



SEE WHY

Connecting Youth in Chittenden South

www.seewhy.info

Volume 16

Issue 1

Fall 2008



From Dayna's Desk...

Happy Fall! Of course, as I say that, it is 82 degrees outside! But this is how life works sometimes—slow transitions.

Speaking of transitions, the main focus of our fall newsletter is the transition that all youth face as they move into adulthood. We call it “adolescence” but this is a nebulous term. It’s not like a caterpillar who transforms into a butterfly and you can see the new self emerge. There is no clear, defining passageway into adulthood and our culture tends to confuse things—youth can drive at age 16, vote and go to war at 18 and drink alcohol at age 21. But science is pretty definitive—particularly the latest research on brain development. The cover story will tell you more!

I’d like to take a moment to publicly thank a few people who served on the CY Board, but have recently stepped down. First and foremost is Helen Niedermeier who retired after more than a decade of service to CY. Also, our graduated seniors—Jonathan Bateman (who is traveling the world as I type!), Halle Broido, and Ryan Mills. Many, many thanks!

As always, feel free to call 383-1211 or e-mail dscott@cssu.org if you have any questions or concerns. Take care and be well,

Dayna Scott

Dayna Scott, Coordinator & Editor



The Brain Equation...18 = 8

Ever see the “This is your brain...this is your brain on drugs” commercial? If so, you know that the brain on drugs was really just a fried egg. Now, in the 21st century, we have gone way beyond the fried egg. There is a tremendous amount of scientific research showing exactly what drugs do to the brain. But one bit of research is particularly important and not widely known—**during the time when the brain is still developing, alcohol and other drug use has a much more lasting and serious impact!**

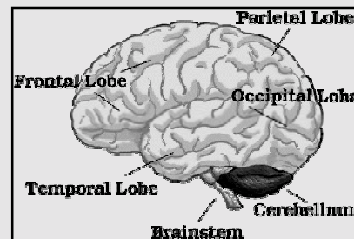
Did you know that the brain is not considered “fully developed” until the age of 25? From early adolescence through the mid-20’s, the brain develops unevenly from back to front. The part of the brain that controls reasoning and impulses (the frontal lobe) actually develops last. If you are a parent, you may have noticed this in your own teenagers. Do they have trouble holding back or controlling emotions? Do they prefer high excitement and low effort activities? Do they sometimes exhibit poor planning and lack of judgment? These things can all be linked to frontal lobe development!

Now add alcohol and other drugs to the equation and there is real potential for long-term harm. First,

research indicates that alcohol abuse during the teen years negatively impacts the memory. Brain imaging shows that the memory center (hippocampus) is 10% smaller than normal in teens who have abused alcohol, and these teens have lower memory scores. The use of alcohol and other drugs also affects the brain’s “reward circuits,” throwing the dopamine system out of whack. This causes teens to feel in a funk when not using substances and going back for more only makes

things worse. Finally, there is what’s called **the “five to fifteen” rule**. People who use alcohol and other drugs at an early age are at a greater risk for addiction, and the addiction process happens much more quickly! In a pre-teen addiction can happen in as little as 5 to 15 weeks; in a teen it can happen in 5 to 15 months; and in someone over the age of 21 it usually takes 5 to 15 years.

What does this mean? It is critical to help young people avoid using alcohol and other drugs as long as possible—what’s called “delaying the onset of first use.” Recent brain research is also food for thought when considering the legal drinking age. Perhaps we should be looking at increasing the voting age instead? To learn more about current brain research, visit www.drugfree.org.





New Faces at CY



Jamilah Vogel, Student Assistance Program (SAP) Counselor for Charlotte and Shelburne: Jamilah is a native Vermonter who grew up in Norwich and

went to Johnson State College, majoring in education and psychology. For the past six years she worked at Shelburne Community School in the Special Education Department. She is excited about bringing the Life Skills Training curriculum alive through interactive games and activities. She is the proud mother of a middle schooler, and when she is not working, she loves to dance and garden!

Lynn Camara, Student Assistance Program (SAP) Counselor at Hinesburg: Lynn actually grew up in Charlotte and graduated from CVU High School.

She found her calling early, serving as a Peer Hotline Helper for the King Street Youth Center while at CVU. Since then she received a Masters in Counseling Psychology from Antioch University and has worked at the Lund Family Center and the UVM Counseling Center. She admires the spunk and curiosity of middle schoolers and is excited to run the Vermont Kids Against Tobacco group!

CY Leadership

The CY Executive Leadership Group for 2008-09 is comprised of: Jeanne Wilson, Sara Kassel (12th grader), Mitch Barron, Jess Spadaccini (11th grader) and CY staff. New Board members include: Jameson Hurd (10th grader), Julie Ho (10th grader), and James Neiley (11th grader). Interested in getting involved? Just complete the form on back—we'd love to have you!



JUST ASK JEN

Dear Jen, My teenager seems a bit off since the beginning of summer. At first I thought it was just normal teenage hormones and moodiness. How do I know if there is something else going on?
Confused Parent

Dear Confused Parent: This is a tough one. Although teenagers are going through many changes, both physically and emotionally, it is important to trust your instincts. (Usually gut feelings are correct!). First, I would recommend talking with your child. Voice your concerns, but be sure to speak in terms of what you've seen or heard—observable behaviors and not accusations! Hopefully he or she will open up to you. If afterwards you still don't have a better understanding of what is going on, you can speak with a counselor at your child's school or with your pediatrician.

If you need to set up a meeting with a professional, remember that your child should be involved in the choice about who to see. The connection should be natural and not forced! Also, many teenagers would prefer to seek help WITHOUT their parents present, so be prepared to step back. Then listen to the recommendations and be sure to follow through. You should trust that professionals have the training and impartiality to provide an assessment and determine what the appropriate next steps should be.

All of that said, you are certainly not alone with this question! I think many parents go through the same struggle, asking themselves "Are my kids using drugs? Is it

depression? Are they questioning their sexuality? Are they having trouble with a friend? Or is it in fact just hormones?" As we head into a new school year I thought I would give a few quick tips on how to support your teen in making healthy choices. (Sorry—I can't help with the hormones! You'll just have to ride those out!)

- * Recommend that your child get involved in activities such as sports, music, service clubs, church groups or other extracurricular activities. This is a GREAT way to meet new friends, keep busy and pursue an interest!
- * Establish clear rules and boundaries for your child, outlining consequences but also rewards for positive choices.
- * Spend dinner time together. I recognize that most families have busy schedules, but studies have shown that when families have dinner together, kids make healthier choices.
- * Talk regularly and use "teachable moments." Next time you are watching a movie and you suddenly realize why it's PG-13, talk with your child about what's happening. If you start the conversations then they'll be more likely to come to you when they need to talk.
- * Seek support and guidance from other parents and parent organizations. When I facilitate CY's parenting course, the most common thing I hear from parents is how good it feels to meet others who are facing similar issues.

Enjoy the year, Jen (482-6951 or JBickel-Hayes@cvuhs.org)



News & Events



Real Life



Safety Zone



The Facts



CY Youth "All-Stars"



This column seeks to recognize students for their commitment to making healthy choices and their leadership in prevention! James and Jessica were both nominated by other students and adults currently involved in CY programs.



Name: James Neiley
Grade: 11
Town: Charlotte
Years in CY: 3 years

What you like BEST about being involved in CY? *Friends who care, food that's good, fun that's healthy. Dayna and Margo.*

If you were a school supply, what would it be and why? *I like talking a lot, so I might be a notebook... because that's how you pass notes and communicate secretly.*

If someone gave you a check for \$1,000 but said you had to spend it all in ONE day--what would you do with the \$? *Are you kidding? Shop of course! Maybe I should try to be more worldly though? I might actually spend half of it on the Invisible Children fund. Yeah, half shopping, half helping people. Maybe a quarter shopping actually. I wouldn't get it out of my head. I'd*

be buying Armani and the shirt would be tainted with guilt. Alright, so it's settled, 25% shopping, 75% to the Invisible Children fund. You should all watch that movie, btw!

Most treasured possession? *My piano. My sister and I sing at it all the time, I miss her like, way too much. I love you Alice.*

If we were making a movie about your life, what would the title be? *THE FANTASTICAL DRAMA THAT IS JAMES! (It must be in capitals!!!)*

How has your involvement in CY helped you, if at all? *I would pretty much go as far to say that without CY, I would really be sunk. Thanks to Dayna, Margo and everyone else who has helped me overcome everything I've gone through. *Queue the Oscar music cutting me off in the middle of my speech. Queue my mother crying, queue the after party.**



Name: Jess Spadaccini
Grade: 11
Hometown: Charlotte
Years in CY: 5 years

How did you first get involved in CY? *I remember the first CY event was*

being on the LEAD team at CCS in 6th grade!

What do you like best about being involved in CY? *I like trying to spread the message of not doing drugs and staying clean to other kids. It makes me feel good about myself. And, CY is a little family within itself and there is always someone I can go to!*

If someone gave you a check for \$1,000 and you had to spend it all in one day, what would you do? *I would definitely go on a shopping spree and then probably give some of the money to my parents.*

Last book you read (for fun)? *I believe it was called "Sweetheart"? I like the romantic teenager books...I'm guilty!*

Something you want to do before you turn 40? *I would love to go to a Dr. Phil show!*

Happiness is... *for me it is being able to help someone or influence them in a positive way and know that I made a difference.*

To nominate a student to be a CY All-Star, please e-mail Dayna at dscott@cssu.org or call 383-1211.

Protect Our Youth—Create Smoke Free Zones!

Did you know that exhaled smoke and smoke from the burning end of a cigarette contain more than 50 cancer-causing chemicals that increase the risk for heart disease and lung cancer? For children, second-hand smoke can cause life-long health problems such as asthma, bronchitis, pneumonia, and more frequent ear infections and allergies. The health risks are clear and there is "no risk-free

level of exposure to secondhand smoke." (U.S. Surgeon General.)

CY is working with the Vermont Department of Health to reach adults with a simple message—that keeping smoke away from children is the best way to protect their growing lungs and bodies. More than ever before, Vermont smokers – and recent quitters – are banning tobacco use in

their homes and cars. Last year, 67 percent (up from 43 percent in 2001) banned smoking in their homes while 77 percent (up from 54 percent in 2001) banned it in their cars. To learn more about creating smoke-free zones log on to www.VTQuitNetwork.org. You can also visit www.seewhy.info and take the "smoke free zone pledge"! All participants will receive a free smoke-free zone water bottle.



Transitions



Parents



Links



www.seewhy.info

Community Calendar of Events

October

- * **Saturday 10/11: "Acting Out" Theater Improv Workshop for CSSU 6th through 8th Graders.** This exciting workshop will be held at CVU High School from 9:00 am until 3:30 pm. The cost is just \$15 and includes lunch and snacks. E-mail Dayna at dscott@cssu.org or call 383-1211 to register.
- * **Fall Parenting Classes:** Come learn practical tips on how to improve your parenting skills! Join CY for the complete 5-week "Staying Connected" course to be held on Tuesdays starting 10/21, or choose the Saturday seminar on 10/11. For details and to register contact Jen at 482-6951 or email jbickel-hayes@cvuhs.org.
- * **Saturday & Sunday 10/18– 10/19: CY/ACCESS Fun Day and Craft Fair.** Do some early holiday shopping and get

your family in shape with a 5K Fun Run! Call Duncan at 482-7194 or e-mail duncan@cvuhs.org.

- * **10/23 through 10/31: National "Red Ribbon Week."** Look for activities that help promote prevention and wellness at all of the CSSU schools this week!

November

- * **Friday 11/14 and Saturday 11/15: High School LEAD Retreat.** This overnight event is for 9th–12th graders and will focus on taking positive risks. Call Margo at 482-7156 or e-mail MAustin@cvuhs.org for details.
- * **Tuesday, 11/18: Aw Shucks Volunteer Recognition.** Join us for dessert as we honor community folks who have dedicated their time to supporting youth and families!
- * **Thursday, 11/20: Great American Smokeout.** Sponsored by the ACS, smokers are encouraged to quit for the day!

I Care About Young People!

I would like to join—or renew membership with—CY. Please accept my tax-deductible 2008-2009 contribution at the following level:

- \$100** will support our peer prevention and leadership activities, including the student-initiated See Why Improv Troupe.
- \$50** will support our Student Assistance Program which serves young people affected by their own or someone else's drug use.
- \$25** will support parent education and teacher trainings across the Chittenden South District.
- Larger contributions** will allow us to serve more people through the CY Mentoring Program & ACCESS to CVU.
- I would like to donate my time or services**—as a chaperone for drug-free activities, by offering food or prizes for retreats, etc. Specify your interest below:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

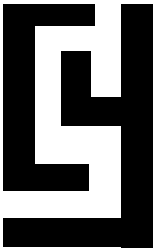
Phone number: _____

E-mail address: _____

Would you like information on **becoming a mentor for a child** in our schools? ___ Yes ___ Not at this time

___ I would like to **nominate a volunteer to be honored at Aw Shucks Night**. This is someone from a CSSU town who has donated significant time helping youth or families. List name (s) here:

Please make checks payable to "CSSU" and mail to CY, 5420 Shelburne Rd., #300, Shelburne, VT 05482, ATTN: CY



Chittenden South S.U.
CY-Connecting Youth
5420 Shelburne Rd., #300
Shelburne, VT 05482

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