



NATIONAL FAMILIES IN ACTION

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## Red Ribbon Week October 23-31, 2007

Enrique “Kiki” Camarena grew up in a dirt-flooded house with hopes and dreams of making a difference one day. After working his way through college and serving in the Marines he became a police officer. Years later he decided to join the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and worked undercover in Mexico investigating a major drug cartel. On February 7, 1985, “Kiki” Camarena was abducted as he left his office. His body was found one month later.

A high school teacher and former classmate from Imperial Valley, California, Camarena’s hometown, within weeks after his death, created the Camarena

Club to promote awareness of the dangers of drug abuse. Over one hundred students signed pledges to lead a drug free life and wore red ribbons to symbolize Camarena’s memory.

In 1988, under the leadership of National Family Partnership, with Nancy Reagan as Honorary Chairperson, Congress proclaimed the first 8-day Red Ribbon Week. Now recognized as the oldest and largest drug prevention campaign in the country, Red Ribbon Week is traditionally held during the last week of October.

Red Ribbon Week has also become a symbol of support for the DEA’s efforts to reduce demands for drugs

through prevention and education programs. By wearing a red ribbon, Americans demonstrate their opposition to drugs. They pay respect not only to Special Agent Camarena, but to all men and women who have made a sacrifice in our nation’s struggle against drug trafficking and abuse. [1]



## Reading, Writing and...CHEATING????

Cheating among students is reaching higher levels than ever before.

Old-fashioned methods, like writing on ankles or wrists, have been replaced by several new tactics. Among them are removing water bottle labels, writing answers on the back side,

and re-gluing labels; sending answers by cell phones from one student to another; recording information onto iPods, or storing it in programmed calculators. Plagiarism is also running rampant with the opportunity to purchase research papers online.

Teachers are taking measures to prevent cheating, like taking up electronic devices when students enter classrooms, assigning specific research paper topics to limit access to existing resources, creating numerous versions of a test, and limiting trips to the bathroom. [2]

### Inside this issue:

Bus Safety Week	2
Cigarette Advertising Targets Children	2
Are You a Hands-On Parent?	3
Flavored Cocaine	3
Important Role Grandparents Play Today	4

### Special points of interest:

- Take advantage while driving with your child or teen to “check in” to see what is going on in his or her life.
- Teach your children about the moral values that are important to your family.
- Teach your teens to respect themselves and others. [3]

# Bus Safety Week October 22-26

Article submitted Walton High School (GA) Parent Corps Leader Pat Giuliani

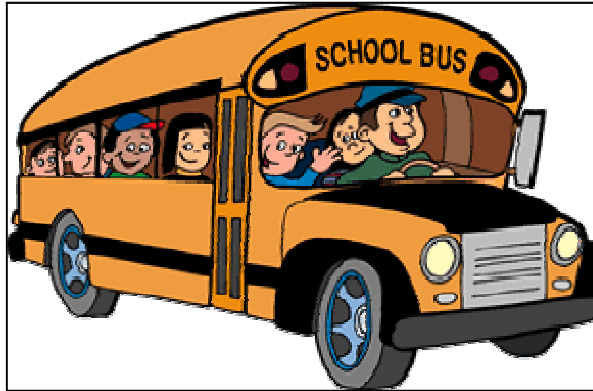
School Bus Safety Week (sponsored by the National Association for Pupil Transportation) is held each year during the third week of October. This year's theme, "Be Aware! Cross with Care" will be used during October 22-26, 2007 along with a poster design contest entitled "Stop on Red. Kids Ahead." Entries for posters are due by October 15. For more information about the poster contest please go to:

<http://www.napt.org>

Approximately 23 million school-age children ride school buses to and from school. The American Public Transit Association also estimates that public transportation provides an additional 900 million student rides per year. This makes school transportation the single largest system of public transportation in the United States, resulting in more than 94 billion total pupil-passenger miles per year.

While many regard school buses as one of the safest forms of transportation, accidents do happen. Of students who have died in school-bus-related incidents, almost two-thirds were killed by school buses, six percent by vehicles functioning as school buses, and 30 percent by other vehicles involved in crashes with school buses. Five and six-year-olds represented more than half of all school-aged pedestrians killed by school buses over the past ten years.

Prevention is the best solution when it comes to school-bus safety. Children and their parents, as well as educators and



community members, need to be aware of the risks involved with children and school buses.

## Things Parents Should know About School-Bus Safety:

- School buses are the safest form of highway transportation.
- Loading or unloading the bus accounts for approximately three times as many school bus-related fatalities compared to other activities.
- The "Danger Zone" is the area ten feet in front, ten feet around the sides of, and the area behind the bus.
- Half of the pedestrian fatalities in school-bus-related crashes involve children between the ages of 5 and 7.

Parents should talk to their children about the importance of bus-safety rules. Young children are most likely to be struck because they hurry to get on or off the bus, act before they think, have little

experience with traffic, assume motorists will see them and will wait for them to cross the street, or don't always stay within the bus driver's sight.

## Things Kids Should Know About School-Bus Safety:

- The bus driver and others cannot see them if they are standing closer than 10 feet to the bus.
- If something falls under or near the bus, tell the driver, NEVER try to pick it up yourself.
- While waiting for the bus, stay in a safe place away from the street.
- When you get on or off the bus, look for the bus *safety lights* and make sure they are flashing.
- Be alert to traffic. When you get on or off the bus, look left, right, and left again before you enter or cross the street.
- When the driver says it is safe to cross the street, remember to **Cross in Front** of the bus.
- Stay in your seat and sit quietly so that the driver is not distracted.

In general, children should understand that riding on the bus is a privilege, that the bus is an extension of school, and that they are expected to behave as well as they would in their classroom. [4]

## Cigarette Advertising Targets Children

In 1998, tobacco companies agreed to stop using images that appealed to children to sell their products. However, there are still a lot of cigarette ads at gas stations and retail stores. New research suggests that these ads *do* influence children. The Institute for Health Research estimates that if retail stores did not display tobacco advertising, there would be an 11 percent decline in the number of teen smokers.

Every *day* in the U.S., the tobacco industry spends 36 million dollars on advertising and promotions. So what can we as parents do to counter those dollars?

Discuss with your teen the way tobacco companies "glamorize" tobacco on billboards, media, TV, and movies.

Remind them about the immediate downside of smoking: less money for other things, physical changes in appearance,

bad breath, and immediate health issues.

Start the dialogue about tobacco use at age five or six, and continue through the high-school years.

Discuss ways to avoid peer pressure or role play situations so your child feels confident enough to say NO.

Maintain a smoke-free house. This will make children less likely to smoke. [5]

# Are You a Hands-On Parent?

Article submitted by Fairview High School (CO) Parent Corps Leader Marsha Mortiz

Wouldn't it be great if you could vaccinate your children against peer pressure, drugs, and academic underachievement? You can, if you are an involved parent. Involved parents watch who their kids are with, stay in communication with the parents of their kids' friends, know where their kids are going, and set up and maintain rules and consequences.

**Are You a Hands-On Parent?** Take 30 seconds to read the following 12 indicators and review the answers at the conclusion of this article.

*Do you expect to be informed about where your child is going in the evening or on the weekends and be told the truth?*

*Have you talked to your children, and are they aware how upset you will be if you find they are using any drugs?*

*Are you informed of your child's plans, particularly after school and on weekends?*

*Do you monitor what your children watch on TV?*

*Do you restrict the purchase of inappropriate music?*

*Are you watching your child's grades?*

*Do you monitor your child's Internet usage?*

*Do you try to have family dinners together five to six nights a week?*

*Do you make sure the TV is not on during dinner?*

*Is there a weekend curfew?*

*Is there an adult always at home when your child comes home from school?*

*Do your children have regular chores that they are responsible for?*



According to a study conducted by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, if you answered "yes" to ten out of the twelve questions, you are a hands-on parent. **Keep up the good work!** If you answered "yes" to 5 or fewer, you are a hands-off parent. What you need to do to become more hands on is to follow these suggested guidelines:

**Do not set up too many activities for you or your children.** If you are overwhelmed with their schedules, then you are not able to keep a good eye on what is going on because you are focused on getting them to the next event.

**Do not make rules without following through with them.** If you make the rules, then keep them. Otherwise children will learn that you are not serious about your consequences.

**Be sure to check up on your children's plans.** Call the parents of the home where your child is going. Make sure while your child is there that acceptable supervision will be offered. Do not worry when your child complains that you are being overprotective. Tell them you love them so much, you want to make sure they are safe while out of your sight. Many teens will try to scam you into thinking they are staying at each other's house for the night, when they are really planning to spend the night elsewhere without adult supervision.

**Be prepared to forfeit some of your freedom in order to follow through on becoming a hands-on parent.** If you say you will be home when your child comes home from school, then be there, and be on time. If you say no TV during dinner, that means *you* also. When children can count on their parents to be involved, they can relax and enjoy growing up. [6]

## Drug Dealers Adding Flavor to Lure Kids to Cocaine

Article submitted by National Families in Action (GA) President and CEO Sue Rusche

Chocolate, peanut butter, and strawberry are not just ice cream flavors any more. They are the new taste of cocaine. Drug dealers understand that the key to addiction is initiating drug use in the teen years. Therefore, they are becoming more desperate and more creative in how they package their goods in an ever-changing illicit drug economy.

The cost of this new flavored cocaine is

forty percent more, but the inflated cost is due to the product's higher level of purity. The health risks of using flavored cocaine are the same as using unflavored cocaine: elevated blood pressure and heart rate, increased respiratory rate, loss of appetite, insomnia, increased risk of contracting HIV, hepatitis, and



other infectious diseases if injected, and psychological problems such as hallucinations, paranoia, restlessness, irritability, and anxiety.

Although flavored cocaine use is growing only in the Midwest, parents are the key to stopping the spread of the re-vamped products. Parents need to let their kids know that just because it looks different, the consequences of using it are the same. [7]



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NFIA also co-sponsors the Addiction Studies Program for Journalists and the Addiction Studies Program for the States with Wake Forest University School of Medicine, the Treatment Research Institute, and the National Conference of State Legislatures. NFIA has been providing scientifically accurate information about alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drug use and addiction since it was founded in 1977.

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## Grandparents Play Important Role in Teens' Lives

According to a national survey conducted by The Partnership for a Drug-Free America and the MetLife Foundation, seven out of ten grandparents reported they believe their grandchildren face greater worries now than their children did when growing up. The main cause of worry teens have these days, according to grandparents, is peer pressure and pressure to try alcohol and drugs.

Forty-eight percent believe parents today are just too stretched for time and are not talking to their children about the dangers of drugs and alcohol. Over half of the grandparents surveyed are in regular contact with their grandchildren, and many feel they have a shared responsibility in providing guidance and care.

The survey also showed that 56 percent have had a conversation

with their grandchildren about the dangers of drugs and alcohol. Nine out of ten of those who have spoken with their grandchildren felt comfortable talking to them about drug abuse.

Several grandparents, almost 50 percent, have already started searching on the

Internet for assistance, and are receiving educational newsletters, resource information, and helpful support about today's drug culture.

However, one-third of the grandparents say they would like access to resources that provide free online information and tools to help them educate children and grandchildren about the risks of drug and alcohol use.

Grandparents today are finding themselves playing the role of caregivers as more parents are going back to work, recovering from their own addictions, or are financially unable to make ends meet. Conversations about drug abuse between parents and children have decreased significantly, and grandparents are in a position to help initiate some of these conversations. [8]

