



# Health/Education

## Youth and weapons: a potential for injury and death

CONTRIBUTED STORY  
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Results of a new survey of Oregon high school students suggest that at least 8 percent, or 13,000 youth, carried some sort of weapon to school at least once during the 1998-1999 school year, according to public health officials at the state Department of Human Services.

The survey responses also led officials to estimate that 1,300 students carried a gun to school. These findings contained in a newly released report are from the DHS Health Division.

"A Potential for Violent Injury: Guns and Knives in the Schools" is based on a 1999 youth risk survey conducted by the Health Division. The report documents how common the carrying of weapons, including guns, is among youth.

"Carrying a gun, knife or club is a part of life for a surprising number of youth," says Mel Kohn, MD, deputy state epidemiologist at the Health Division. "For many of these students, it only one of several risky influences in their lives."

Among the findings:

Gun carrying is strongly associated with many of risky behaviors and influences, including fighting, substance abuse, physical and sexual abuse by adults and harassment at school.

Of students whose conditions and circumstances included 10 or more risk factors, 11.4 percent said they carried a gun to school compared with 0.2 percent of students who had none. Students without an adult to go to were almost twice as likely to take weapons to school as were those with two or more supportive adults (12.8 versus 6.7 percent).

Students who had been purposely hit, slapped, or physically hurt by an

adult's family member were twice as likely to take a weapon to school as students who had not been abused (14.3 percent versus 7.1 percent).

Students who experienced harassment due to race, gender and sexual orientation were 36 times more likely to carry a gun to school (14.3 percent versus 0.4 percent).

Students who abused five or more substances were 39 times more likely than non-abuser to carry a gun to school (7.8 percent versus 0.2 percent). Students who said they were involved in six or more fights at school were 86 times more likely to have a gun at school (25.7 percent versus 0.3 per cent.)

"Although the data do not tell us why these students carry weapons, they suggest there are factors within the family, school, and community that are associated with youths carrying weapons. It is crucial for families, community members and school officials to understand what these factors are, in the interest of preventing injuries and deaths," Kohn says.

The 1999 state Legislature took action, which will help protect children. SB 344 establishes a stronger collaboration among schools, courts and law enforcement to help assure safety in schools. It requires school officials to contact law enforcement officials any time they believe a firearm is brought into a school, or if they become aware of a threat of harm.

"Because guns, more than any weapon, are more likely to kill, we must reduce their availability to youth," says Dan Noelle, Multnomah County Sheriff. "When weapons are present and emotions are high, what might otherwise have been a moment of sadness, an argument, or fistfight may lead to serious injury or even death."

## Time to institute your Summer creativity through PCC

CONTRIBUTED STORY  
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Summer is the time of year when Mother Nature's creative forces come into full bloom. So, isn't it time you get out and mold your own spare time into a creative endeavor through Portland Community College's Summer Art Institute 2000? There are 14 different credit classes that will be offered through the institute fees as low as \$4 and

no higher than \$12. All classes will be held at PCC's Sylvania Campus, located at 12000 SW 49th Avenue.

Even through some of the institute's classes begin Monday, June 19, it is not too late to register.

All of the courses offered by the PCC Summer Art Institute span the reaches of the creative imagination. Check out A-Z Comic Book Creation, a class that guides students through character design, story telling, drawing techniques, publishing,

promotion and developed by Comedy Central, teaches the class from 2-5:20 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursday beginning Tuesday, June 20. Don't forget the course Native American Plateau Baskets and Culture, a hands-on basketry workshop focusing on plateau tribes of Eastern Oregon and Washington. Pat Courtney Gold, who is a member of Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs teaches the class from noon to 4:50 p.m. Mondays through

Thursday starting Monday, July 10. Other classes includes Basic Design, Introduction to Drawing, Drawing Ceramics I, Sculpture: Welding, Brush Calligraphy, Alternative Photographic Processes, Painting Encaustic, Pinhole Photography, Bronze Casting Workshop, Italic Calligraphy Workshop and Native American Art. For more information on any of these PCC Summer Art Institute classes, call 503-977-4279.

## Abstinence-until-marriage programs added

CONTRIBUTED STORY  
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Oregon's abstinence program, Students Today Aren't Ready for Sex (STARS), has provided abstinence education to 104,555 Oregon youth in 32 of Oregon's 36 counties since 1995.

Beginning this fall, three additional abstinence programs will be available to Oregon communities with funding from the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS). Abstinence education is one of six strategies in Oregon's Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Action Agenda 2000.

The new programs will give local communities the opportunity to extend abstinence education programs to unserved youth.

The new programs

Managing Pressures Before Marriage. Contractor is Grady Health Systems of Georgia. This program will be available statewide. Managing Pressures Before Marriage can either be adult-led or teen-led. The program has curriculum for two age groups: youth in 7th and 8th grade (ages 12-14) and youth in 5th grade and 6th grade (ages 10-12). Also available is a complementary teen leader training program and programs for parents of each targeted age group.

Stop and Think. Contractor is Lane Pregnancy Support Center of Eugene. This program will be available in Lane County, Salem, Albany, Coos Bay/North Bend and Roseburg. It encourages kids to stop and think about what their behavior will be before they act on it, to get kids to think critically when confronted with risky situations. Curriculum is taught by trained presenters who are adults. Stop and Think is most appropriate for eighth- through 12th-graders.

Youth Solutions Abstinence Education Program. Contractor is NW Family Services of Portland. It is available statewide. This program uses the FACTS middle school and high school curricula and Promises peer-led drama

presentation. It also includes a peer leader component with high school students teaching middle school students why it's best to wait to have sex. Parent and family education is also available. All programs are provided in English and Spanish.

Oregon's current program: STARS

STARS is an abstinence teen pregnancy prevention program aimed at sixth- and seventh-graders, taught by teen leaders who deliver the message, "It's best for teens not to have sex." As a skill-based program, STARS gives kids practice in how to say "no." The programs will be coordinated to avoid redundancy where these programs are already in place.

Marketing the programs

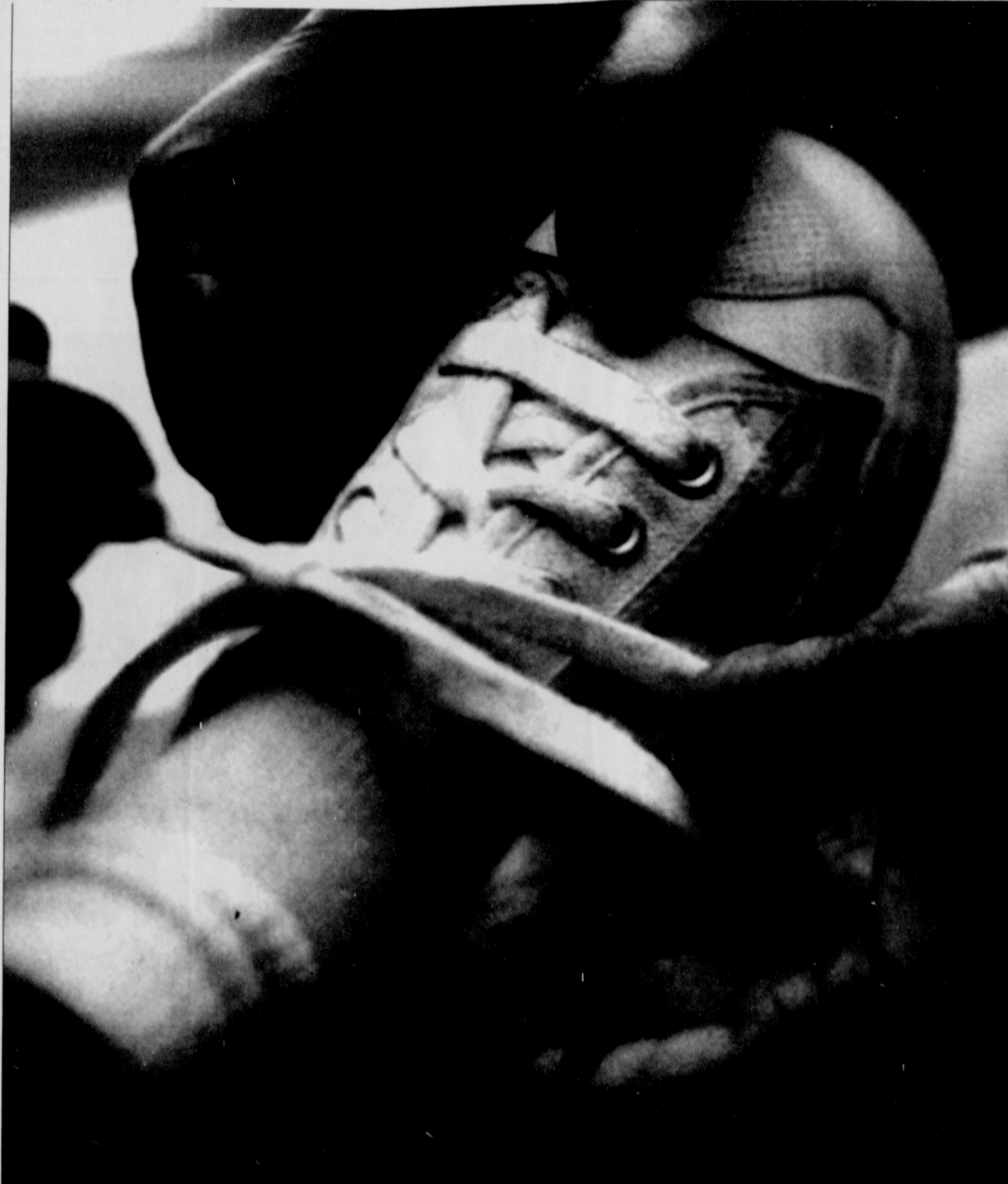
DHS will distribute information about these programs to schools, health departments and local teen pregnancy prevention coalitions. The contractors will market their programs to local communities and be paid after training has been provided.

Establishing the new programs

The 1999 Legislature directed DHS to identify and develop additional programs that met the federal criteria for abstinence education. Programs that emphasize teaching abstinence from sexual activity until marriage were sought.

The new contractors successfully completed a request-for-proposal process that included an evaluation of their curriculum materials (e.g., videos, lesson plans and handouts), how well it addressed the federal abstinence criteria, the effectiveness of the educational strategy, and whether the information presented in the proposal was scientifically and factually accurate. DHS made the final decisions, based on the recommendations of an evaluation panel.

Funds are available to support these services through June 30, 2001. Abstinence education is one part of comprehensive sexuality education. Oregon's Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Action Agenda 2000 is available online or by calling the DHS Adult and Family Services Division at (503) 945-5600.



*Shoelaces need  
careful hands  
to guide them.*

*The same is true of children.*

You have more to teach kids than you might imagine. *Take the Time* is a campaign to help young people succeed. And that takes some help from adults. We've outlined 40 assets that help young people become successful, and we can suggest ways for you to get involved. Be the difference. Please call us at 503-988-3897 or visit our website at [takethetime.org](http://takethetime.org) to learn more.



**TAKE THE TIME**  
BE THE DIFFERENCE