



CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

By: Al Orsello, Co-Founder, Executive Director

The Prevention Partnership is **celebrating 35 years of collaboration with Chicago Public Schools**, providing promising and evidence-based prevention and health promotion programs. Participating students receive age-appropriate substance use prevention, self-esteem, communication, problem-solving, decision-making and anger management information and skills in line with Illinois State Board of Education social-emotional learning standards. **Prevention Partnership has provided over 8,750 Youth Prevention Education in-classroom sessions to over 250 students per year.**

The agency has provided services for several West Side high schools in Austin, North Lawndale, East Garfield Park, and West Garfield Park, including Michele Clark Prep Academy Magnet High School, and Al Raby School for Community and Environment, (two alternative schools were also served: Academy of Scholastic Achievement and Community Christian Academy).

An important Chicago Public Schools/Prevention Partnership collaboration is with the Illinois Youth Survey (IYS). Conducted bi-annually by the University of Illinois, Center for Prevention Research and Development, data from this survey is used by the Illinois Department of Human Services to secure Federal Block Grant funds for alcohol and other drug prevention in the state. Excellent cooperation with Network Chiefs Jennifer Farrell-Rottman (3) and Shantae Higginbottom (5); Jarvis Sanford, Academy for Urban School Leadership, and Ethan Netterstrom, Independent School Principals allowed **Prevention Partnership to attain 100% registration, and 92% administration commitments for the 2020 IYS.** When COVID-19 shuttered schools in March 2020, we had reached 87% registration and 62% administration. IYS data has provided the agency with documented local information to guide planning and delivery of prevention services to schools.

In 2022, Prevention Partnership will provide CPS elementary and secondary schools in Austin, North Lawndale, East Garfield Park and West Garfield Park with an evidence-based communication campaign on marijuana (the drug of choice of our youth) for youth and parents, as well as information on National Prescription Drug Take Back Day and National Prevention Week.

Beginning in September, Prevention Partnership will also **provide services for schools in the South Side communities of Englewood, West Englewood, Chatham and Greater Grand Crossing.**

A Historical Perspective of services provided to Chicago Public Schools can be found on our website: **www.preventionpartnership.org.**



WEST SIDE HEROIN/OPIOID TASK FORCE

By: **Lee Rusch, Co-Founder, Director**

The West Side Heroin/Opioid Task Force outreach team has continued its direct service outreach work in the past quarter, **training and equipping over 1,000 residents to be able to reverse opioid overdoses.** Local substance use treatment providers have joined the effort and enroll persons for treatment services right on the spot.

The West Side Heroin/Opioid Task Force members are gearing up for International Overdose Awareness Day on August 31. **International Overdose Awareness Day is the world's largest annual campaign to end overdose,** remember without stigma those who have died, and acknowledge the grief of the family and friends left behind. A press conference and resource event will be held at the corner of Jackson Blvd. and Pulaski Rd. A Fentanyl Workgroup was formed to confront the many challenges posed by the presence of this powerful opiate, that can be at least 50 times more potent than heroin and can be directly linked to a rise in overdoses in the community. For more information on all of the above contact the Task Force at **westsidetaskforce@yahoo.com or 773-450-1567.**

Want to learn more about the West Side Heroin/Opioid Task Force and its latest initiatives?

[Visit our website!](#)



IT'S SUMMER AND NOW IS THE TIME TO FOCUS ON SOCIAL SUPPORT

By: Dr. Rosario Pesce, PHD, NCSP

Reestablishing social support systems is one of the oldest and most powerful of crisis interventions when having faced a crisis. **COVID-19 proved to be an enduring crisis that affected all of us.** As caregivers for our children and students, parents should understand the role they play in facilitating social support.

Types of social support include emotional support, such as validating and listening to our children when they want to express feelings; instrumental support occurs when we are willing to do specific things for our children such as helping facilitate previous typical summer activities that were not able to be conducted last summer; and informational support such as providing children the opportunity to problem solve and/or provide helpful tips and information to address problems and tasks.

Social support comes from multiple sources and includes:

- Family members, especially parents
- Teachers, counselors and other recreational supervisors, if available, during summer activities
- Classmates, friends, and other adults
- Social media, when used in moderation

Note that there are some developmental differences in children and youth as to who they view as most important social support providers. Younger children tend to rely on family members such as parents and grandparents for social support. Adolescents have begun to rely on peers, extended family and romantic partners for support. Cultural factors also play an important role in providing social support where family support is viewed as more helpful than support from professionals. Moreover, the church and religious community prove to be important sources of support for many.

Last summer, children and youth had to forgo their many routine summer recreational and social activities. It is important to revisit these again this summer with the awareness that some modifications might be required. Make sure to involve students in making such decisions as crises often make us all feel helpless and powerless. **Seeking and promoting their input gives children and youth a sense of control and of ownership that not only promotes cooperation but also heightens their self-confidence.**

Caregivers should remain up to date about **best practices around health and safety in regard to COVID**. In a recent article from Consumer Reports, key takeaways include the following:

- Thirty-seven percent of **parents/caregivers don't expect their kids to have a typical summer this year**, according to a recent nationally representative Consumer Reports' survey.
- Fully vaccinated teens can safely hang out together without a mask. For kids under age 12, who aren't yet eligible for vaccination, social distancing, and mask-wearing guidelines still apply.
- Unvaccinated kids can visit and stay with fully vaccinated friends or relatives from one other household as long as none of the unvaccinated kids are at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
- If two families with fully vaccinated adults and unvaccinated kids want to vacation together, they should stay in separate accommodations.
- Booking a camp for your child? Pick one where kids spend the day in small groups, mostly outdoors and physically distanced, and wear masks when they're indoors.
- Experts say that road trips are safer than air travel for families.

PBS CoCAL has offered other tips for parents and other caretakers to consider, especially **focused on the importance of promoting children's mental health**.

Given the importance of parents and other caretakers in facilitating social support, it is critical that they feel empowered to do so. Given that it is most likely that **most schools will return to in-person learning** next school year, it is important that caregivers obtain regular and updated information from their schools to find out what to expect for their students and then share that information with their students in a developmentally appropriate manner.

Finally, just as with the warning that adults should be the first to breathe from drop down oxygen masks when planes have a sudden dip in air pressure, **it is critical that parents and other caretakers be mindful of their own self-care**.

How to Be Mindful of Your Own Self-Care

- Taking care of yourself is vital to being able to care for your children and others in your care.
- Maintain healthy eating habits; get adequate sleep and exercise.
- Limit the use of alcohol and other substances.
- Know your limitations; feeling frustrated or overwhelmed is normal so take a break.
- Maintain normal daily routines as possible.
- Connect with trusted friends or family in normal daily routines as possible.
- Acknowledge that you and your family may need additional help.

Resources:

Mental Health America Illinois

Get Help: Resources for You or Your Loved Ones

National Child Traumatic Stress Network

Parent/Caregiver Guide to Helping Families Cope

With the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Taking Care of Yourself

Reference:

Brock, S. E., Nickerson, A. B., Louvar Reeves, M. A., Conolly, C. N., Jimerson, S. R., Pesce, R. C., Lazzaro, B. R. (2016) School Crisis Prevention and Intervention: The PREPaRE Model (2nd ed.). Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.



TEEN PREGNANCY PREVENTION PROGRAM

By: Shellie Coleman, Director of Youth Services

Since Fall 2012, Prevention Partnership Inc. has implemented a successful Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program. Read these fast facts about the program.

- Our Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) application to provide sex education in Chicago's south suburbs was implemented the same year the Illinois Comprehensive Sex Education Law was signed, **banning abstinence-only sex education in Illinois public schools.**
- Evidence-based six-module curriculum is designed to **help young people change behaviors that place them at risk for HIV, STIs, and pregnancy.**
- **Adult preparation sessions are also included,** intended to delay initiation of sex among sexually inexperienced youth, to reduce unprotected sex among sexually active youth, and to help young people make proud and responsible decisions about their sexual behaviors
- A Teen Pregnancy & STI Resource Guide is updated annually and **distributed to over 3,000 students** and the community at large.
- In March 2013, we held an **all-day retreat for over 211 freshmen and sophomore girls** at Rich South High School in Richton Park.
- **Provide comprehensive sex education programming for some 3,000 Rich Township High School District 227 students** in the District's 3 high schools: Fine Arts and Communications Campus, STEM Campus, Olympia Fields, and Rich East, Park Forest.
- Due to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, we created the **Connections Teen Resource,** an online resource guide for students to participate virtually.



Spotlight: Guido Girolami and Novella Bates

Each quarter we feature an interview with a board member and an employee of Prevention Partnership. Read our interview with board secretary/treasurer, Guido Girolami and Director of Operations, Novella Bates.

With the stresses and challenges of the pandemic, what have been some challenges or obstacles facing Prevention Partnership that you've overcome or seen progress through?

Guido: As life hopefully gets back to normal, I'm hoping that Prevention Partnership can get back into the classroom and streets to actively pursue its programs in-person.

Novella: Our Chicago Public Schools were all on remote learning. Staff did a remarkable job developing curriculum to electronically facilitate the needs of the students. In addition, our community partners were tremendous in aiding us to reach out to the students. Moving forward, it would be great to see the students, parents, and our partners in person!

Are there any upcoming or current projects/initiatives that you're most excited about?

Guido: I'm really excited about our opportunity to grow into a larger organization through the recognition of our excellence. Additionally, the recent opportunity to potentially acquire our own building for offices, meeting spaces and providing programs is a great opportunity. It will also allow Prevention Partnership to make its mark in the neighborhood where most of our services are provided.

Novella: I am excited about the hiring of new staff to assist with projects on the West and South sides of Chicago.

Tell us how you got started with Prevention Partnership and why you felt compelled to be part of the organization.

Guido: I got involved with Prevention Partnership through my friendship with Al Orsello who I've known since the early 1980's. To be honest he was a hard person to say no to and as he invited me to several board meetings I became more interested.

Novella: I volunteered with the agency for three years prior to being hired as an employee. I became involved because of the agency's mission to empower communities to be self-sufficient.

During your time at Prevention Partnership, name one or two highlights that have happened.

Guido: I'm really excited about the work Prevention Partnership has been doing with the West Side Heroin and Opioid Task Force and the recognition the organization has received for the exemplary job in coordinating all the participants involved.

Novella: I served youth in an after-school setting four days a week for seventeen years. I really enjoyed working with the youth, parents and families of Dvorak and Hughes Elementary Schools in North Lawndale. It was very rewarding, personally, and professionally.

Looking ahead, what are you most excited about for Prevention Partnership's future?

Guido: I'm excited that for the first time in years Prevention Partnership has a very strong financial position, a steady source of program funding and the opportunity to acquire its own permanent headquarters.

Novella: The expansion of services to our communities is exciting.



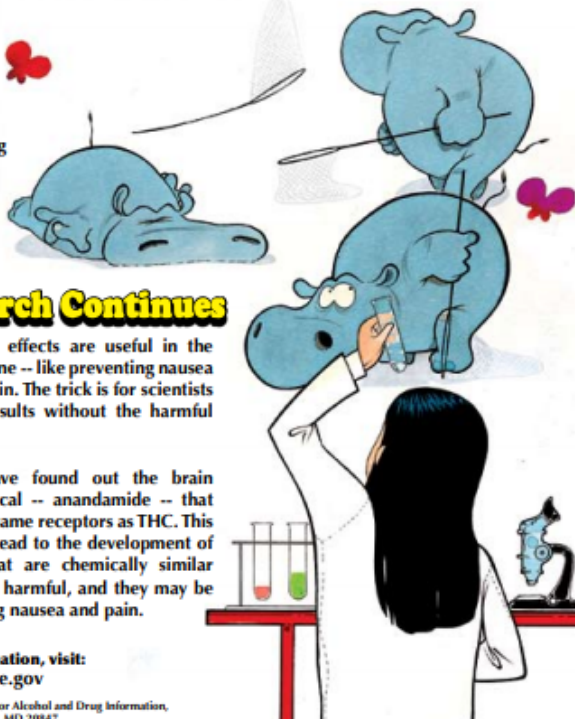
Hippocampus

One region of the brain that contains a lot of THC receptors is the hippocampus, which processes memory. When THC attaches to receptors in the hippocampus, it weakens short-term memory.

The hippocampus also communicates with other brain regions that process new information into long-term memory. (That's how you can remember today's math lesson or a new friend's phone number.) In the brain, under the influence of marijuana, new information may never register-- and may be lost from memory.

Maybe you've heard that in some people, marijuana can cause uncontrollable laughter one minute and paranoia the next. That's because THC also influences emotions, probably by acting on a region of the brain called the limbic system.

And don't forget this: THC can make something as simple as driving a car really dangerous.



The Search Continues

Some of THC's effects are useful in the world of medicine -- like preventing nausea and blocking pain. The trick is for scientists to get these results without the harmful effects.

Researchers have found out the brain makes a chemical -- anandamide -- that attaches to the same receptors as THC. This discovery may lead to the development of medications that are chemically similar to THC but less harmful, and they may be used for treating nausea and pain.

For more information, visit:
www.drugabuse.gov

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information,
P.O. Box 2345, Rockville, MD 20847
1-800-729-6686

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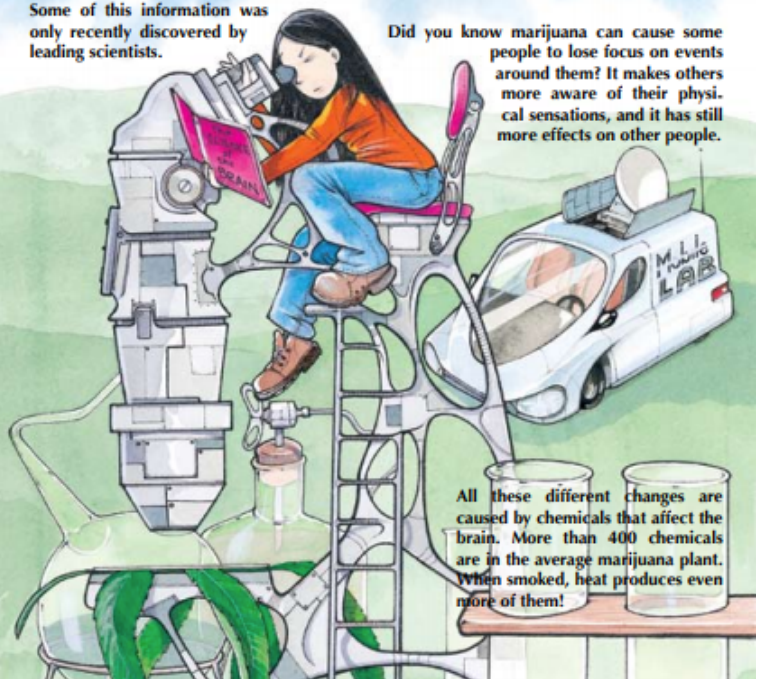
MIND OVER MATTER

The Brain's Response to Marijuana

Hi, my name's Sara Bellum. Welcome to my magazine series exploring the brain's response to drugs. In this issue, we'll investigate the fascinating facts about marijuana. Some of this information was only recently discovered by leading scientists.

You may have heard it called pot, weed, grass, ganja or skunk, but marijuana by any other name is still a drug that affects the brain.

Did you know marijuana can cause some people to lose focus on events around them? It makes others more aware of their physical sensations, and it has still more effects on other people.



All these different changes are caused by chemicals that affect the brain. More than 400 chemicals are in the average marijuana plant. When smoked, heat produces even more of them!

National Institute on Drug Abuse

Where Does Marijuana Come From?

Marijuana is the dried leaves and flowers of the hemp plant (*Cannabis sativa*). Like all plants, it's sensitive to the environment where it grows. Different weather and soil conditions can change the amounts

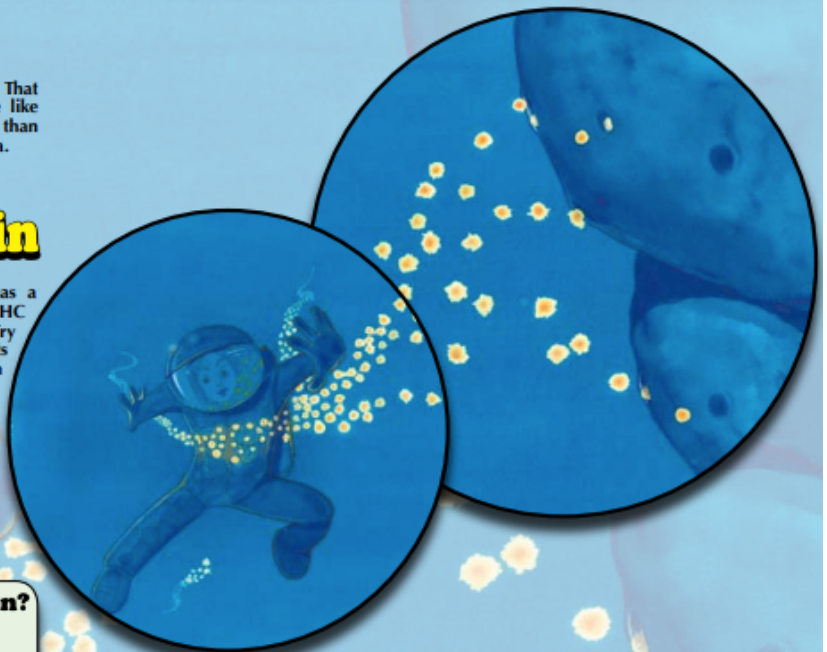
of the chemicals inside the plant. That means marijuana grown in a place like Hawaii might be chemically stronger than marijuana from Mexico, or vice-versa.

Marijuana Invades the Brain

How do the chemicals in marijuana change the way a person sees, hears, smells, tastes, and feels things?

When someone uses marijuana, these chemicals travel through the bloodstream and quickly attach to special places on the brain's nerve cells. These places are called receptors, because they receive information from other nerve cells and from chemicals. When a receptor receives information, it causes changes in the nerve cell.

The chemical in marijuana that has a big impact on the brain is called THC -- tetrahydrocannabinol. (Whew! Try saying that 10 times fast.) Scientists recently discovered that some areas in the brain have a lot of THC receptors, while others have very few or none. These clues are helping researchers figure out exactly how THC works in the brain.



How does marijuana affect nerve cells in the brain? Marijuana causes some parts of the brain --



such as those governing emotions, memory and judgement -- to lose balance and control.

Marijuana may cause some parts of the body to react in different ways. What do you remember about:

- A Rapid heartbeat -- up to how many beats per minute?
- B Dilated blood vessels -- can be seen in what part of the body?
- C A feeling of panic -- accompanied by what kind of sensations?
- D Daily cough and more frequent chest colds very much like who?

Answers:
A) Marijuana can speed the heart rate up to 160 beats per minute.
B) Dilated blood vessels make the whites of the eyes turn red.
C) Panic feelings may be accompanied by sweating, dry mouth and trouble breathing.
D) Tobacco smokers.

Visit PREVENTIONPARTNERSHIP.ORG for more resources, guides, and information on our programs and initiatives.

WHO WE ARE

Prevention Partnership is a minority governed, nonprofit organization located on the Westside of Chicago. We are focused on making the world around us a better, happier place. With the help of our tireless staff, we organize fundraisers, community-building events, and in-depth education and training sessions for our youth, parents & community residents.

WHAT WE DO

Promoting positive habits through education, prevention, and intervention.

Enabling individuals and communities to gain the power to persevere.

Our community based programs are designed, implemented, and evaluated utilizing the help of community coalitions composed of indigenous residents and organizations such as local government, law enforcement, youth, parents, media, youth serving and civic organizations, schools, health care, churches and other concerned civic groups and individuals.