

Safe Neighborhoods Newsletter

Safe Kids Now Network, LLC
Stephanie Mann, Director

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Sher Graham, Editor

Making Neighborhoods Safer for Kids & Families!

Safe Kids Now Network LLC (www.safekidsnow.com) shares information to empower and keep children, families, and neighbors safe throughout our global communities.



Children are God's love gift; they are Heaven's generous reward - Psalm 127:3

NEIGHBORHOOD BREAKING NEWS!

✓ **MEMBER PHOTOS:** We would like to use our network member photos of their kids and families. We need your help. Please email photos of the children and families you serve and your programs. Make sure you have permission from parents (if minors) and tell us in the email the information: Agency, program name/event, City/State, Who is in Photo. Thanks.

From the Director's Desk

Greetings from the Director's Desk! This month, we are sharing several articles from our network members on topics that are important to the safety of our children and communities. If you have an article you would like to share, please email to safeneighborhoods@gmail.com by the 10th of each month.

This month, I am talking about the myths of cycles – violence, drug abuse, child abuse. I would appreciate your comments and thoughts on this issue.

YOUR NEWS: If you have relevant announcements about important events aligned with our efforts to shed light on the problems that kids, their families, please email safeneighborhoods@gmail.com by the 10th of each month prior to our monthly newsletter emailed around the 15th-20th of each month. If it is an event, we need 60 days lead time to promote your event.

From the Editor

This month, we are sharing trends and statistics on teen vaping. A leader in advocacy for the passage of state legislation on teen vaping is the Drug Education Council in Mobile, AL. Their advocacy is 24/7 as it has become a crisis not only in the Gulf Coast region and the state of Alabama but our country.

6 MYTHS KEEPING AMERICANS LOCKED INTO CRIME AND VIOLENCE

By Stephanie Mann

For decades, politicians and community leaders have perpetuated myths as the cycle of drug abuse, gangs, and violence continues from one generation to the next. Such myths include:

Myth #1 – Police can keep us safe. Police have a limited role. Additional police on the streets increase response time, but their job is to react to crime. Citizens can PREVENT crime! The national average is 2.4 police for every 1000 citizens. It is not realistic to assume the police can keep us safe.

Myth #2 – More money will stop crime. In the past 40 years, taxpayers have spent billions of dollars on education, home security, guards, swat teams, training, scanning equipment, shot spotter, and surveillance cameras. Money does not stop domestic violence or youth from being abused at home or bullied at school. It does not put a responsible father back home or increase time spent with children.

Myth #3 – Hitting and verbal abuse will not harm children! Abused children struggle to be accepted. They often learn to bully, or they become victims. They don't trust their instincts or intuition or develop a healthy conscience, which can protect them. Children grow strong and resilient when they have love and a supportive network.

Myth #4 – Laws control criminal behavior. Politicians write laws to keep the public safe. Laws have limitations. Most citizens obey rules, but criminals, gangs, pimps, and drug dealers ignore laws.

Myth #5 – Racism keeps the community oppressed. The blame game divides and distracts from real solutions. Blaming police or society perpetuates anger. Anger gives disconnected youth an excuse to be violent and become self-destructive, which is a false sense of power.

Myth #6 – Poverty keeps people from progressing. Politicians gain power by creating an illusion of compassion. For decades, taxpayers have spent billions of dollars on programs, including the "War on Poverty" and "War on Drugs." Some programs helped, but others destroyed self-confidence, self-determination, and motivation.

Myths have some truth, but they don't change behavior. Connected citizens have the power to reduce fear and create positive change to restore community trust, safety, and confidence. America is at a crossroads. Will security in the U.S. require more laws and less freedom, or will we focus on supporting neighborhoods and strengthening families? The largest group of crime victims are children. They are "canaries in the mine."

Two major shifts are needed to create peaceful cities.

- An awakening to raise resilient, spiritually centered children with a self-protective conscience.
- Community involvement creates safe neighborhoods and, ultimately, safer, friendlier cities.

Our national goal must be to strengthen families. Freedom is an inner journey with supportive families and a network of connected neighbors to create a strong sense of community.

About the Director: Stephanie L. Mann, Crime and Violence Prevention Consultant and founder of Safe Kids Now National Network LLC. Her experiences in crime prevention has given her the insight, wisdom, and vision to advocate for safe communities and neighborhoods for all children around the world. She is the author of five books on family, home, neighborhood and city safety. Stephanie conducts workshops and keynote speeches as a professional speaker on crime prevention and safety. You can reach her at safeneighborhoods@gmail.com or visit <https://www.safekidsnow.com>



RED RIBBON CAMPAIGN: The nation's largest and longest-running drug-use prevention campaign

The website for redribbon.org states the following:

"National Family Partnership, formerly the National Federation of Parents for Drug Free Youth, was established as a grassroots, nonprofit organization in 1980 by a handful of concerned and determined parents who were convinced they

should begin to play a leadership role in drug prevention. Since its founding thirty years ago, NFP has devoted its efforts to the well-being of youth. Today, NFP is a national leader in drug prevention education & advocacy. Our mission is to lead and support our nation's families and communities in nurturing the full potential of healthy, drug free youth."

One of their major drug awareness programs is the annual National Red Ribbon Campaign™. Beginning in 1985, the Red Ribbon has touched the lives of millions of people around the world. "In response to the murder of DEA Agent Enrique Camarena, angered parents and youth in communities across the country began wearing Red Ribbons as a symbol of their commitment to raise awareness of the killing and destruction cause by drugs in America. In 1988, NFP sponsored the first National Red Ribbon Celebration. Today, the Red Ribbon serves as a catalyst to mobilize communities to educate youth and encourage participation in drug prevention activities."

For more information, visit <https://www.redribbon.org>.

On the Gulf Coast

The vision of the Drug Education Council (DEC) headquartered in Mobile, AL, is to promote healthy choices by helping to guide the hearts and minds of individuals and families and also working to change the community narrative when it comes to substance use disorder and addiction. The 57-year-old agency is licensed to serve the state of Alabama, currently providing services in Baldwin, Clarke, Conecuh, Escambia, Mobile, Monroe and Washington Counties. The agency has offices in Mobile and Baldwin Counties.

In the Gulf Coast region, the Red Ribbon Campaign is a year-long leadership program for our youth sponsored by the Drug Education Council. Each year, outstanding students from Mobile and Baldwin County are selected as individuals who exemplify the six pillars of Character promoted by the Character Counts initiative and the Drug Education Council. These include trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. This year, more than 160 students participated from Mobile and Baldwin counties.

The 2024 National Red Ribbon Week is October 23rd - 31st. However, we encourage each school to celebrate Red Ribbon during a week in October or November that is most suitable for them.

These young student leaders work with their School Red Ribbon Coordinator to lead Red Ribbon activities on their school campus during Red Ribbon Week. The students are also challenged to plan and execute a community service project during the school year to help their peers build a connection to the community and encourage healthy lifestyle choices. DEC encourages each school to choose a Red Ribbon leader. There are endless opportunities for leadership projects. These student leaders are honored at the Superintendents' Red Ribbon Leadership Kickoff events held in Mobile County and Baldwin County each September.

Superintendents address students and their families at the exciting Kickoff events and share their visions for the projects each student will be asked to complete. Then in the spring, student leaders who submit project information to DEC will be presented with a commemorative medallion at a Red Ribbon Celebration. Courtney Upton Leadership Scholarships are awarded to outstanding 12th-grade projects in Mobile and Baldwin Counties.

Virginia Guy, Director of the Drug Education Council, commented: "There are so many moments to remember, but the best are when I'm stopped in the community by parents or students and told what a difference this program made in their lives!" She continued "The long-lasting outcomes are seen when students are told they are Leaders, they, more often than not, live up to that expectation. We believe that everyone can be a leader."

Guy continues as she talks about the impact on these communities, "One of the things I've learned in my career is that it's not as important what is wrong in a child's life as what is right in that child's life. Sometimes we can't fix the wrong, but we can strengthen what is right. The Red Ribbon Leadership program does this by impacting all domains of a young person's life... individual, family, peers, school, church, community, etc. When a student leads positive activities on their campus... and does a community service project, they feel a sense of individual pride and they bond with the school and community. We know that the more the student is bonded, the less likely they are to become involved in negative behaviors... drugs, violence, etc." "Personally, I've witnessed countless students blossom, grow, and realize they can make a difference in their community. It's simple, but extremely rewarding." For more information on the Drug Education Council, visit <https://www.drugeducation.org>.

Underage Vaping in America: Drug Education Council, Mobile, AL

A second project this year for the Drug Education Council was the passage of the Underage Vaping Bill in Alabama. DEC spent many hours during this past legislative season lobbying and advocating for the Underage Vaping Bill. During the 2024 Alabama legislative session, in a rare show of bipartisan support, the Underage Vaping Bill was passed in the Alabama House of Representatives 103-0 vote in April following a unanimous vote in the Alabama Senate in March. The bill bans possession of vaping devices by persons under the age of 21. The bill was signed in August by Governor Kay Ivey.

As of June 30, 2024, all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands have passed legislation prohibiting the sale of e-cigarettes to underage persons.

Here is information about this crisis level. <https://www.drugeducation.org> (Printed with permission)

Underage vaping is at crisis levels!

- More than half of all high school students nationwide have vaped
- Nearly 18% of 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students report vaping marijuana
- Almost half of high school students who vaped said they vape at least 20 days a month, and nearly a third said they vape every day
- We are increasingly seeing children as young as 7- and 8-years-old vaping
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Vaping is dangerous!

- Vaping greatly increases the chance of nicotine addiction among underage users
- A single nicotine cartridge delivers as much nicotine as an entire package of cigarettes
- Vaping THC is increasingly the norm, and, just as with nicotine, vapers receive a highly potent and concentrated form that is much stronger than a traditional marijuana joint or bong would provide (e.g., 80% THC with a vaping device vs. 5-20% THC with dry marijuana)
- Doctors are reporting serious health issues stemming from underage vaping, including the need for lung transplants in teenagers

Now is the time to outlaw underage vaping!

- We're asking Congress to pass legislation making it illegal for persons under the age of 19 to vape or to be in possession of vaping devices
- Minors cannot legally smoke tobacco, drink alcohol, or be in possession of alcoholic beverages nor should they be able to be in possession of vaping devices

The Problem: Underage Vaping is at Crisis Levels

- The FDA is Overwhelmed: Vaping devices and products are evolving faster than the FDA can manage—along with loopholes and new products that allow manufacturers and sellers to evade regulations as fast as they are enacted.
- Vaping is Taxing Our Resources: Neither school officials nor law enforcement have the adequate resources to discipline youth offenders. This has resulted in inconsistent consequences leading to highly addicted children who can become both distracted and disruptive in the classroom.
- Marketing to Kids: The tobacco industry is heavily invested in the vaping industry, giving it the resources needed to evolve and evade regulators. Vape products are marketed to youth through brand ambassadors, partnerships, and other campaigns on social media. With more than 15,000 flavors currently on the market, most teens vape because they enjoy the taste. Some products with CBD and Delta-8 can even be purchased legally by minors.

The Hard Questions

- At What Cost America? The cost? Healthcare use among exclusive e-cigarette users totals \$1.3 billion annually. Or, roughly \$1,800 per e-cigarette user.
- At What Cost Big Tobacco? The global e-cigarette and vape market was valued at \$22.4 billion in 2022 and is expected to grow to \$182.8 billion by 2030.
- At What Cost Cool, Teens? Nicotine is highly addictive to young brains. It can cause long-lasting negative development effects and harm parts of the brain that control attention, learning, mood, and impulse control.

The Solution: Outlaw Vaping & the Possession of Vaping Devices by Individuals Under 19 of Age

How...

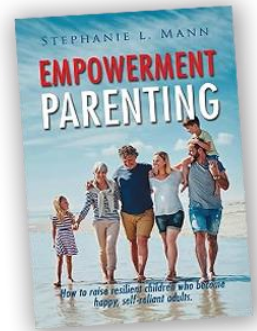
- Prohibit the use and possession of any vaping device by anyone under the age of 19.

- Expand the definition of all devices to an all-encompassing Inhalant Delivery System and change the language of current laws to make them more effective and easier to enforce as consistent language does not exist.
- Mandate progressive consequences by raising fines, driver's license suspensions, and more. For example, the Drug Education Council partnered with Clarke County, Alabama, officials to institute a five-session course for the offender and a guardian, plus a monetary fine.

VIOLENCE IS OFTEN THE RESULT OF PARENTS NOT TEACHING CHILDREN about INNER POWER.

Neglecting to empower youth can lead to mental health problems later in life! A child who feels love, respected, supported and heard will choose not to abuse drugs, become violent or develop mental health problems. Today's society can confuse youth about sex and violence. Parents can drug and violence proof their children.

Stephanie Mann wrote "Empowerment Parenting" as a result of working in our inner cities. Most children, regardless of their environment, do NOT become sexual, violent or abuse drugs. This book is necessary for every parent to read and share with their children's teachers, and other family members. When parents have the knowledge to empower themselves, then their behavioral choices become empowerment action for their children. EMPOWER one child or a group of children! Empowerment Parenting provides parents, grandparents, teachers, coaches and educators the tools to help youth become centered, responsible and self-aware. Young people recognize the power of bullies and abusers. However, they need to know how to discover their inner power to handle the slings and arrows of life. Visit www.safekidsnow.com to order the book "Empowerment Parenting: How to Raise Resilient Children Who Become Happy, Self-Reliant Adults." www.safekidsnow.com



NOVEMBER LIFE HEALTH CELEBRATIONS

IN NOVEMBER, CELEBRATE Lung Cancer Awareness Month; Stomach Cancer Awareness Month; American Diabetes Month; International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day (November 16); National Family Caregivers Month; National Stress Awareness Day (November 6); National Alzheimer's Disease Month

Thought Leader Wisdom

Three thoughts on child learning:

"Learning is the cornerstone of growth; it empowers us to shape our futures with knowledge and confidence."

"A child's education is like a canvas, where every lesson adds a stroke of brilliance."

"In the garden of life, education is the sunlight that helps ideas blossom."