

# KINGS PARK **in the kNOw**

Empowering our community to be drug free

## winter 09 newsletter

Vol. 1, No. 1

**Some watch while things happen, and then wonder "What happened?"  
Some people make things happen.**

### **WORKING TOWARDS A SOLUTION**

Kings Park has historically been a great place to raise a family and it remains so today. It's one of the main reasons Kings Park **in the kNOw** was formed. Like so many of you, we care deeply about the safety of our most valuable asset, the children of Kings Park. Kings Park **in the kNOw** is a non-profit organization whose mission is to eradicate the infiltration of illegal drugs and substance abuse for the benefit of our children, schools and community. We are comprised of parents, school officials, local business owners, local and state elected officials and members of the Town of Smithtown Youth Bureau.

The problem of illegal drug sales has plagued our society for decades – the substances may change, but the problem remains the same. How can we, as a community, work to help solve this problem? There is no one answer to that question. However, our little group is growing in numbers and we are taking a multi-faceted approach to the problem.

We have set up a hotline where members of the community can anonymously report drug dealing (*see related Hotline article*). We will be putting out informative newsletters like the one you are reading now. We will be working in conjunction with our school district to host parent seminars on the subject of prevention and we will be working to educate the children of our community about the dangers of illegal drug use and alcohol abuse.

Optimistically, parents and grandparents will begin to have important dialogues with their children about drug and alcohol use and the devastating effects of destructive decisions. Together we can make a difference; we can keep the children of Kings Park safe. Please help us work towards a solution. If you would like to be a member of our new dynamic coalition, please contact: (631) 269-0800

**Board of Directors:** Tony Leteri, Chairman; Maureen Rossi, President; Bob Desomond, Vice President.  
**Trustees:** Chuck Campisi, Linda Henninger, Anne Carlin, Donna Bee, Debra Abramowicz, Kim Revere, Tony Salucci, Ed Cunningham

**"I'll be over at Tom's. I told you his parents would be there, but they won't be. We'll just be playing video games and getting stoned. Luckily, you're not the type to call and check up."**

Follow up on where your kids tell you they're going, and you won't have to wonder if you're getting the whole story. You'll know that you are. Monitoring is important, because if you don't, your kids are four times more likely to do drugs or start using just the way it is. **PARENTS.**  
To learn more, call 1 800 788 7880. Or visit [theanti.org](http://theanti.org)

**HOTLINE  
UP AND  
RUNNING!**  
**CALL 631-273-1353**

to anonymously report possible drug dealing in the Kings Park community. If you are concerned about caller ID, press \*67 prior to making the call. All information is passed on to law enforcement. Illegal drug sales affect every member of this town, even if your child is making good decisions, the dealers are making drop offs here and people under the influence are driving on our roads. Help keep Kings Park safe – if you suspect something, make a call!

To date, we have received a few dozen calls.

## Instant Messaging

TGIF, RSVP or even ASAP may sound familiar; however, as computers have transformed communications, a new dialect has emerged: Internet lingo. Acronyms or character symbols called Emoticons (mixing symbols to express emotions or moods) enable teens to communicate with others in a few keystrokes.

While often just a convenient and quick means of communication, many teens use these acronyms and symbols to warn their friends when parents might be present and even to discuss drug use in a code that parents can't decipher.

Instant messages, blog entries and text messages often look like Sanskrit to parents, but decoding this lingo used in digital communications is an important monitoring skill that should not be overlooked. Here is a quick guide to help you translate what teens are saying online and in their cell phone text messages. Keep in mind that, as with street names for drugs, these symbols and acronyms are subject to frequent change, particularly when those who use them suspect that others have figured out what they mean.

POS	Parent Over Shoulder
PIR	Parent In Room
P911	Parent Alert
PAW	Parents Are Watching
PAL	Parents Are Listening
KPC	Keeping Parents Clueless

;) )	Winking
:*(	Crying
#-)	Wiped out, partied all night
%*}	Inebriated
%\	Hangover
8-#	Death
:-d~	Heavy smoker

To view the entire list, go to:

[www.computeruser.com/resources/dictionary/emoticons.html](http://www.computeruser.com/resources/dictionary/emoticons.html)

## DRUG LINGO

Similar to Internet lingo, drug nomenclature can be cryptic. Parents can monitor for drug use by learning popular drug lingo and asking questions. A few examples of popular drug lingo are listed below:

- Pharming** • Raiding medical cabinets to trade and consume prescription drugs to get high
- Robotripping** • Drinking cough medicine to get high (comes from the brand name Robitussin)
- Lean** • Drinking prescription cough syrup mixed with painkillers and soda
- O** • Oxycontin
- Tweaking** • High on amphetamines
- Blue Boogers** • Snorting Adderall or Ritalin

See the Street Terms for more drugs at:  
[www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/streetterms](http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/streetterms)



## It's Not Just Pot

Children of Baby Boomers often find the stories and pictures of their parent's teen years comical. Free love, big hair, bell bottoms, rock and roll and anti-establishment views have punctuated the lives of many of America's 76 million Baby Boomers as they were coming of age in the 60s and 70s. Checking out was a rite of passage for many in that generation, that may set the stage for some parents to have an overall casual approach about marijuana. However, current research has debunked the once-held theories about marijuana being harmless and non-addictive. Today we know that marijuana is a dangerous substance. According to **Parents. The Anti-Drug**, today's teens are smoking a more potent form of marijuana and starting use at increasingly younger ages during crucial brain development years. There is scientific evidence that shows:

- Pot impedes and even changes the mental health of adolescents. Changes in the brain are similar to those caused by cocaine, heroin and alcohol. So it's not JUST pot – it's bigger than that.
- Weekly marijuana use can increase the risk of depression later in life.
- Teenagers 12 to 17 who smoke marijuana weekly are three times more likely to have thoughts of committing suicide.
- Marijuana is linked with symptoms of schizophrenia and studies report that cannabis is an independent risk factor for schizophrenia.
- Certain brain centers, such as the limbic system, are greatly influenced by THC, the active ingredient in marijuana – the very same center responsible for memory formation, emotion, aggression and fear.

The fact is that marijuana is harmful; it impairs judgment, which can lead to risky decision making on issues like sex, criminal activity or riding with someone who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Parents are still the most important influence in a child's life. Talk to your kids about pot, tell them it's not OK.

## HELP IS CLOSE BY

Smithtown's **HORIZONS**  
Offers An Array of Services to Families

What should you do if you suspect your child or a child you love is using illegal drugs or struggling with an alcohol problem?

What should you do if someone in your family is abusing drugs or alcohol?

The good news is that help is close by and it's affordable - **HORIZONS** Counseling & Education Center provides critical adolescent, family and adult substance abuse education, prevention and treatment services.

In operation since 1979, it is a not-for-profit agency run by the town of Smithtown and is located on the ground floor of 124 West Main Street, Smithtown. **HORIZONS** offers affordable substance abuse and family treatment services for adults and adolescents in the town of Smithtown, using a sliding fee scale for all treatment services.

For more information about **HORIZONS**, call 631-360-7578.

"Alcohol-related car crashes are the leading cause of death for young Americans, between the ages of 16 and 24."

—www.pbs.org

WHAT THE  
EXPERTS  
ARE  
SAYING

"Make your feelings clear. Children who understand the depth of their parents' opposition to it are less likely to smoke. Help them say no."

—www.gaspfair.org

## 10 Deadly Teen Driver Mistakes... and How to Avoid Them (AAA)



- 1. Risk Taking:** Know that it can happen to you. Car crashes are the leading cause of injury and death for people ages 15 to 20.
- 2. Un-Buckled:** Use a safety belt and insist that all your passengers do so as well. About two-thirds of teens killed in vehicle crashes were not wearing safety belts. Wearing a seat belt reduces your chances of being hurt or killed in a crash by 45 percent.
- 3. Speed:** Stick to the speed limit. One-third of teen fatalities involve speeding. Obeying the speed limit reduces the severity of a crash you can't avoid.
- 4. Rowdy Riders:** Don't load up your car with friends. Adding one teen passenger to a vehicle increases a 16 or 17 year old driver's crash risk by about 50 percent. With two or more teen passengers, the crash risk increases fivefold.
- 5. Cell Phones:** Focus on driving. Save the phone calls, text messages and other gadgets for after the driving is done. Talking on a cell phone while driving can double reaction time.
- 6. CD Player:** Turn the music off while learning to drive. Research shows that adjusting the radio is the most common distraction for drivers between the ages of 16 and 20. Driving and channel-surfing don't mix.
- 7. Late Night Cruising:** Don't drive late at night. Teen crash rates at night (9PM to 6AM) are twice as high as daytime rates. Obey parental curfews.
- 8. DUI:** Stay sober. Of 16 and 17 year old drivers killed in crashes, one in six would have been considered legally intoxicated by adult standards.
- 9. Peer Pressure:** Make good choices and don't be afraid to "speak up". Before you get in a car with a friend, ask: Is this a person you trust? Is he in the right frame of mind to drive safely? Are you prepared to speak up if he drives dangerously?
- 10. Overconfidence:** Inexperience and overconfidence can lead to crashes when new drivers encounter unfamiliar or unexpected situations. Parents should supervise and monitor their teen drivers — even after they get their license.

For more information visit: [www.aaa.com](http://www.aaa.com)

## A FRIEND IN NEED

So you think your friend or sibling has a problem with drugs or alcohol? Maybe he or she seems like a different person since starting to drink or get high.

Well, you are not alone. Many teens are facing the same issues all across the country. Many of us are afraid to discuss serious issues with our friends because we fear being rejected. It is not easy to tell a friend or loved one that they have a problem.

No one ever thinks that trying or casually using drugs is going to lead to a life-threatening addiction. That's the reason why substance abuse is so complex...no one thinks they're going to be the one with the problem. Yet, millions of people suffer and die from drug addiction every year.

If you decide to sit down and talk with your friend or sibling about his or her drinking or drug use, you may not know what to say. You may wonder how they will respond. Will they get defensive? Will they deny they have a problem? Will they get mad at you and tell you to mind your own business? It's likely that they will. People with drug or alcohol problems usually defend their use or make excuses for it. It's hard for people to admit to themselves that they have a drug or alcohol problem.

To learn more about how to start the conversation with your friend, go to:

[www.freevibe.com/stepup/whattosay.asp](http://www.freevibe.com/stepup/whattosay.asp)



## Signs & Symptoms of Teen Drinking and Drug Use from Parents. The Anti-Drug.

- **Changes in friends**
- Negative changes in school work, missing school or declining grades
- **Increased secrecy about possessions or activities**
- Use of incense, room deodorant, or perfume to hide smoke or chemical odors
- **Subtle changes in conversations with friends, e.g., more secretive, using coded language**
- Change in clothing choices; new fascination with clothes that highlight drug use
- **Increase in borrowing money**
- Evidence of drug paraphernalia such as pipes, rolling papers, etc.
- **Evidence of inhalant products (such as hairspray, nail polish, correction fluid, common household products); rags and papers bags are sometimes used as accessories**
- Bottles of eye drops, which may be used to mask bloodshot eyes or dilated pupils
- **New use of mouthwash or breath mints to cover up the smell of alcohol**
- Missing prescription drugs — especially narcotics and mood stabilizers

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Empowering our community to be drug free

**MISSION STATEMENT**

Kings Park **in the kNOw** is committed to eradicating the infiltration of illegal drug and substance abuse, thereby benefiting our children, our schools and our community by:

- Connecting law enforcement, school administrators, students, elected officials, businesses and residents
- Informing parents and educators about the dangerous activities our children are susceptible to, including, but not limited to, illegal drug use, binge drinking, illegal pharmaceutical web sites, club drugs and other activities that may harm them
- Communicating to parents and students the dangers of using drugs illegally, both from a health standpoint and from a law enforcement issue

Our goal is to empower families to prevent substance abuse and help their children make good choices that will pave the way for healthy and productive lives.

**Steroids**  
**THE HARD TRUTH**

More and more kids are turning to steroids as a shortcut to increase their athletic performance or reach physical "perfection". But, do your kids know that steroid abuse can lead to:

- Shorter adult height (you may have desired to become 6'3", but you could end up being a permanently muscular 5'5")\*
- Baldness in boys and girls
- Acne
- In girls, permanent sterilization and masculine traits, such as facial hair

Adolescent girls use steroids, among other drugs, to stay thin. The use of these drugs often goes hand in hand with eating disorders.

According to Charles Yesalis, abuse can start with something as simple as supplements your kids are taking to enhance their performance either on the field or in the gym.

For more information on steroid use, visit [www.steroidabuse.org](http://www.steroidabuse.org)

\*According to Charles Yesalis, a Penn State professor and author of several books on steroids and athletes.

Help make a difference in the lives of our children and families of Kings Park.  
If you would like to **join our coalition** or **make a donation** to our cause,  
please **contact us at 631-269-0800.**

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**THERE'S A NEW DEALER IN TOWN.**

Prescription drug abuse is a problem among teens today. And a major source of the problem is right under your nose: the medicine cabinet. This may be happening in your house, which means you can definitely do something to stop it. Safeguard your medications and keep track of the quantity. Educate yourself. Find out more at [theantidrug.com](http://theantidrug.com). You can stop the dealer.

[theantidrug.com](http://theantidrug.com) **PARENTS.**

**Sign on the Dotted Line**

**Parent-Child Contracts Can Help**

In today's complex world of parenting, contracts have become a way of setting clear rules for certain activities. Parent-Child Contracts are available for an array of subjects such as Driving, Internet Use, Allowances, Dating, Family Values, Chores and Substance Abuse. Simple to use, a contract merely lays out concrete rules of a family and the consequences for breaking those rules. They often prove to be helpful for a number of reasons, the first being the initial dialogue they elicit, leaving children with a clear understanding of their parent(s) expectations. A contract on alcohol may include a line saying, "I promise to NEVER get in a car with a person who has consumed alcohol." Parent-Child Contracts may seem silly to parents who know how to set clear, concise rules and enforce them, however, some parents need help and a contract could possibly save their child's life.

Check out a number of companies offering contracts for a nominal fee, including [www.kidscontracts.com](http://www.kidscontracts.com) or [www.parentcontracts.com](http://www.parentcontracts.com) and get information about the importance of setting home rules and ideas for creating your own customized contract.