

Counselor Corner

A quarterly newsletter from the OMS Guidance Department

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LONG ISLAND COUNCIL ON ALCOHOL & DRUG DEPENDENCY PRESENTS TO OMS STUDENTS AND PARENTS

On the evening of January 25th, the Long Island Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence's Clinical Director, Steven Chassman, in conjunction with the OMS and HHS PTA, presented the dynamic program *Drug and Alcohol Awareness* to a packed audience.

OMS Guidance Counselors were first introduced to Mr. Chassman this fall at the LI Annual Counselors' Association Conference. Mr. Chassman was invited to speak with OMS 7th and 8th graders last month and, with that program being so impactful, he was invited back to conduct a parent workshop.

Mr. Chassman's presentation focused on the very real problem of alcohol and drug abuse among Long Island teens. Most notably, Mr. Chassman emphasized that

the average age of alcohol and drug experimentation begins in 7th grade. While this might be difficult for many to believe, alcoholism and drug abuse is a problem every student will be confronted with on some level over the next several years. But the reality is that some are already being confronted with this difficult and dangerous issue.

Mr. Chassman also emphasized that the drug and alcohol 'scene' has changed dramatically from what many adults knew in the 70's and 80's. Adolescents now have access to the most potent narcotics in the world, marijuana that has been chemically enhanced and a wealth of prescription medications that never existed 25 years ago.

Our most important focus as parents and educators is

to help our children establish healthy coping skills. A lack of coping skills has been one of the primary causes of drug and alcohol abuse and dependency over the last decade. Mr. Chassman also encouraged all adults to take an active role in our children's lives, including checking text messages, phone contacts and Facebook.

The time period from age 13 to 17 is critical. If we can help our children through these years by staying vigilant and involved, the research states we will greatly reduce the potential for the psychiatric diagnosis of Substance Dependence in our youngster's lives.

For more information, please visit LICADD.org or call 516-747-2606 or 631-979-1700.

IMPORTANT DATES:

2ND QUARTER ENDS	1/27
REPORT CARDS MAILED, ON PORTAL	2/7
ANTI-VIOLENCE DAY	2/16
MID-WINTER RECESS	2/20-2/26
GR 6 TRANSITION MEETING, 7PM	3/6
3RD QTR INTERIMS MAILED, ON PORTAL	3/7
3RD QUARTER ENDS	4/5

Strategy Corner

Your child is not too old for your help with homework, organization and time management. While "giving your child some space" might *seem* like a good idea, your child needs you now more than ever to help he/she remain focused and to prioritize their many academic, extracurricular and social commitments.

CHILDREN'S PAJAMA AND BOOK DRIVE A SUCCESS!

Thanks to the efforts of 8th graders Brendan Deegan, Georgia Viggiano and Eric Leone, the book and pajama drive to benefit The Pajama Program was a huge success. Boxes and boxes of children's pajamas and story books were

collected on behalf of the organization, which helps to provide new pajamas and books to children waiting to be adopted. We commend the thoughtful and giving efforts of these students and the entire OMS community!



Photo credit: RamonaG

30 NEW MEMBERS TRAINED, INDUCTED TO T.L.C.

Oldfield Middle School's Natural Helpers program, **T.L.C.** (*Tornadoes Listening and Caring*), was pleased to induct an additional 20 students to the program in December, bringing the total number of current student helpers to 30.

In October of this year, all 7th and 8th grade students were asked through an anonymous survey to list the names of three of their peers who they felt were trustworthy and who they would approach in a time of need.

From there, a committee of staff members determined the final 20 students to

be invited to T.L.C. training. These students had to have received numerous nominations from their peers and also had to represent different social groups within the school.

The 20 students nominated underwent four hours of training, led by T.L.C. co-advisors Ms. McCaffrey and Ms. Roemer. Students were trained in breaking down social barriers, looking past stereotypes, effective communication, expressing genuine care, and most importantly, how to recognize when a friend is in need of adult assistance.

All T.L.C. members will be officially

introduced to the entire student body during our Anti-Violence day assemblies on February 16th.

Natural Helpers is a peer-helping program used across the United States and several other countries. Natural Helpers is based on the premise that in every school, an informal helping network exists: students naturally seek out their peers in times of need. Natural Helpers primarily serves middle and high school students who want to strengthen their communication and helping skills while providing support to others in their school community.

2011-2012 TLC members: Nikki Balducci, Maeve Barth-Dwyer, Alex Bertossi, Olivia Betz, Alex Bloom, Freddie Buckholtz, Ziggy Celestine, Damien Clement, Ariana Domencetti, Tyler Farrago, Jen Gary, Morgan Globus, Melissa Greaves, Jack Levenberg, Phil Lockwood, Ishaan Lohia, Kellen Paradine, Katie Paul, Rob Pecorelli, Zoe Plataras, Hunter Radecki, Stephanie Rossi, Billy Schimmel, Liam Seligman, Tony Taber, Sara Veleno, Georgia Viggiano, Jordan Williams, Maddie Wilson, Ellie Woodward

SLEEP AND HEALTHY ADOLESCENTS

The National Sleep Foundation states that teens require about 9 1/4 hours of sleep each night to function at their best. Yet, a national study found that only 15% of teens get even 8 1/2 hours of sleep during the school week.

The constant use of technology day and night, academic demands and jam-packed extracurricular schedules are some of the causes of lack of sleep among adolescents. But what does this all mean?

Lack of sleep can limit one's ability to concentrate and solve problems, impacting academic performance. Aggressive and inappropriate behaviors are often seen among teens who do not get enough sleep, as are acne and other skin conditions. Lack of sleep can lead to unhealthy eating habits and weight gain and can contribute to overall poor health and illness.

Sleep is a priority for your health and well-being: your bedroom should be cool, quiet and dark. Avoid eating,

drinking (especially caffeinated products!) or exercising a few hours before bed time. Within an hour before bed time, turn off the TV, iPods, smart phones and computers. Stick to calm and quiet activities. Establish a consistent bed and wake-up time, even on the weekends. Also, try to follow the same routine each night (shower, read a book) - this signals your body that it's time to sleep. It's easier to fall and stay asleep with this type of routine.

Source: www.sleepfoundation.org



HHS SENIORS VISIT 8TH GRADERS

On January 11th, OMS was delighted to welcome back two Harborfields High School seniors, Brian Chalif and Jessica Godfrey. Jessica and Brian graciously took time out of their hectic schedules to meet with our 8th graders to discuss their high school experiences. The 8th graders listened attentively as Brian and Jes-

sica discussed the types of courses they'd chosen to take over the years, what the differences are between Regents, Honors and AP courses, extra curricular options, balancing academics with sports/clubs/music and the importance of strong time management and organization skills.

Jessica and Brian also fielded questions from the audience, ranging from what study hall is like, to what to expect during lunch, to how to get to class on time in such a large building. The presentation was such a success, we are hopeful to continue this tradition for every 8th grade class in the coming years.