



**CENTRAL NAUGATUCK VALLEY
REGIONAL ACTION COUNCIL**

***Executive Director's Corner:
An exciting new year!***

February 2008

Issue 2

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Hello there CNVRAC Community! Welcome to the second edition of our newsletter and to some great announcements from the staff here at the RAC. For starters, Bonnie Basile, the Prevention Coordinator of the CNVRAC is pregnant with her first child! Congratulations are in order to Bonnie and her husband David, and from the entire staff at Family Intervention Center. We can't wait until July to meet this bundle of joy!

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In other exciting news, we have hired our first ever, part-time Office Assistant! This is another exciting and new experience for the CNVRAC, to have a staff member specifically assigned to record our activities with the state, using the MDS reporting system. Ida Hidalgo, will be in our office on Wednesdays and Thursdays to greet you by phone. She will also be a major support to Bonnie and me, utilizing her computer skills to assist us with work for the Strategic Prevention Framework's data collection process this year, and to assist us in our Regional Priority Setting Process. Funding for the position of our Office Assistant comes from the Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services. Welcome, Ida Hidalgo!

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And lastly, as we embark on another year of work in the field of prevention, I would like to reflect on what a challenging year 2007 was for many people involved with the CNVRAC. We have had colleagues lose loved ones, we have seen job positions move and change, we have watched families grow and shrink, and through this all, the *Council* of the CNVRAC, has stayed the same. The word *council* literally means *together*. Or, a group of people *called together* for advice, discussion, etc.

Special points of interest:

As we begin 2008, *together*, as a group committed to the prevention of substance abuse in youth and over time across the lifespan, I am reminded daily that we do not operate in a vacuum. We cannot accomplish our goals alone. We cannot overcome obstacles without support and encouragement from those around us. And we cannot truly appreciate this kind of support, without reciprocating it to those in need. Thank you to everyone over the past year that has supported the CNVRAC, so that *together* we can make a difference in the communities which we serve. May you have peace, happiness, and perseverance in the New Year.

Would you like to join the CNVRAC Steering Committee ?

We meet every third Friday from 9-10:30 AM. Please call our office for more information!

203-578-4044

Parent's Corner: Cultural Norms and Prevention

I am a single Hispanic mother of four. I have three daughters and one son. My children now range in age from 14 to 25 years. They are of mixed nationality, Puerto Rican and Irish, and Puerto Rican and Dominican. I don't know much about their Irish heritage, but in my opinion the Latino heritage has a similar output when it comes to alcohol. In Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, it is okay for a young boy or girl no older than fifteen to be drinking & having sex. It is considered normal for them, and many of the problems associated with adolescent sexual activity & alcohol use have to do with the lack of education, morals, and economic issues. Being born here in the United States, I was raised differently. So when I saw these things happening for the first time, it was very alarming to me that people did not see the damage alcohol, drugs and sex could do to their children.

My children were exposed to alcoholism for many years because of family members that had substance abuse problems. I tried to inform my children what would happen if they started drinking or drugging. I would tell them that they should never drink alcohol or take drugs because it would ruin their lives like it has done to their loved ones. Being Hispanic and having family members and a spouse who had a drinking and drug problem was difficult because I was taught to keep my mouth shut and not to let that person acknowledge that they were an alcoholic or that they had a drug addiction. Getting help was not talked about, and you just had to deal with it.

It became difficult for me to handle three of my children when they became preteens and I was divorced. They were hanging out with older kids and being very rebellious. Even though I was going through very hard times, I would take the time to talk to my children often, and to tell them over and over again the damages alcohol and drugs would do to their health and lives. I would remind them of a family member that they see as a role model, who is suffering because of alcohol and substance abuse. I would say to them that I love them very much and that all I want is for them to get an education and be happy. Life isn't easy for many of us, but we have to have faith in God and each other, that things will come our way in a positive light. Parents, especially those of Latin origin need to try to inform their children the best way they know how, and not be ashamed to speak to them about these things that in the past were not allowed because of our parent's customs.

Society today has changed over the years, and we need to keep our kids safe & informed of all the dangers out there. If parents aren't willing to talk to their children about the dangers of alcohol and drugs they should at least find the help that these children need by other means.

I am still helping my children the best way I can to stay away from alcohol & drugs even though a few of them are adults. There are many Hispanic parents that come from a family that had someone in their circle that was an alcoholic or drug addict & have never drunk alcohol nor taken any drugs. They have always feared in their hearts that one of their children would develop this disease. Parents need to step up their game & realize the world we live in is full of many dangers. We need to stop thinking that if our children have a problem, it is just a phase they are going through. Speak to your kids everyday, and ask them how did their day go & do not be afraid to ask if there was someone at school or a friend who may have treated them badly. You can get to know each other better, and develop better communication skills. Take it from a Latina mother who knows.

Laying Down the Rules — Tips for Parents

Parents, you are the first line of defense when it comes to your child's drug use or drinking. And you do make a difference! Nearly two-thirds of teenagers see great risk of upsetting their parents or losing the respect of family and friends if they smoke marijuana or use other drugs.

Courtesy of The Anti-Drug

Check out the CNVRAC Prevention Committee! By: Jill Fontanella , Chair of Prevention Committee

The Prevention Committee meeting is a group of Counselors, Social Workers, School Resources Officers and any professional working with students in the middle school and high school setting which are interested in meeting to discuss school resources, needs, prevention, and services available in the community. This group began meeting in October 2007 and meets quarterly. Currently the committee has 12 members from the Central Naugatuck Valley. It was organized as a means to share information amongst colleagues that may be experiencing similar dilemmas and issues facing students.

I have been working in the social work profession for over 15 years, 8 in a school setting. It has been in these 8 short years I have seen students needs become more complex and face issues adults are not even ready to address. With the increasing needs and decreasing resources students are struggling to come to school and put their best foot forward academically. For some of these students, school becomes a retreat from the chaos they experience at home rather than a place once known as an educational institution. Developing the Prevention Committee was my attempt to pull

school professionals together to share years of experience and knowledge to address the increasing needs of students.

The next meeting of the CNVRAC Prevention Committee will be held on Tuesday March 11th from 3-4:30 PM at the Cheshire Town Hall, hosted by Sarah Bogdanski Bourdon, MSW, Project Coordinator, Cheshire Coalition to Stop Underage Drinking. If interested in participating in this committee please contact Jill Fontanella, School Social Worker Wolcott HS at 203-879-8157 or email at jfontanella@wolcott.org

Operation College Sweep By: Bonnie Basile, Prevention Coordinator

We are in our second year of Operation College Sweep which is a gambling project that provides information dissemination, education and problem identification and referral on gambling. This past November I presented to 22 students and staff on online gambling. The students participated in a survey , some of the results of that survey are: 100% reported being able to access gambling sites on school computers, 100% can access gambling sites from the dorms, 53 % of students know someone who has an online gambling problem, and 100% of students think a college student can ruin their credit by gambling. The results of this survey was given to the appropriate staff. We are now in the process of having another focus group with the residential staff and students. There is an adult focus group in the works also, we are interested in knowing what do they perceive as student gambling, what are the consequences if a student is found on campus gambling, what do they think encourages or discourages students to gamble?

March 9th– 16th is Problem Gambling Awareness Week. CNVRAC will be providing posters, brochures and referral information for Post University. There will also be a recovering gambler coming in to speak to the students and staff in late March.

Post University has been absolutely incredible to work with. They are open to suggestions and appreciate the time we have spent on Operation College Sweep.

Some Facts about College Student Gambling

At least 90% of college students make a bet each year.

30% to 45% of college students gamble on a weekly basis.

About 10% to 15% of college gamblers will spend money earmarked for books or get into a financial problem.

5% will be in the compulsive stage and in the grip of illness without treatment.

Courtesy of The National Council on Problem Gambling

**Central Naugatuck
Valley Regional
Action Council**

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The Central Naugatuck Valley Regional Action Council's mission is to prevent and reduce alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use in its service area among youth, and over time among adults, through community education, community mobilization, public awareness, and advocacy.

March and April Awareness Days

Problem Gambling Awareness Week March 9-16

National Inhalants and Poison Awareness Week March 16-23

National Alcohol Awareness Month– April

National Alcohol Screening Day– April 10



We are on the web!

www.cnvrac.org

**The CNVRAC serves
the following
communities:**

- Beacon Falls
- Bethlehem
- Cheshire
- Middlebury
- Naugatuck
- Prospect
- Southbury
- Thomaston
- Waterbury
- Watertown
- Wolcott
- Woodbury

What can the CNVRAC do for you?

- *Provide solutions to reduce addictions
- *Community Mobilization
- *Awareness, Education & Prevention
- *Legislative Advocacy
- *Public Policy Development
- *Technical Assistance & Training
- *Needs Assessment & Data Collection
- *Research & Evaluation
- *Program Development
- *Project Collaboration

Regional Action Councils are led by local educators, parents, business people, social service providers, law enforcement officials, clergy, government leaders and youth. They are designed to be responsive, focused and tailored to meet your community's specific needs.

We are a program of Family Intervention Center.

We are Funded by the State of Connecticut , Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

Also funded through municipality support

from the following communities:

**Bethlehem, Middlebury, Naugatuck, Prospect,
Waterbury, Woodbury**
