



## Study Reveals Correlation Between Brain Maturation and Drug Use Through Mid-Twenties

By Melissa K. Tibbits, Ph.D.

Approximately 72% of teens have used alcohol by the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, and 57% have been drunk. Recent advances in neuroscience partially explain why resisting the temptation of alcohol use is difficult for many youth. The most important finding is that the brain is not fully developed until the mid-twenties.

We now know that the regions of the brain devoted to emotions and excitement seeking mature much sooner than the region of the brain devoted to reasoning, planning, and behavior control (prefrontal cortex). In fact, the prefrontal cortex is not fully developed until approximately age 25. As a result, teens who are motivated to use alcohol to manage their emotions or to experience excitement may have difficulty resisting these motivations due in part to the underdevelopment of the prefrontal cortex. This is very problematic given that we know teens who start using alcohol before the age of 14 and/or use alcohol frequently (e.g., binge drinking) are significantly more likely to have problem alcohol use in adulthood.

Additionally, emerging research suggests that teen alcohol use affects brain development. In particular, heavy use of alcohol and other substances appears to damage the hippocampus, the region of the brain dedicated to learning and memory. Further, teen alcohol use may impact the development of the prefrontal cortex, thus making it harder to resist alcohol in the future.

These research findings highlight the need for parents to help their children resist using alcohol and other substances. One of the most important things parents can do to prevent alcohol use and other risk behaviors is to maintain good communication with their teens and work to minimize family conflict. Additionally, parents who have lenient attitudes toward teen alcohol use and allow teen alcohol use in their home are more likely to have teens that start using alcohol early and/or heavily, parents should set and enforce strict rules about alcohol use. Finally, the importance of parental modeling of healthy behaviors (e.g., practicing moderation; not binge drinking) cannot be minimized as parental alcohol abuse is related to teen alcohol use and abuse.



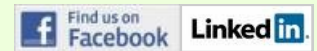
Melissa K. Tibbits, Ph.D.

Formed in 1978, PRIDE-Omaha, Inc. is one of the few nationally recognized, parent / community drug prevention organizations in the United States that remains dedicated to preventing the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs by children.

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### Sarpy County "Medicine Drop" a Success

On Saturday, October 9, 2010 community members dropped off expired, unused prescription and over the counter drugs to the Hy-Vee location in Shadow Lake. This free *drive up, drop off and drive out* event was very successful. Items collected include:

**Liquids/Aerosols - 2 boxes = 60 pounds**  
**Pills - 4 boxes = 64 pounds**  
**Sharps - 2 boxes = 12 pounds**

This event was sponsored by **PRIDE**, the Sarpy County Sheriff's Department, Sarpy County Attorney's Office, Sarpy/Cass County Department of Health, and Home Instead Senior Care.

**Red Ribbon  
Drug Prevention Month  
OCTOBER**

On October 6, 2010 Governor Dave Heineman signed a proclamation declaring October to be Red Ribbon Drug Prevention Month in Nebraska. **PRIDE** sought out this state recognition on behalf of all prevention organizations and individuals working to keep kids safe and drug free.

Two additional city proclamations were signed by Mayor David Black of Papillion on September 27, 2010, and Mayor Mary Johnson and the Bennington City Council on October 11, 2010.

Photos (top to bottom, left to right) - (Oct. 6) Rick Lenarduzzi, Kareen Hickman, Governor Dave Heineman, and Paul Carter; (September 27) Mayor Black and Paul Carter; (Oct. 11) Paul Carter, Mayor Mary Johnson and the Bennington City Council.



**Report: Illegal Drug Use Up Sharply Last Year (2009)**

Illegal drug use by persons aged 12 years and older in the United States rose sharply last year. The 9% increase over 2008 represents the highest level of illicit drug use in nearly a decade.

The 2009 National Survey on Drug Use and Health reports that marijuana use increased by 10% over 2008. The use of ecstasy and methamphetamines also increased, while cocaine use decreased.

The survey, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, studied 67,500 people. It is considered the most comprehensive annual snapshot of drug use in the United States.

Gil Kerlikowske, Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, called the increase in drug use disappointing but said he was not surprised, given "eroding attitudes" about the perception of harm from illegal drugs and the number of states approving "medicinal" marijuana.

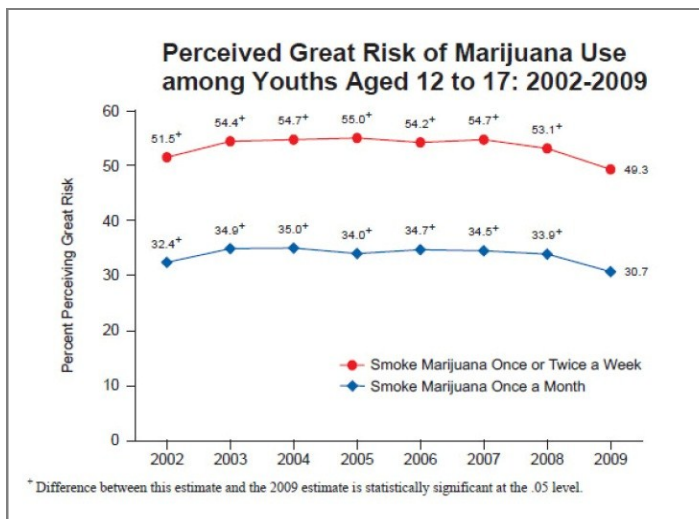
"I think all of the attention and the focus of calling marijuana 'medicine' has sent the absolute wrong message to our young people," Kerlikowske said in an interview.

The survey found that the number of young people aged 12 to 17 who perceived a great risk of harm from smoking marijuana once or twice a week dropped from 54.7% in 2007 to 49.3% in 2009.

The rise in marijuana use comes as California voters prepare to decide in November whether to legalize the drug. Marijuana sales and use in the 14 states that allow it to be considered "medicine" have increased dramatically since the federal government signaled last year that it would not prosecute marijuana sellers who follow state rules.

Robert L. DuPont, M.D., President of the Institute for

*Continued on page 3...*



This chart identifies the dangerous correlation between the perceived risks of marijuana and drug abuse by teens. By classifying marijuana as "medicine" the perceived risk of its dangers decrease and results in an increased use of this toxic, mind-altering drug.

### Report: Illegal Drug Use Up Sharply Last Year continued...

Behavior and Health, Inc., commented on the survey results, saying, "This significant increase in marijuana use is the result of well-funded and increasingly successful efforts to minimize the serious public health threat of the use of marijuana and other illegal drugs." Dr. DuPont also warns that marijuana legalization would lead to further decreased perception of risk of use, increased availability, and increased marijuana use.

-Associated Press, Sam Hananel, Sept. 15, 2010  
 -Institute For Behavior and Health Commentary, "National Rates of Drug Use Rise Sharply: Implications for US Drug Policy," September 20, 2010



### Milton Creagh Delivers Hard-Hitting, Inspirational Message to Metro Omaha Youth

In the spirit of Red Ribbon Drug Prevention Month, the Elks National Drug Awareness Program and **PRIDE** have collaborated with greater Omaha/Council Bluffs area schools to provide teens with an opportunity to hear the *Ur Choice Ur Voice* message created and delivered by internationally renowned motivational speaker, Milton Creagh.

Milton Creagh, a.k.a. Bigg Milt, speaks to more than 200,000 young people annually. His hard-hitting, inspirational message to high school students is *Enough is Enough!* and *There must be a Change!* Milt has personally declared war: *War on Drugs! War on Hate! War on Racism! War on Ignorance! War on senseless Violence!* His message: "Hear the truth about this war, We can fight back, We can make a difference, We can save our community."

For more information about Milton Creagh, contact **PRIDE** at 402.397.3309.



Picture (left to right) – North High School Principal Gene Haynes; Elks Nebraska Drug Prevention Coordinator Jean Averall; PRIDE Executive Director Paul Carter; and international speaker Milton Creagh.

### Third Grade Students Pledge to Live Tobacco-Free

During the month of October, third graders in a number of schools in the metro Omaha area are participating in an educational campaign to learn the long-term and short-term health risks caused by tobacco use.



Sponsors of *No Tobacco Challenge* include **PRIDE**; Methodist Hospital Lung Cancer Clinic, Metro-Area Schools; and Methodist Hospital Foundation.

### MOTAC Recognizes C&A Industries, Inc. for Exemplary Smoke-Free Campus Policy



The Metro Omaha Tobacco Action Coalition (MOTAC) presented a certificate of appreciation to members of **C&A Industries'** wellness group on September 16, 2010 for implementing a smoke-free campus policy that goes above and beyond the current smoke-free air laws.

MOTAC recognizes businesses and property owners who implement exemplary smoke-free or tobacco-free policies. Tobacco-free policies are a growing trend as community leaders realize the importance of such policies.

[www.motac.org](http://www.motac.org)



Picture (front to back, left to right) – Tom Hansen, Mary Crosby, Dena Wineinger, Nicole Bencker, Troy Carlton, Teresa Lauver, Sarah Bonow, Lisa Brannan, Jenny Tesnohlidek, Tiffany Bessmer, and Hanneka Brown.

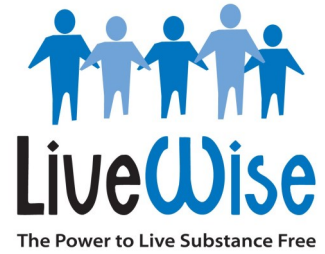
### PARENT RESOURCE TIP

For parents and teachers who are looking for fun learning opportunities for young people, click on <http://teach.fcps.net/trt10/PowerPoint.htm> to create enjoyable learning experiences. Drug facts and refusal skills can be discussed and taught using these PowerPoint games.

### Youth Training Opportunity!

LiveWise and R5 have teamed up to offer Omaha area high school students with the unique opportunity to take part in a youth leadership summit. The event entitled 'Against the Grain' will take place **Saturday, October 23, 2010** from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Ralston High School. This free event is open to all area high school students and provides teens the opportunity to explore what it means to be a leader, and to empower them with skills necessary to face difficult situations.

All participants will receive a free t-shirt, canvas tote, and journal. Lunch is provided. Anyone interested may contact Laura of LiveWise Coalition at 402.990.7355 or [llarsen@livewisecoalition.org](mailto:llarsen@livewisecoalition.org).



### Parent Alert: Marijuana Soda Debuts in CO

Parents be advised, a Colorado-based company introduced a new soda allowing "medical" marijuana patients to get a buzz without the smoke. These cannabis-laced flavors are being marketed as *convenient, discreet, potent*. Orders are taken over the phone.



## COMMUNITY DAY 2010 SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 13

PRIDE is participating in Younker's annual Community Day event. Please consider purchasing your \$5 tickets at PRIDE.

Tickets are available now. Call (402) 397-3309.



Visit the following websites for information on upcoming events!

PRIDE-Omaha, Inc. - [www.prideprevention.org](http://www.prideprevention.org)

LiveWise Coalition - [www.regionsix.com/livewise](http://www.regionsix.com/livewise)

Metro Omaha Tobacco Action Coalition (MOTAC) - [www.motac.org](http://www.motac.org)

Tobacco Free Sarpy (TFS) - [www.tobaccofreesarpy.org](http://www.tobaccofreesarpy.org)



PRIDE-Omaha, Inc. would like to extend our gratitude to our donors and funders; friends; and family for their support. PRIDE relies on contributions to help provide services promoting a healthy, safe and drug-free environment for children.

## Thanks for your Contributions

OPS Nathan Hale

And thank you to Manota E. Simon Foundation for supporting this publication!

### PRIDE-Omaha, Inc. Wish List

Computer flash drives; rolling brochure display; acrylic brochure/flyer display; acrylic collection box; wire utility cart; folding table.

Thanks for considering a donation to PRIDE. If you prefer to give a cash donation, visit [www.prideprevention.org](http://www.prideprevention.org), or send a check by mail to: 6143 Whitmore St. / Omaha, NE 68152.

### Contact PRIDE

PRIDE has changed its hours of operation to accommodate educators and parents who would like to access our Resource Center after work.

#### NEW Office Hours

Monday-Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Friday, 8:00 a.m. to Noon

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