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Be a Piece of the Puzzle: Making a Difference at 1000 Feet

By DeAnna Pearl



Have you taken a look lately at the Vernonia school calendar? If you do, you will see an amazing juxtaposition of dates and events, both school and community related, jockeying for space on campus. Small communities like Vernonia depend on their schools to provide for gathering spaces. With this availability also comes responsibility to adhere to the policies in place to keep youth and families safe and healthy. Hence the tobacco, drug and alcohol free zones and during school sponsored or partnered events on school grounds.

It is also important to know what is prohibited within 1000 feet (any direction) of your kid's school. First let's establish what 1000 feet looks like from the boundaries of the school in its current location: District Office to Madison; Washington Grade School

to the fire department; VHS office to Anderson Park; VHS office to C Street. As for the new site, that isn't so clear yet but the boundaries set will still be the same: 1000 feet in all directions.

In 1982, Sen. Strom Thurmond introduces a crime crack-down bill that would make it a federal crime to sell drugs within 1,000 feet of a school. In 1984, Congress passes the Comprehensive Crime Control Act, providing tougher sentences for those convicted of selling drugs within 1,000 feet of a school. By 1986, the Safe and Drug-Free Schools & Communities Act (SDFSCA) was established. Unfortunately, outside of the 1000 feet of a school zone, the penalties are different and individuals are often released without being charged.

The purpose of the SDFSCA is to support programs that: (1) prevent violence in and around schools; (2) prevent the illegal use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs; (3) involve parents and communities; and, (4) are coordinated with related Federal, State, school, and community efforts and resources to foster a safe and drug-free learning environment that promotes student academic achievement. It is common that if an individual is found in possession of schedule I or II drugs, without a written prescription, they are more likely to be looking to distribute. More often than not, the person is school aged and seeking to sell to other minors.

The current VSD 47J's Substance/Drug Abuse policy reflects this. According to the policy it is prohibited to manufacture, distribute, purchase, administer, or to be in possession of schedule I or II drugs

and is a Class A Felony. Schedule I drugs include hydrocodone, methadone, oxycodone, heroin, meth, cocaine, and MDMA (ecstasy). Schedule II drugs included alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana. Further, it is illegal to be in possession of objects or devices to ingest, inject or deliver said drugs. The District policy, as in all polices developed by the district, is reinforced by Oregon Revised



Statutes. You can find this ORS and others at www.leg.state.or.us/ors. The impact of Drug Free School Zones helps keep our kids safe from outside influences during the school day. According to the 2011 Oregon Healthy Teen (OHT) survey there is a significant reduction of use and distribution on school grounds. Minors who report seeing or using ATOD's on school campus is at an all time low. This can be attributed to the tougher drug free work place laws and Drug Free School Zone enforcement by administration. Both these laws hold students, staff and visitors' accountable while on school property and its surroundings.

Unfortunately, in the same 2011 OHT report, marijuana, heroin, alcohol and prescription drug abuse is on the rise. If students are not buying and using on school campus, it is not hard to deduce they are access the above mention drugs in community settings. In Vernonia, the use of illegal drugs and prescription drugs has risen 25% between 2008 and 2011 for 11th graders. Student reported that is easier than ever to obtain alcohol, illicit and Rx drugs; up to 85% easier. But there is hope for younger students coming up the ranks.

OSSOM students care about not only what happens on campus, but outside of their 1000 buffer zone. The community is invited to join school students on Friday April 20th, to witness the aftermath of an accident caused by underage drinking. Students will be using footage from the 2010 SKID event to set the stage for lingering consequences of driving drunk and buzzed. Unfortunately, this is still the #1 cause of death for teens.

The Drug Free School Zone of 1000 feet is working. School districts like Vernonia are seeing is a reduction of use, abuse and side effects on school grounds. Communities as a whole could learn a lot from the intolerance of the manufacturing, distribution of, purchase of, administer of, or to be in possession of schedule I or II drugs in and around minors specifically within the city and county limits. Ensuring an extra bite to individuals targeting our children as customers seems to be working.

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National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-TALK (8255)
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Are you feeling desperate, alone or hopeless? Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline a free, 24-hour hotline available to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. Your call will be routed to the nearest crisis center to you.

Veterans Suicide
Prevention Hotline
1-800-273-TALK (8255) Press 1

Teen Health and Wellness Week—April 16-20th

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| Monday
April 16 | Media Distribution
Posters, Flyers, P.S.A.'s |
| Wednesday
April 18
9am-2pm | Health & Wellness Fair
Booths and Activities
Washington Grade School |
| Friday
April 20
12-2pm | Price of Underage Drinking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Hall Presentation • Every 15-Minutes • Beyond S.K.I.D. Reenactment • Empowering the By-stander <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DON'T let friends drive drunk or buzzed • STOP sales to minors • STOP the purchase for minors Vernonia Logger Dome |
| Saturday
April 21 | Vernonia High School Prom |

2012 O.S.S.O.M.

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Coming Soon!

Free Summer Meals Program

June 18th—August 17th



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Any questions please contact
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