



# COMMUNITY NEWS

Downtown District

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## Epidemic Among Our Youth: Prescription Drug Abuse

According to the Arizona Affiliate of the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, kids are more likely to experiment with drugs due to boredom, spending time with friends who use drugs or too much unsupervised time throughout the summer months. In June and July alone, there was a startling 40 percent increase nationally in the number of youth who tried marijuana for the first time compared to the rest of the year. Even though we have gotten through those summer months, we still need to be diligent about the dangers affecting our kids.

Even more startling is the newest trend – intentional misuse of prescription medications, which is the biggest teen substance abuse challenge we face today. According to the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA), abusing prescription and over-the-counter drugs can be just as dangerous, addictive and even deadly as using “street” drugs. The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (HSDUH) says, every day 2,500 teens abuse a prescription drug for the first time. The trend is alarming:

- The number of new abusers of Rx drugs is now greater than new users of marijuana (NSDUH, SAMSHA)
- Rx drugs are now the most commonly abused drugs among 12-13 year olds (NSDUH)
- Rx/OTC medications account for 7 of the 11 most frequently abused drugs (NIDA)

Aggravating the issue are weak perceptions of risk among both teens and their parents – both believe abusing medicine is NOT as dangerous as using “street” drugs. Consider the ease of access to teens – medicines are readily



## From The Desk Of Commander Johnny Cervantes

This month I'd like to say “thanks” to all of you who participated in the GAIN event on October 3<sup>rd</sup> and to those who will be having their event later this year. It's always great to see communities come together in an effort to improve safety. Community members getting involved is a key element to enhancing safety in our neighborhoods.

With safety in mind, please remember that Halloween is just around the corner. It is one of the most exciting times of the year for children. Following a few simple guidelines will help make this fun filled night a safe one as well.

**Choose bright, flame-retardant costumes.**

**Plan a trick-or-treating route in familiar area with well-lit streets.**

**Discuss basic pedestrian safety rules when walking to and from houses.**

**Never send younger children out alone – they should be with a parent or guardian, or another trusted adult.**

**Make sure children know their home phone number and address in case you get separated.**

**Always walk younger children to the door to receive treats and don't let them enter a home unless you are with them.**

**For further information on Halloween safety feel free to contact your District 2 Crime Prevention Officer.**

**Commander Johnny Cervantes**

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(prescription drug abuse continued)

available in their own or a friend's medicine cabinet. Teens abuse their own prescriptions, a family member's or a friend's prescription. Medicine abuse has become "normalized" in teen culture, and Arizona twelfth grade students' abuse prescription medications at twice the national rate. The effects of prescription and over the counter drug use are not to be taken lightly:

- Seizures, Heart Attack, Stroke
- Permanent Brain Damage and Liver Damage
- Slow Breathing
- Small Pinpoint Pupils
- Dizziness
- Weakness
- Nausea, Vomiting, Seizures
- Death

The Arizona Affiliate of The Partnership for a Drug-Free America encourages parents and community members to take action by following these 3 steps:

- **Educate** themselves on the medications kids are abusing
- **Communicate** the risks of abusing medicine with the children
- **Safeguard** their medicine cabinets and ask family and friends to do the same

The Scottsdale Police Department and the Arizona Affiliate of the Partnership for a Drug-Free America are pleased to offer you the Rx360 program. Rx360 is a research-based community education program developed by the Partnership for a Drug-Free America to raise awareness of the problem of prescription drug abuse by middle and high school-age children.

"We are pleased to be partnering with the Arizona Affiliate for this important program," said Commander Burl Haenel. "Teens take their lives into their own hands when they intentionally abuse prescription medications. Whether it's to get high or deal with stress, or if they mistakenly believe it will help them perform better in school or sports. Teens don't realize that when they abuse medication or use without a prescription, these medicines can be every bit as harmful as illegal street drugs. We have to educate our community on this issue."

A recent article from Join Together on September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2009 stated, "23 percent of teens say they can get marijuana within an hour and that prescription drugs

are easier to obtain than beer – findings echoed in stories from young drug users themselves." Each child faces pressure and how we work with them on handling that pressure is extremely important. If we as parents allow ourselves to become complacent or self-absorbed, we may miss the signs telling us that something is wrong. As adults, we may have the pressures of a divorce, a death in the family, work obligations, or even a marriage so let's ask ourselves, how is that affecting our children? Take the time to ask them about their day. If you notice any changes in mood, attitude, grades or feelings, ask them about it. Those minutes may be the most important of your life and theirs!

If you would like to schedule a presentation or for more information on crime prevention or additional opportunities to get involved in your community contact Crime Prevention Officer Craig Abernethy at 480-312-2594 or [cabernethy@scottsdaleaz.gov](mailto:cabernethy@scottsdaleaz.gov), or District 3 Police Aide Randee Short at 480-312-2074 or [rshort@scottsdaleaz.gov](mailto:rshort@scottsdaleaz.gov).

## Upcoming Events:

### Special Olympics

**Tip –a-Cop benefit for Special Olympics:** - Wed Oct, 14<sup>th</sup> from 5-9pm at the Yard House Restaurant, 7014 E. Camelback. Come have dinner and be served by police employees who will work as waiters and waitresses. All "tips" go to the Special Olympics.

### Shredding, Drug Destruction, BBQ, & Kid Fingerprinting

**Shop-with-a-Cop fund raiser:** Sat Oct 31<sup>st</sup>, from 11am-3pm at the Sunflower Market at 4402 N. Miller. Events include Document Shredding (donation of \$2 per box suggested), BBQ (Donation), Prescription/OTC Drug Destruction (Free), and Child Fingerprinting (Free). Kids are welcome to wear costumes. All proceeds go to Shop-with-a-Cop. This money is used to take pre-screened kids on a shopping spree event held in December. Call Officer Craig Abernethy at 480-312-2594.

### Crime Free Multi-Housing

**Crime Free Multi-Housing Phase 1** – Thursday, November 5, 2009 from 8:15 am to 4:30 pm at the Via Linda Station Community Room located at 9065 E. Via Linda, Scottsdale, Az. 85258. The Scottsdale Police Department will present the FREE Phase 1 class. This class is geared towards apartment managers, leasing consultants and maintenance staff who hope to achieve the Crime Free certification and limit crime on their property. Please contact Officer Kory Sneed at (480) 312-5696 to sign up.