

PURPOSE OF ABCDE

ABCDE is a community action group made up of concerned citizens including professional social service and health representatives, parents, school personnel, clergy, police, business and other interested people who donate their time. It is organized for the purpose of preventing the use of alcohol/drugs among school children in the Barrington area communities.

To this end, ABCDE promotes awareness of the problem, informs parents and students of the potential dangers and symptoms of alcohol and other drug abuse, and supports those who take the position that the use of alcohol/drugs among school age youth is inappropriate.

Major intervention and prevention objectives are to mobilize parental communication involvement at the parent-peer group level and to support school, police, and other agency prevention/intervention programs.

ABCDE does not duplicate any service provided by other agencies or organizations. Rather, the awareness and education that it provides makes existing groups stronger and more committed to the overall goal of prevention.

BACKGROUND OF ABCDE'S DEVELOPMENT

School and community leaders have cooperated on drug abuse programs since early 1969 which resulted in formation of the Drug Abuse Committee; in 1972 this effort culminated in the organization of Barrington Youth Services (BYS), which has been the chief source of crisis intervention and prevention services available to Barrington area students.

In 1980 a high school parent group was formed whose major goal was communication between the home, school and community; it sponsored several drug awareness/education workshops. In 1983 the school board and staff were seeking more effective alternatives for students involved in school-related incidents of substance abuse. A group of BYS and school officials traveled to Minnesota to observe several types of programs functioning effectively in Minneapolis schools and to formulate recommendations for our community. Supported by the Parents Who Care group, Barrington police and village officials adopted an ordinance which held parents responsible for children's drug related offenses.

In March, 1983 Dr. Clyde Slocum, Superintendent of Schools, called together representatives from village governments, police departments, parent, church, professional and service organizations to assess the extent of student drug use/abuse problems, to identify the community agencies in place to deal with such problems, and to develop a coordinated community action plan. By July, 1983 a Steering Committee was planning an umbrella organization which would increase community awareness and bring greater cooperation and coordination among the various community programs providing prevention and intervention services. As that group began its work, "The Chemical People" network television program series was announced. The Steering Committee assumed the leadership for the local organization of that event. On October 27, 1983 the Barrington Courier Review published results of its drug use survey of high school and middle school students. The survey results "confirmed" that many Barrington area children use drugs regularly, especially alcohol, much like national survey results suggested. The publicity from the survey set the stage for an excellent community reception of "the Chemical People" (CP) programs.

Over 1,600 people attended the two CP televised programs, which were set up at three locations in Barrington, connected via closed circuit cable (Centel) television. Following the first program, ten panel members (including three BHS students) told of the alcohol and other drug scene in Barrington. After the November 9 CP program, people in attendance were enlisted for committees which were set up according to CP recommendations. An Ad Hoc Steering Committee developed bylaws and proposed a slate of officers and board of directors with broad community representation. ABCDE became an official umbrella task force to combat student use of alcohol and other drugs on December 8, 1983. It has a not-for-profit 501 3 (c) status.

To celebrate its tenth year, the ABCDE Board of Directors, led by Suzy Palmer, re-dedicated and re-committed efforts to continue to provide community awareness and response to the needs of youth in an effort to intervene and prevent high risk behavior.

ABCDE UPDATE: WHAT'S HAPPENED IN BARRINGTON

Using a task force approach and with broad based representation of professionals, volunteers and parents, ABCDE pulls the community together and encourages organizations and agencies-in-place to fight against alcohol and other drug use by school-age youth. It recognizes that, while there is no "quick Fix", a community can work together to manage the dilemma.

Accomplishments include:

I. Increased awareness of alcohol and other drug-related problems among all segments of the community through:

A. Publication of CHOICES. From 1984 to 1991, thirteen issues of this newsletter were mailed to over 15,000 households and businesses in CUSD #220 and to parents of students in other-than zip code 60010. It was also distributed to school and police personnel and, by representatives of the Chamber of Commerce and Welcome Wagon, to new homeowners.

- B. Informational presentations to PTO, church, clubs, etc.
 - C. Obtained films and tapes, many of which are available at the Barrington Area Public Library or through Barrington High School's media center.
 - D. Increased media coverage by the local newspapers which promotes prevention activities and gives prevention information. Increased attention is given to prevention activities in school, church and other organizations' newsletters.
- II. Provided alcohol and other drug prevention/intervention training for nearly 700 school, professional and community persons, either at Community Intervention, Inc. Minneapolis or at CI staffed summer workshops in Barrington. Starting in 1994, the workshop include information on other high risk behaviors.
- III. Helped to develop a sharper focus on drug-related problems by schools, churches, individuals, agencies/organizations, government/police and mental health professionals.
- IV. Support for and a better understanding of each other's role in intervention/prevention among community persons, agencies, organizations. (e.g. parents know more about school and/or police policies)

A. School

1. A review of the Drug Policy was conducted by a School Board Committee and a revision made to include prevention activities.

2. Barrington High School created a Chemical Health Program to deal with violations of chemical use policy at school, to support students who are concerned about someone else's use of chemicals and to support those needing it after in-patient treatment for chemical dependency. A Core Team of workshop-trained staff is in place

The Athletic and Activities Codes were revised and Leadership Groups were conducted with student team and organization leaders. Other prevention activities were initiated and/or increased

Sponsored a peer counseling program with Barrington Youth Services.

A student/parent committee plan an after-prom activity.

A drug and alcohol-free student group, DAFS, was begun.

Faculty initiated "Donuts and Jeans", a Saturday morning session for Dads only.

3. Barrington Middle School, led by a Core Team of trained staff members, has instituted an alternative-to- suspension policy and program for students who use chemicals at school or school-sponsored activities.

It promoted alternative activities and, with BYS, increased Snowflake activities, participated in national Red Ribbon Week, worked with the PTO in educational programs, sponsored Chemical Awareness Month and initiated support for students who are concerned about another person's use/abuse.

A pilot "special friend" program to provide a student with additional support and guidance from an adult was initiated.

In the '92-'93 school year, health teachers were added at each middle school.
(See Govt./Policies/Parks, re: IMAGES.)

4. Each elementary school's special services team can help a child at risk for chemical use/abuse; a referral system is also used.

Fourth grade Just Say No Clubs were encouraged to form in order to enrich the prevention effort. JSN groups participated in special projects. One presented a petition signed by 1,800 students to the Barrington Village Board which requested passage of an ordinance to prohibit the sale of tobacco products to minors. A yearly JSN march of 4-5th grade students and others helped to emphasize and enrich the curriculum, to take part in a national march effort and to provide an opportunity for adults to be supportive.

(See Barrington Youth Services re: high risk.)

An Elementary Advisory Council composed of representatives from each elementary school, including parents, teachers, principals and other personnel, meets regularly during the school year to exchange information about activities at each school/PTO, to coordinate efforts, to examine curriculum/enrichment programs and to promote community education.

B. Church

1. A number of churches sponsored workshops or retreats concerning self esteem, decision making and other prevention tools. Some increased alternative fun activities.
2. Some churches held adult educational programs concerning alcoholism, prevention, support groups and resources for help.
3. A number have "Core Teams" within the church for membership help and support.
4. An increased number of support groups meet in church space.
5. A number of churches' youth pastors meet regularly, including Campus Life and IMAGES coordinators, to share information and to promote joint alternative activities. (e.g. Jello Jam for middle schools.)

C. Government/Police/Parks

1. Village governments have supported ABCDE programs and have provided funds for CHOICES and workshop training.
2. All villages, except one, in BACOG have adopted the "model" ordinance package providing an uniform legal process and for assigning greater liability to parents for teenage partying and illegal drug use in their homes. The "model" was developed by an early ABCDE committee of police, legal, social service providers, student and parent representatives.
3. The same committee drafted and obtained acceptance by Cook County Court system of an educational Deferred Prosecution Program (DPP) for first-time minors under age 19 who violate drug laws and which has been conducted by Barrington Youth Services since December, 1985. The Third District Court in Rolling Meadows has encouraged agencies in other suburbs to institute a DPP modeled after the Barrington DPP and conducts its own sessions in Rolling Meadows court building as well.
4. Police from several Barrington area villages are networking and cooperating to deal with illegal parties/use of alcohol and other drugs by students. The Barrington Police Chief issued a position paper describing possession and constructive possession of illegal drugs as well as consequences of violation. Enforcement of "constructive possession" has resulted in some police intervention/arrests.

The Village of Barrington Police Dept. initiated a Drug Awareness Resistance Education program, D.A.R.E., in the Village of Barrington schools; Barrington Hills and Carpentersville Police Departments also have a D.A.R.E. officer. All CUSD #220 elementary schools are now covered, including St. Anne School. A parent D.A.R.E. program was offered to parents of Middle School children. (a D.A.R.E. officer has been on campus at BMS, Prairie Campus, since the 1994-95 school year.)

5. Barrington Paramedics present programs to Driver Education classes at BHS.
6. Lagendorf Park Board decided to enforce its no-alcohol-on-parks-premises policy.
7. In cooperation with Barrington Youth Services, and with funds provided by the Barrington Area United Drive, a junior leader program, IMAGES, was developed and conducted at Lagendorf Park, later joined by park districts from South Barrington, Barrington Hills and Lake Barrington. The IMAGES coordinator is housed at BYS and in 1993 became a BYS staff member. BYS staff input gives this activities program for all middle schools a prevention/therapeutic aspect. An IMAGES programs advisory board includes representatives from each park district and BYS; it monitors programs and activities while supervision is provided by BYS staff.

D. Professional

1. A Social Service Network was formed after the first summer workshop in Barrington when religious, police, mental health and social service participants discovered a need to share information and be more informed about each other's services and specific youth-related topics.
2. Family Service of South Lake County provides brief parenting sessions for parents while their young children are in a library program. It also conducted a special seminar for single parents and other family life education programs.

3. Barrington Youth Services, until 1992-93, sponsored an Operation Snowball Chapter, chartered by the Illinois Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Association; it provided information, support and activities for high school students. It also promoted and provided scholarships for Illinois Teenage Institute, a week-long summer peer leadership training camp.

BYS instituted an Aftercare program for students who return from in-patient treatment. A group for their parents is offered.

Until 1992-93, a BYC counselor co-sponsored a peer counseling group, Peer-friends-counselors (PFCs), at the high school. In 1993 peer leader training was offered to school staff-selected middle school students.

A pilot transition to middle school workshop was conducted at Lines School for all its fifth grade students by social workers, graduate interns and middle school peer leaders. In 1994 workshops were held in five elementary schools.

Other BYC prevention programs include: Rainbows, a support group for elementary children suffering the effects of divorce, death or other family trauma; a group for "chronic Saturday detention BHS students; social skill building groups at elementary schools; a smoking program similar to DPP for BHS students referred for repeated violation of school smoking rules; or other special groups as requested.

BYC counselors increased the number of parent education programs, e.g. Systemic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP), support for parents of children in Rainbows, ACOA, etc.

E. Other

1. All service providers - park districts, library, YMCA, etc. - were urged to examine and increase their activities, especially for students on school holidays. A meeting for representatives of park boards in CUSD #220 to explore prevention possibilities was held.

2. Increased attention and support was given to treatment programs and support groups, e.g. Adult Children of Alcoholics, AA, Al-Anon, CODA for co-dependents, by individuals and organizations.

Good Shepherd Hospital initiated inpatient treatment and a creative program for adolescent out-patient treatment was adopted. An increased number of educational programs are offered to the community.

V. Parent Networking

A. ABCDE Parent Networking Representatives

1. While ABCDE has no committee structure now, several from the original ABCDE Parent Networking Committee have presented educational and awareness programs to parent groups in schools, churches and other organizations.

2. A half-day workshop was developed to teach parents and other community persons how to organize, conduct and lead a parent networking (PN) session. In 1993 a Leader Pool was developed offering each school the opportunity to have a leader from outside its school to lead PN sessions. PN sessions offer parents the experience and aid in understanding how communication between parents, at any level, is beneficial to prevention efforts.

Leader Pool participants attend more intensive two-session workshops.

B. Summer Workshop and/or Parent Networking-trained Parents

1. PN is occurring in many organizations, schools and individual groups. This is not ABCDE programming; rather it is sponsored by the individual organization, school or group.

2. Trained leaders from elementary and middle school PTOs, including St. Anne, hold PN sessions at nearly every grade level. A number of fathers only sessions were conducted by trained father-facilitators. Communication among parents is urged at any time and in many forms.

3. PTO PN representatives formed a Parent Networking Council (PNC) which meets to share program information, to promote PN activities/ideas and to promote joint educational/speaker programs. This has become an important factor in ongoing PN through PTOs.

In 1994-95 the PNC focused on providing an evening grade level session for parents of any elementary or middle school, with sitters, in order to allow parents who cannot attend sessions offered by their school.

4. PN became a part of the BHS Parent Assoc. commitment. Parents of incoming Fall, 1988 BHS freshmen expressed desire/need to continue the kind of parent communication they began at elementary school levels when it is "easier" to do. "Prom Talk" for parents has given parents information, courage and support to set guidelines for before and after prom activities.
5. Regular networking sessions (Connections) are offered for parents of pre-school children.
6. Parents, especially in PN sessions, are addressing student social behaviors which may lead to high risk activities in older age levels. Increased attention is given to skill building and communication techniques. Other parenting issues are coming to focus along with increased support for the tough job of parenting. There are "success" stories out there of support and change.
7. PTO presidents initiated Parent Allied to Communicate (PAC) which invited parent to subscribe to a "no-serve" pledge and follow-up phone confirmations. An awareness week was conducted at BHS in 1992-93. The pledge is printed in school handbooks and urges parents to regularly talk with parent peers.

VI. Students

- A. More high school students participate in community volunteer and other alternative activities.
- B. Students took active roles in peer leadership against drunk driving, prevention programs with younger students and participated in training sessions, e.g. Operation Snowball, Illinois Teenage Institute. They raised money to support their programs and training scholarships. Students helped to plan the first after-prom event and served with D.A.R.E. officers in elementary classrooms.
- C. A number claim the feeling of more support for those who do not drink or use other drugs. At BHS, a new drug and alcohol-free students (DAFS) group was formed.
- D. A 1988 survey at BHS showed a slight drop in use (similar to that of the government-sponsored national survey of high school seniors) and a change in attitude toward recognition of a need for helping students in trouble with use of alcohol/drugs (rather than punishment)
- E. Two ABCDE student board members conducted a survey of BHS and BMS students to support a need for a community center for teen activities.
- F. Elementary students became more involved and active through JSN clubs and BMS students through Operation Snowflake, IMAGES and Core Team sponsored activities.
- G. Since 1993, students from high, middle and elementary schools provided inspiration at Red Ribbon Week community rallies.

VII. Unknown Activities

It is recognized that individuals who have received CI workshop training, attended educational programs or PN sessions have performed unknown prevention/intervention activities. We can never estimate the total impact of such experiences. However, we do know that many young people and families have sought and received needed treatment, support and other services.

Skills and principles gained at the summer workshop and other educational sessions can be applied to any youthful high risk behavior. Help sought in other areas also is not known; however, professional services are increasing in number and utilization. Underlying and often more severe problems of youth and families are being seen in counseling and treatment agencies, possibly due to increased community awareness and attitudes that "it's okay to get help".

VIII. Continued Need

As ABCDE members share information, it is obvious that while there are more "safety nets", more interventive and preventive programs and support groups, the problems of youthful risk taking is still occurring in various forms: alcohol and other drugs, gangs and gang-like behavior, etc. The trend toward younger age groups to experiment makes a concerted and coordinated community effort needed now, as much as ten years ago, to manage the dilemma through awareness, education, intervention and help.