

# the crisis in youth violence & substance abuse

Each year, hundreds of thousands of young people are victims of youth violence and substance abuse. As a nation, we face the challenge of developing enhanced service interventions and community action strategies that will work to provide safety and security for all family members.

For families, parents must be aware and educated about the signs and symptoms of abuse. Among adolescents, parents should be alert to new trends in their teenage children's behaviors, such as fatigue, headaches, edginess, impatience or waning interests in friends or school. The parent's involvement is key to preventing violence and substance abuse.

## Developing Effective Partnerships in the Community

As a community, we face the challenge of developing viable strategies for changing the social and institutional norms. The ultimate goal is to develop effective partnerships with social service agencies, treatment providers, juvenile justice, schools, the courts, child welfare, law enforcement, families, lawmakers and policymakers to influence and build partnerships to promote safe and healthy families.

Violence among children and adolescents is a significant public health concern. In 2001, violence claimed the lives of more than 3,200 Americans ages 19 and under – that's an average of 9 deaths per day – making the homicide rate for young people in the United States the highest among developed countries. Homicide is the second leading cause of death among 15 to 19 year olds and the third leading cause of death among children ages 10 to 14.

## Youth Violence can Happen Anywhere

Highly publicized school shootings have sobered communities that may have believed they were immune to youth violence. Once viewed as a problem only in inner city neighborhoods, youth violence is now perceived as a nationwide crisis, and communities are eager to find ways to stop.

Youth violence is a complex public health problem with many risk factors, including individual beliefs and behaviors such as early aggression and use of alcohol or other drugs, family characteristics such as spousal abuse and lack of parental supervision and environmental factors such as access to firearms.

## Youth Substance Abuse

Research reveals that adolescents who abuse substances are more prone to serious psychological and behavioral problems. Youth who are victimized by physical or sexual abuse are much more likely to develop chemical dependencies:

- Youth who experienced either physical or sexual abuse or assault were twice as likely to report past-year alcohol or other drug abuse (Kilpatrick et al. 2000)
- This same national study found that youth who witnessed violence were three times as likely to experience substance use disorders (Ibid.)
- Among 12 to 17 year old current drinkers, 31 percent had extreme levels of psychological distress, and 39 percent exhibited serious behavioral problems (SAMHSA 1999).

## We Can Stop the Violence and Substance Abuse

Circle Around Families and the Lake County Drug Free Alliance's goal of this conference is to prevent violence and substance abuse from occurring by making systems work more effectively with each other, by providing families with better supports and engaging neighborhoods in developing responses that keep families safe and communities strong.

The objectives of this conference are:

- Gauge what is happening nationally vs. locally in substance abuse and violence prevention
- Describe the level of need among families for youth programs
- Describe policies, practices and procedures currently in place at the local levels to respond to this population
- Characterize the continuum of services currently available to youth, including gaps in service, strengths and indicate which programs do exist in Lake County
- Identify potential "next steps" including strategies and key issues to be targeted by advocates, lawmakers and policymakers
- Gauge the current level of collaboration and stimulate further planning and coalition building with local policymakers, lawmakers, treatment providers, parents, families and communities
- Educate child serving entities from multiple systems in the clinical definitions of substance abuse related disorders
- Convene youth and families, law enforcement, policymakers, child welfare, lawmakers, educators, social workers, mental health workers and treatment providers for a conference to develop a vision for the future that will expand the number of citizens in addressing the crises of youth violence and substance abuse.

Research findings:

- Youth, who participated in violent behavior during the past year were likely to use an illicit drug or alcohol during this same time period compared with youth who did not participate. For example, in group fighting during the past year, 35 percent used an illicit drug in the past year compared with 18 percent of youths who did not. In addition, youths who participated in two or more of these types of violent behaviors in are more likely to have used an illicit drug or alcohol during that time period than youths who participated in only one of these types of violent behavior.
- Firearm violence among youths has been linked to criminal behavior in three major ways: through the drug market, through actions taken to obtain money to support a drug habit, and the physical or emotional effects of drugs.
- Youth violence is a high visibility, high priority concern in every sector of US society. No community, is immune from its devastating effects.
- In 2001, 5,486 young people, ages 10 to 24, were murdered – an average of 15 each day (CDC, 2004)
- In 2001, 79% of homicide victims, ages 10 to 24, were killed with firearms.(CDC 2004)
- Between 1994 and 1999, 172 students were killed on or near school grounds or at school related activities.

conference: april 5th '06



HATE PRINCE  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
ARGUMENTS  
RESULTS  
HABIT  
VIOLENCE  
ABUSE  
GUNS  
PEERS  
PREU  
SHAME  
LIVE  
STREET  
ILLER  
VERBAL  
HATE  
CHEMICAL  
STRUGLE  
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UBSTANCE  
FAMILY  
CONFLICT  
FIGHT  
PENDING  
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GUNS  
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VIOLENCE  
ARGUMENT  
PREU  
SUBS  
BELL  
DHEMICAL  
ADDI  
FAMI  
PREU  
STRUG  
DOMEST  
PREU  
SUBS  
ALCOHOL  
PRESSURE  
FIGHT  
STRESS

## National Speakers:



**Virginia "Ginger" Katz**  
*President/Founder*  
 The Courage to Speak Foundation, Inc.



**Dr. Deborah Prothrow-Stith**  
*Associate Dean/Professor/Author*  
 Dept. of Health Policy and Management  
 Harvard University



**Carl C. Bell, M.D.**  
*President/C.E.O. Community Mental Health Council*  
 University of Illinois

## Local Speakers from Lake County:

- Judge Mary Beth Bonaventura**, Superior Court of Lake County
- Jane Bisbee**, Director of Lake County Dept. of Child Services
- Bruce Hillman**, Director, Campagna Academy
- Sheriff Rogelio Dominguez**, Lake County Sheriff's Dept.
- Bernard A. Carter**, Lake County Prosecuting Attorney
- James Hmurovich**, Hmurovich & Associates
- Magistrate Jeffrey Miller**, Superior Court of Lake County

- Leo Arreguin**, Director of High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area
- Peter Villarreal**, Lake County Prosecutor
- Albert Gay**, Program Director, Geminus Prevention Services
- Tim Thomas**, Edgewater Systems For Balanced Living
- Erin Mantis**, Tri City Mental Health Center
- Lauren Peterson**, LCSW, Southlake Mental Health Center
- Angelo Machuca, Jr.**, Chief of Police, East Chicago
- Brian Miller**, Chief of Police, Hammond

- Allen Hines**, CAD/C, NC, Apostolic Youth and Family Services
- Cindy Rivas**, Executive Director, Healthy East Chicago
- Mark Sanders**, LCSW, CAD/C, Trainer
- Alpha Stewart**, Chief of Police, City of Gary
- Cynthia Sampson**, Program Director, Geminus Prevention Services
- Brianne Oliver**, Program Facilitator, MHA-Girls, Inc.
- Mara Reardon**, Director, Lake County Drug Free Alliance

Circle Around Families, the Lake County system of care, in conjunction with Lake County Drug Free Alliance are co-sponsoring this conference.

The Lake County Drug Free Alliance is a coalition of volunteers, formed by joint efforts of the Lake County Prosecutor and Lake County Sheriff, that is established to identify and address the complex problems related to alcohol, drug, tobacco and gambling addictions.

## Circle Around Families Conference

### Addressing the Crisis of Youth Violence and Substance Abuse

**WHO CAN ATTEND:** Youth, families, caregivers, lawmakers, law enforcement, substance abuse counselors, social workers, mental health counselors, clergy, policymakers.

**WHEN:** Wednesday, April 5, 2006, 9:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.

**WHERE:** Avalon Manor 3550 E. US RT 30 Merrillville, IN

**RSVP By:** March 20, 2006  
 Space limited. Lunch served. (219) 757-1822

**CEUs:** 6 CEUs - ICAADA  
 6 CEUs - Indiana Law Enforcement Academy  
 6 CEUs - The Indiana Social Worker, Marriage and Family Therapist and Mental Health Counselor Board

**SIGN UP TODAY!**

## Circle Around Families Addressing the Crisis of Youth Violence and Substance Abuse

Wednesday, April 5, 2006, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Avalon Manor - 3550 East U.S. Route 30, Merrillville, IN 46410

**Please read carefully, fill out completely, and mail to:** Geminus Corporation – Circle Around Families, 8400 Louisiana Street, Merrillville, Indiana 46410

**Or Fax to:** (219) 757-1856

No registration fee.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_