

Greenwich Central School

"Scholarship, Character, Community - Cultivating the Future"



September 21, 2009

To parents and guardians,

On Wednesday, September 16th many of our school staff and community members attended a meeting of the newly re-energized GECC (Greenwich Easton Community Cares). There was a news release last Friday in the Post-Star that did a marvelous job of capturing the spirit of the meeting and the emerging movement to do something to save lives.

The School has been tracking student self-reported data on drug and alcohol use for the past ten years. The good news is that we are seeing less use of cigarettes, alcohol and marijuana. The really horrible news is that heroin and prescription drug abuse is on the rise. Equally as shocking is that although we have had slight improvement in some of our students' behavior, overall the self reported use of alcohol is 5%-10% higher than other students in Washington and Warren counties and 10%-20% higher than the national averages! Our students' use of marijuana is about the same as other communities, locally and nationally.

Our 2008 survey has indicated that:

- 33% of our 7th grade students have used alcohol in their lifetimes and the use rises to 87% among our seniors.
- 8.5% of our 9th grade students report having five or more alcoholic drinks in a row *twice* in the past two weeks and 13.5% of our seniors.
- 9% of our 7th graders have use marijuana and 41% of our seniors.
- 8% of the 7th grade has used pain relievers without a prescription and 20% of our seniors.
- Our seniors have also reported use of stimulants (11%), LSD (9%), crack (6%), and heroin (3%). All of these numbers have *increased* over the past four years!

There is no doubt that our school needs to do a better job of helping our students to be more resistant to substance abuse. Currently, we are instituting new programs, K-12 to heighten student awareness of the personal and societal damage of drug and alcohol abuse. We also are increasing our vigilance and tightening our codes to make our stand on substance abuse clear to students and the community.

I would encourage all of you to join in the community effort to make a difference and save lives.

For learning,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Matthias E. Donnelly".

Matthias E. Donnelly