

Contact: Stefanie Schumann
w: 312-546-3512
c: 847-722-4144
sschumann@mww.com

Melanie Nimrodi
w: 312-546-3508
c: 312-217-6355
mnimrodi@mww.com



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ACE LAUNCHES INHALANT ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM TO HELP 598,000 ILLINOIS YOUTH WHO ABUSE INHALANTS

Health, Parent, Nurse, Education, Counseling Groups Rally to Support Illinois Children

Chicago, IL (May 30, 2007) – The Alliance for Consumer Education (ACE) in partnership with health, parent, nurse, education and counseling groups today announced the launch of Illinois’ initiative to educate parents, school officials and others who work with children on the dangers of inhalant abuse. The ACE *Inhalant Abuse Prevention Program* will provide and distribute free Inhalant Abuse Prevention Kits to schools and communities throughout Illinois. The kit contains information and handouts to help educate adults on how to talk with children about this underestimated substance abuse issue.

“The program was launched to address parental unawareness and the significant rise of inhalant abuse,” said Colleen Creighton, Executive Director at ACE. “There is a real problem when more than 1 in 5 children in the U.S. will abuse inhalants by the eighth grade. That’s why such a distinguished and action-oriented group came together today to help address this issue.”

Among the representatives and organizations that will be promoting and/or providing the Inhalant Abuse Prevention Kit include:

- Dr. Carol Adams, secretary, Illinois Department of Human Services (pending)
- Karel Ares, executive director, Prevention First
- Chris Cathcart, secretary of the board, Alliance for Consumer Education
- Colleen Creighton, executive director, Alliance for Consumer Education
- Carol Deslauries, certified specialist poison information, Illinois Poison Control
- Albert Holmes, principle education consultant/SDFSCA statewide coordinator, Illinois State Board of Education
- Julie Johnson, Illinois director, National Association of School Nurses
- Carleen Kreider, immediate past president, Alliance for Consumer Education
- Roseann Oppman, president, Illinois School Counselor Association
- Jeff Williams, parent and police officer

More than 1,400 inexpensive and readily available common household, office and school products can be huffed or sniffed by children to achieve short-term highs. These include correction fluid, nail polish remover, computer dust removal sprays, hair spray, pressurized dessert toppings, air freshener, felt tipped markers, spray paint, glue, butane lighters, gasoline and cooking spray.

“Inhalants are the fourth most abused substances after alcohol, tobacco and marijuana,” said Carol Deslauries, Certified Specialist Poison Information at Illinois Poison Control. “And yet this is likely one of the last things that occurs to parents when they think about drug abuse.”

According to recent research from the Illinois Drug Education Alliance, 598,000 Illinois youth ages 12-17 have initiated inhalant abuse in the past 12 months. Interestingly, girls start huffing at a much earlier age than boys. That means that parents, health care professionals and educators should start talking with pre-teen girls about the dangers of inhalants before it is too late.

“Today’s young teens didn’t benefit from the public-education campaigns and community outreach of the 1990s,” said Karel Ares, Executive Director at Prevention First. “This new generation of parents needs our help to prevent this dangerous behavior. The first step parents can take is to learn about inhalant abuse and resist denial that their children would abuse.”

Common health effects of inhalant abuse may include: Sudden sniffing death syndrome; nervous system and brain damage; irreversible damage to the liver and kidneys; and hearing loss. Inhalant abuse happens in homes, schools and places where children recreate. It is as common in cities as in suburbs and rural locations. In the past few years fatalities from inhalant abuse have occurred in neighborhoods from Rockford/Loves Park to Galesburg, Illinois.

Officer Jeff Williams, an east Cleveland police officer and father of Kyle Williams, learned about inhalant abuse in the most devastating way — when his son died from inhalant abuse. Though he is a police officer and his wife is a nurse, they had no idea about inhalant abuse.

“No parent should have to find out about inhalants like we did,” Williams said. “Nothing I can do can bring my son back, but what I can do is help other families avoid suffering the same pain that we endured. Education is the key to help battle inhalant abuse, and it is important that families educate themselves about inhalants and get to know the warning signs. If you don’t recognize the signs, you can’t save your kids.”

To obtain an ACE Inhalant Abuse Prevention Kit, you can contact Prevention First at 312-988-4646 for a copy or download a kit online at www.inhlant.org.

###

The Alliance for Consumer Education (ACE) is a Washington, D.C., based nonprofit foundation dedicated to advancing community health and well-being wherever household and commercial products are used. Inhalant Abuse Prevention Programs have been successful in Alabama, Alaska, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Texas and Virginia to date.