

Second Saturday Net

Aug 2003

Teens Talking To Teens

This summer we had a series of meetings with young people aged 12 to 18 at Mike's Soul Food Restaurant in downtown Santa Cruz for the purpose of developing a survey project on teen alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) use in our community. Here are some of the things we learned from the ten who responded to a pilot version of our Soul Food Survey administered by their peers:

Why do you think teens use alcohol?

Teen #01: *Because of peer pressure or because they want to...*

Teen #02: *So they can loosen up and talk to anyone about anything--for sure!*

Teen #03: *Because other people are drinking so they feel like they gotta drink too...*

Teen #04: *Peer pressure... They do it to take the edge off in tough situations because they don't want to get stuck when they're around friends who are using the drugs and feel like an outsider... Or maybe there is some pain in their life that won't go away... Sometimes they try it because of peer pressure to be cool and then they get addicted...*

Teen #05: *Addiction or peer pressure... So that you can fit in... It could just be experimentation --it seems like something new and makes kids feel empowered... Or maybe it's something to take the pain away—the negativity... The main reason is that kids are sinners from birth...*

Teen #06: *They do it to have fun or to be cool... Because of peer pressure...*

Teen #07: *To be cool and because of peer pressure...*

Teen #08: *They do it because others do it...*

Teen #09: *For the thrill and fun of it... To capture the moment...*

Teen #10: *They use it because they like to get drunk—it brings comfort to them...*

Why do you think teens use tobacco?

Teen #01: *To look older than they are...*

Teen #02: *To look cool and to ease stress--for sure!*

Teen #03: *Because they can--for the hell of it... and because it relieves stress...*

Teen #04: *They see adults using cigarettes and they want to feel older by doing what adults do ... Or sometimes they do it just to rebel...*

Teen #05: *They start doing it because of peers... It's the same as with alcohol plus it's very addictive... Teens feel like adults feel--they want to momentarily take away the pain of life...*

Teen #06: *Mostly they do it to look cool...*

Teen #07: *To be cool and because of peer pressure...*

Teen #08: *To be cool...*

Teen #09: *For the effect of the drug*

Teen #10: *Same reason as they use alcohol—it brings comfort...*

Why do you think teens use other kinds of drugs?

Teen #01: *Peer pressure or problems at home... Examples of other drugs teens use? Weed... Coke ... Acid...*

Teen #02: *To be relaxed--For sure!... Examples of other drugs teens use? Weed... Shrooms... Shurm ... E... Columbian Nose Candy...*

Teen #03: *Because their friends use it so they gotta fit in by using it... Examples of other drugs teens use? Indo (Weed)... Ecstasy ... Heroin... Cocaine...*

Teen #04: *Because it is a cool thing to do--peer pressure... Or some kids just like the feelin' of getting high --or because it is relaxing... But mostly it's peer pressure... Examples of other drugs teens use? Marijuana (you get a weird sensation)... Inhaling glue... Sniffing paint... Sniffing markers...*

Teen #05: *Same reasons they use alcohol or tobacco... Man has fallen from original creation when Adam sinned... It's like peers want and peers get...*

Why do you think teens use other kinds of drugs?

Teen #06: *Actually it's the same as for alcohol--peer pressure or just to fit in... Examples of other drugs teens use? Weed...Huffing...*

Teen #07: *To be cool and because of peer pressure...*

Teen #09: *For the thrill and to have fun...Examples of other drugs teens use? Marijuana... Ecstasy ... Heroin...Cocaine...*

Teen #10: *They like the feeling it gives them...Examples of other drugs teens use? OC...Ecstasy ...Heroin ...Cannibus...PCP...LSD...Crack...Coke...*

What questions might teens have about ATOD use?

Teen #01: *Does tobacco cause cancer? Are tobacco and other drugs habit forming? Will using drugs cause brain damage?*

Teen #02: *What happens if I get caught with alcohol or cigarettes or other drugs? Can drinking damage You in later life? Can you die from combining different drugs?*

Teen #03: *If I mix more than two different kinds of drinks can it damage my liver? What happens if I'm found with tobacco and I'm under age? Can I die from doing more than one drug a day?*

Teen #04: *What does using glue do for you or to you?*

Teen #05: *Would teens stop if they knew more about the dangers or consequences of using drugs?*

Teen #06: *What does it feel like to use alcohol, tobacco and other drugs? Does it really make you feel cooler? Can you feel the difference between taking speed and taking heroin?*

Teen #08: *What does DUI mean?*

Teen #09: *Is there a way to know how much alcohol is too much? What's the strongest type of tobacco? How come you always want to get higher? Why is it so fun?*

Teen #10: *How bad is alcohol for you? What does tobacco and other drugs do to your health? Can combining drugs kill you?*

Do you agree that teen ATOD use is a problem in our community?

Teen #01: *Yes... What can be done to make it less of a problem? Maybe put on some teen plays or community awareness events...*

Teen #02: *No--Gangs are more of a problem than alcohol--for sure!*


Teen #03: *No--Violence is more of an issue for anyone in our society...*

Teen #04: *Yes... What can be done to make it less of a problem? Maybe youth groups--Or maybe have more serious consequences...*

Teen #05: *No--Kids and teens need those who know the truth of the Gospel to get out and spread the good news about Jesus...Teens need to repent their sins and come to Jesus whose love covers a multitude of sins...We just need to get God back into the hearts of youth...*

Teen #06: *Yes and No--Not as much as in other places... What can be done to make it less of a problem? Yeah--you could get involved in sports and more things after school...*

Teen #09: *Yes...What can be done to make it less of a problem? Play sports...swim... go to the mall read ...write...play chess...*

Teen #10: *Yes...What can be done to make it less of a problem? Do sports and stuff... *



Nubra Floyd and Pedzisai Mashiri discuss drug issues w/ Second Saturday teens and parents at Mike's Soul Food - Jul 2003 photo by mic

Second Saturday Network provides a community based program of educational activities aimed at enhancing identity development by promoting African cultural awareness and an informed appreciation of the Black heritage experience. Your contribution of any amount--or just a few encouraging words-- lets us know you value this work.

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