of parents working together to keep their children drug free. The Parent Corps recruits, trains, certifies and pays part-time or full-time salaries to Parent Leaders for two years of service. It institutionalizes the parent movement of the late 1970s into the early 1990s. That movement proved it could change social norms and get results, cutting past-month drug use by two-thirds among adolescents and young adults between 1979 and 1992.

Web site address: <http://www.nationalfamilies.org/>

Join Together

Join Together leads initiatives to help communities respond to the harms caused by excessive alcohol and drug use and provides free Internet services supporting their efforts. Learn about Join Together's current Web-based services and other programs.

Web site address: <http://www.jointogether.org/aboutus/>

Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP)

The principal purpose of the ONDCP is to establish policies, priorities, and objectives for the nation's drug control program. The goals of the program are to reduce illicit drug use, manufacturing, and trafficking, drug-related crime and violence, and drug-related health consequences.

Web site address: <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/about/index.html>

MJCPC STAFF

Velesha P. Williams

Project Director
601-979-1402

Alvin L. Clark

Program Manager
601-982-0861

Terry Bennett

Outreach Worker
601-982-0861

Angelia C. Gooden

Training Specialist
601-979-1173

Brenda Lexing Gilmore

Administrative Assistant
601-982-0861



Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Jackson, MS
Permit No. 290

Jackson State University
Mississippi Urban Research Center
JSU Box 17309 • Jackson, MS 39217

