



# Partnership For Awareness

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## From The President

Many thanks from Partnership for Awareness to the members and donors who are listed in this issue. Without their generous support we would not be able to fund the programs and services we offer. I also need to thank my board of directors who have been doing an outstanding job. They are also listed here in the newsletter. I am very pleased with the direction our programs have taken thanks to the hard work and planning by our Program Chair, Karen Connolly. Dr. Wendy Mogel's talk was informative, entertaining, and very well-attended; our "Navigating Cliques" program for middle-school girls and parents had an overflow crowd; and Ross Szabo's programs on mental health for teens, with two assemblies at San Marino High School and an evening follow-up for parents, were well-received and beneficial. Please keep in mind that there have been no charges to participants for any of these programs. Please check this newsletter for our upcoming events and mark your calendar.

Partnership for Awareness is just that, a partnership of parents, community, schools and students, and we invite you to become involved. If you have not yet joined, please do so (a membership form is included in this newsletter). We are currently filling our board, and a variety of positions are available to parents of both private and public school students in the San Marino area, as well as advisory positions for community members. Please contact me if you are interested (email: [jmorgan007@aol.com](mailto:jmorgan007@aol.com)).

As we move forward with a vision of reaching out to all students and parents to provide nurturing school and home environments, safe and drug-free schools and students, tools for coping for adolescents and their parents, and education on a variety of topics, we at PfA appreciate the help and support of our community. Thank you to all who make this possible.

Janet Morgan  
President, Partnership for Awareness

# DRUGS, ALCOHOL, AND DENIAL

Charles Weinstein, Ph.D., A.B.P.P.

Given the title of this article, a number of individuals probably have stopped reading and have moved on. I hope that I am mistaken.

Two months ago I spoke with a close friend. Although he lives in another part of the country, we have watched our children grow up over the past twenty plus years. He told me a sad story about his youngest child, a story my wife and I continue to feel in the pits of our stomachs.

This 16 year old boy lived and attended public high school in a community much like San Marino. He had some attention problems and learning difficulties which his parents identified early and addressed. A year or so ago, they discovered that their child was smoking marijuana. At first they were convinced that it was recreational-only at parties and never anytime else. As time passed, their concerns began to increase. The parents contacted parents of their teenager's friends. Those parents seemed to think that these kids were "just being kids". Despite mounting evidence, these parents continued to believe that there was no problem and their teenagers reinforced that belief.

A few months ago, as the problems became too obvious to ignore, my friend and his wife one more time attempted to speak to the other parents. Again these parents felt that my friend and his wife were overreacting. Knowing that they must act, they consulted with a drug and alcohol expert in their community. The final decision, after much emotional struggle, was to place their son in a residential rehabilitation program. He will be away from home for the next two years.

What were the symptoms? Declining school performance, staying out well beyond curfew, withdrawal from friends who were achieving, refusal to communicate with family, drug related problems with the school.

These symptoms can and often are rationalized by parents and teenagers. Sometimes they are a part of growing up, when poor judgment is part of the learning process. However, there are too many times when drugs and alcohol are condoned by parents believing that it is an in-

*(Continued on page 5)*

## PfA Hosts Seminar on Internet Safety

Why are experts alarmed that parents think it's dangerous to let children roam freely on the street, but not on the internet? What is *MySpace*? How can an impersonal computer be used to make personal attacks? If using the internet has become mandatory, how do we protect our children from the real and serious dangers it creates?

Charles Weinstein, clinical psychologist, and Karen Preston, San Marino School Board Member, will walk us through both the real and psychological issues of internet use among teens and preteens. Please join us on **April 18<sup>th</sup>** at 7:30pm at the Huntington Middle School Cafeteria for a lively and informative discussion of this very critical issue.

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## Book Recommendations

by Ross Szabo

More Than Moody

-Dr. Harold Koplewicz

It's Nobody's Fault

-Dr. Harold Koplewicz

Will's Choice

-Gail Griffith

Acquainted With the Night

-Paul Raeburn

An Unquiet Mind

-Dr. Kay Redfield Jamison

Cutting

-Dr. Steven Levenkron

Standing in the Shadows

-John Head



(Continued from page 2)



nocent part of growing up. These parents often will talk about their days of youth. What these parents mistakenly recall is college days. Many of them did not have much access to drugs and alcohol in high school. Those parents' experiences often were truly experimental. Today, there is more access to drugs and alcohol. Teenagers and adults use drugs and alcohol to self medicate for anxiety and depression.

What is recommended? Be a strong parent. Listen to your gut. Confront your denial. Set healthy boundaries with your children. It is OK, if not important, for your children to be angry with you at times. If you are your child's "buddy", you cannot be your child's parent. Be honest and educated about your own drug and alcohol use. Openly discuss your usage and let your teenagers know why it is not be good for them. Seek help. There are several resources for parents to educate themselves about what to look for and how to communicate with their children. Parents are not alone.

[www.nida.nih.gov](http://www.nida.nih.gov)

[www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)



## GET INVOLVED WITH PFA!

Partnership for Awareness is looking for concerned and energetic people with various skills to help us organize events like Red Ribbon Week, find articles, perform administrative duties, or help with the mailing of these newsletters. We meet during the year to share news and ideas that pertain to the mission statement of PFA.

If you are concerned about the welfare of our children and are looking for a way to help, please contact Partnership for Awareness President Janet Morgan at:

[jmorgan007@aol.com](mailto:jmorgan007@aol.com)



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Yes, I'd love to become involved with PfA activities this year!

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