

# Reality of kids' drug use shocking, eye opening for local parents

By Matt Liebowitz

Before Phillip Hubbs, executive director of Proactive Network Against Substance Abuse (PRONASA), spoke a single word at his Sept. 23 presentation, his point was frighteningly clear.

On a long table behind his podium sat dozens of recognizable household items: Cool Whip, Pam cooking spray, Reddi Whip, Axe body spray, Neutra Air, nail polish remover, pre-paint cleaner, drain opener, Chore Boy copper scrubbers, Visine eye drops, Rock Star and Monster energy drinks.

Lining the wall to the side of the projection screen stood a series of posters with names like "Rave Parties and Designer Drugs," and "Anatomy of Drugs," the latter of which showed in explicit detail how different controlled substances (alcohol, tobacco, MDMA, steroids inhalants, heroin, methamphetamines) negatively affect the body.

More than 75 parents from the San Dieguito Union High School District in attendance milled from poster to poster, reading how steroids can cause shrunken testicles, baldness, and an enlarged prostate, how heroin can lead to liver disease, scarred veins, and heart valve damage, and how dementia can be brought on by inhalants. The event was held at San Dieguito Academy High School.

When Hubbs, a San Diego police officer of 31 years, began speaking, he had the attention of the crowd, and it didn't take long for him to reinforce the point conveyed by the items on the table and the posters: drugs are a serious problem, and, as he said shortly after beginning, "parents are always the last to find out, and always in denial."

Starting with tobacco, which he called "the ground floor," Hubbs reported that it causes 450,000 deaths per year, and that students who smoke are 10 times more likely to use drugs.

"That's not guesswork," he said, "those are the facts."

The facts, spoken in Hubbs' clear, strong voice, were enough to keep people alert; his credentials lent credence to his presentation.

For 15 years, Hubbs worked undercover, "buying drugs from gang members, prostitutes, and kids," he told the audience. Eight years ago, he and a group of officers decided to retool the D.A.R.E. program, gearing it toward increasing awareness of teachers, parents, and coaches.

For the past four years, PRONASA has been accepted into all 42

school district in San Diego County. His San Dieguito Academy presentation was coordinated by READI, a drug intervention program in the San Dieguito Union High School District.

Standing for Recovery Education and Alcohol/Drug Instruction, READI is a three-day program students may voluntarily enter (in lieu of school suspension) if caught in possession — or under the influence — of drugs or alcohol.

Completion of the READI program and a follow-up counseling and community service allows for the suspension to be removed from the student's permanent record.

From tobacco, Hubbs moved to alcohol, but instead of rehashing facts and figures the audience was familiar with, he incorporated a video to prove his point.

A segment from a News 8 broadcast, the clip centered the danger presented when high school students cross the border to drink in Tijuana; it showed kids beaten up, robbed, and intoxicated to the point of hospitalization after a night of partying.

Enough to elicit audible sighs of shock, Hubbs emphasized the severity of the issue with a host of

stories from personal experience: a Mount Miguel High School football player stabbed to death in a Tijuana bathroom; a girl raped by a classmate who, because it happened in Mexico, couldn't be prosecuted in the States.

"It's a third world country," Hubbs said. "Kids can't call 911 and have their parents come pick them up."

The presentation shifted its focus from the border to problems on local roads; Hubbs spoke about several drunk-driving accidents, which took the lives of local teens in San Marcos, Ramona, and Riverside.

He told the story (backed with a projection of the newspaper article) about a West Hills High School basketball player who was shot by an off-duty El Cajon police officer after attempting to choke him when he was caught stealing beer from a convenience store.

Cocaine was Hubbs' next topic. Holding up a copy of the 2000 movie "Traffic," which addresses cocaine smuggling across the border into San Diego, Hubbs said the film was an accurate portrayal of how "law enforcement is getting our butts kicked in the war on drugs at the local, state, and federal levels."

He then showed a gory photo of a girl with an abscess running from her elbow to her wrist. The girl, a 16-year-old prostitute Hubbs arrested in an undercover operation, was who Erika Christensen's "Traffic's" character was modeled on.

In the movie, Christensen's drug-addicted character is put in a prevention program. In real life, the girl, who'd been injecting heroin into a cut on her wrist for six years, had her arm amputated in Tijuana.

"You don't see this," Hubbs said, as the girl's picture lingered on the screen. "This is the true reality. I see this every day on the street."

Hubbs then tackled all the angles of marijuana, from 200-pound drug busts and robberies outside medicinal marijuana dispensaries, to the story of Ruxana Mermarzadeh, a 16-year-old La Jolla girl who, in June 2004, drove her car off a 300-foot cliff while high.

He branched off into more obscure drugs being used by teens, including Jimson weed, a native plant classified as a poison and consumed for its hallucinogenic effects, and Salvia, a plant readily available and not classified as a drug or poison.

"You can get this at Home Depot or any plant store," Hubbs said. "Every kid knows about this."

Hubbs' heroin segment was abridged to make room for the rapidly growing problem of prescription drugs, and household items kids are abusing right under parents' noses, like Dust-Off computer spray, hair spray, felt pens and Axe body spray, all used as an inhalants.

A substantial and serious segment was devoted to methamphetamines, the most serious problem facing San Diego youth.

Though video clips and tales of the drug underworld were enough to scare parents, Hubbs' presentation seemed most effective when the audience was made to see firsthand the ways kids abuse drugs.

Passing around baggies filled with meth pipes, blunts, crack pipes, as well as scrubbing sponges used as crack pipe filters, Hubbs mentioned how kids are using lightbulbs as meth pipes, and removing the guard from lighters, enabling a five-inch flame to shoot straight up for smoking meth.

"Kids are very resourceful," Hubbs said. He then clicked on a series of slides showing mugshots of meth addicts, many of which caused audience members to cringe in disgust.

"It doesn't take a Frankenstein lab to cook up meth. The labs aren't in rural areas, they're in our front yards."

The presentation finished with segments on steroids, ecstasy, and GHB, the date rape drug behind actor Nick Nolte's infamous 2002 mugshot, as well as the 20 drug-induced rapes committed by the Max Factor heir Andrew Luster and the gang rape and death of a Mira Mesa teen.

"We as parents have to step up and communicate," Hubbs told the audience. "I applaud you, you stepped up to the plate by showing up."

Exiting, parents recognized the benefits of the program, including the shocking footage and firsthand knowledge.

A parent of a 14-year-old Torrey Pines High School student (he asked not to be named) said he wasn't previously aware of the severity of drug-related crimes in the area, especially in Tijuana. He also affirmed Hubbs' adamant assertion that kids are already well versed in the drug culture despite what their parents know.

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## DRUG

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"What he said is true — kids know everything. It's a bit scary." The father said he would share the details of the presentation with his child. "It was very informative," said Michael Klein, who has a 15-year old son at La Costa Canyon High School and a 12-year-old daughter at Oak Crest Middle School. "Parents have to get involved to stop the problem." Brenda Hill, a parent of three girls (one at Torrey Pines High School, one at Earl Warren Middle School, and a third in college), was strongly affected by

the realities Hubbs laid out. "It's an eye opener," Hill said. "We think we know about alcohol and drugs, but some of the stuff, like Dust-Off, it makes you aware of what could go wrong. "It's frustrating," said Peter Demarco. "It looks like a losing battle."

Demarco's wife, Gina, said, "This is a really great program. I'm grateful for it. It scares us as parents."

Addressing what he saw as the logical progression of Hubbs' presentation, Peter added, "It scares the parents, but what we really need to do is scare the kids."

*Look for more on this topic in upcoming issues.*

## TAX

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believe is ultimately needed — a regional firefighting agency. But supporters say Prop. A will still provide incremental improvements.

"We have to ask ourselves all the time, is it ever enough. No, it's not enough to do the complete regionalization we've envisioned for decades in San Diego County. But it is another very positive step," said Ghio. "When you look at how much money it is, it's more than we have now."

In August, the board of the Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District took an official position against the measure. Board members said Prop. A does not provide enough funds to make needed improvements, and creators of the ballot measure did not prepare a detailed list of the county's equipment and personnel needs.

In an interview, fire board president Jim Ashcraft said another shortcoming is that not enough money is focused on East County, where the major wildfires in 2003 and 2007 started.

"So, it's not the right approach. We've got to attack the problem in the East County," said Ashcraft.

With another fire season just about to start, Ashcraft concedes the need for improved firefighting capacity in

San Diego is "an urgent matter." But along with failing to allocate enough resources to East County, he said, the tax won't generate enough money county-wide to deal with the problem.

Prop. A calls for half of the \$50 million in annual revenue to be spent on regional assets, and the other half to be divided among cities and fire districts, to be spent within their boundaries.

"Twenty-five million a year is a start, and I applaud the Board of Supervisors for trying to get this thing going, but the truth of the answer is, the problem is bigger, we need to get down and get a solid plan and take that to the public," Ashcraft said. "People tend to forget, the public is smart, trust the public. They'll know when you have a good plan and they'll vote for it."

Five local officials signed the ballot statement in support of Prop A: They include Ghio, San Diego Mayor Jerry Sanders, Sheriff William Kolender, Mark Baker, president of the San Diego County Fire District Association, and Greg Cox, chairman of the county Board of Supervisors.

## PARKING

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town became timed parking spots. In 2005, one-hour timed parking spots were put in on both sides of Paseo Delicias between Avenida de Acacias and La Granada; in 2006, those spots were changed to two-hour spots, and one-hour spots were put in on Via de Santa Fe between Paseo Delicias and La Flecha. In 2008, half of Via de Santa Fe was turned into two-hour spots, and two spots in front of Country Friends on El Tordo were turned into two-hour spots.

"All these changes have been done to help businesses have spaces for their customers," she said.

She added that the Association does not pay the Sheriff's department, and therefore has no control over its enforcement. The Association does hire California Highway Patrol for overtime enforcement, primarily to deal with safety issues such as speeding; CHP also has a full-time officer in Rancho Santa Fe. (The Association's RSF Patrol cannot issue parking citations, only warnings that are not binding.)

On a yearly basis, Avalon conducts a parking survey, and said, "Every year for the past three years we've made some kind of change to help businesses. The parking situation is better now than it has been in some time."

The Planning Committee meets the fourth Thursday of every month; at its last meeting, on Sept. 25, Dodson said she addressed the issue of redesigning the park in front of The Inn to help create more parking spaces in the Village area.

## Scripps Clinic's Dalessio Headache Center offers free community lecture and support group

Every other month the Dalessio Headache Center offers an evening of education about headache at Scripps Green Hospital Hastings Room (adjacent to the Scripps Green cafeteria) at 10666 North Torrey Pines Road, La Jolla, CA 92037. Next meeting is Wednesday, Oct. 29, from 6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Guest speaker is Dr. Robert Bonakdar, M.D. from the Scripps Center for Integrative Medicine.

## DROUGHT

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the close of the public hearing the board of directors may consider adoption, revision, or modification of the drought response policies and procedures.

Santa Fe Irrigation District has made a significant effort to inform and alert its customers of the current water supply conditions and the district's proposed Drought Response Policies and Procedures. District staff has met with several homeowner associations and community groups to share this message and respond to questions from the community.

Drought Response Policies and Procedures, being adopted by area water agencies, are intended to serve as a tool in achieving demand reductions during shortages, and to provide regional consistency in the event of necessary reductions. The Santa Fe Irrigation District Drought Response Policies and Procedures references, and is intended to be implemented in accordance with, two important state statutes. California Water Code section 375 authorizes water suppliers to adopt and enforce a comprehensive water conservation program. California Water Code section 350 authorizes more restrictive water use regulations and measures such as water rationing, under the declaration of a water shortage emergency.

The Santa Fe Irrigation District Drought Response Policies and Procedures have four levels of drought response, which are determined by specific existing conditions. The levels require increasing levels of conservation from a voluntary 10 percent reduction of water usage up to a mandatory 40 percent or more

reduction. The district's intention is to inform customers in advance of official noticing of the drought condition levels, so they can prepare for reductions and consider water usage changes that could be implemented now.

Santa Fe Irrigation District has several helpful tips to reducing water usage available on its Web site: [www.sfidwater.org](http://www.sfidwater.org) as well as offering free residential water audits to help determine the most efficient methods of water usage for a residence.

Please contact the Santa Fe Irrigation District Water Conservation Department at 858-756-5672 for further information, to schedule a water audit, or to get answers to your water conservation questions. Also, view water conservation information on the customer care tab of the Santa Fe Irrigation District Web site: [www.sfidwater.org](http://www.sfidwater.org).

The Santa Fe Irrigation District was formed in 1923 under the California Irrigation District Act. The district provides water and related services to residential, commercial and agricultural customers in the San Diego County communities of Rancho Santa Fe, Solana Beach and Fairbanks Ranch. The district provides service to about 22,000 customers in a 16-square-mile area. The district supplies over 4.5 billion gallons (or 14,000 acre feet) of water per year to its customers, utilizing a blend of local water from Lake Hodges and imported water purchased through the San Diego County Water Authority. The district administers and operates the jointly owned R.E. Badger Filtration Plant, a 40 million gallon per day water treatment plant. The district has historical rights to local water supplies from Lake Hodges and the San Dieguito Reservoir.

## DECISION

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About the Association's plan to appeal, Rababy said, "They've already lost twice, I don't know why they want to appeal it. I don't know why they've fought me so much. Past board members could not believe that this was not commercial, and most people in the Ranch feel that this is commercial. If you ask anyone in the Ranch, they'll say it's commercial."

Rababy said she pays a landscaper to take care of the property every week, and added, "I don't know what else I can do. It's a gas station, people park their cars there."

As an example, according to Rababy, of the the Association's unwillingness to cooperate and the town's repeated vilification of her, she brought up the events that occurred when, in the recent past, she and her husband tore down the historic house that previously existed on the property.

"I've been crucified for tearing the house down," said Rababy. "The truth is, we offered it to

the Association, and they didn't want it. We offered it to the Historical Society, they didn't want it. We offered it to the Inn, they didn't want it."

Before tearing the house down — which was done on a Saturday as a conscientious gesture, according to Rababy, not to impede traffic — Rababy said they offered to pay for the moving and restoration of the house, and only asked the Association to find a spot for it.

"It wouldn't cost them anything," she said, "but they weren't interested."

Rababy said she was unable to get insurance for the house because nobody was living in it at the time, and that kids were repeatedly breaking in and vandalizing the house.

"They told us we could tear it down," she added, "There was no permission needed to tear it down, and then everybody had an opinion."

About two weeks ago, prior to the judge's final decision, the Rababys were paid a settlement by the Association's insurance company to drop the other courses of action in the suit against the

Association. Those actions included a complaint for breach of fiduciary duty, and a violation of Civil Code 1366.1, which states "An Association shall not impose or collect an assessment or fee that exceeds the amount necessary to defray the cost for which it is levied."

The Association's side of the matter has roots going back nearly a century.

When the Covenant was formed in 1928, the north half of the property (where the gas station currently sits) was zoned for commercial use. However, the owner of the Rababys' parcel, at that time, didn't immediately join; six months later, they joined under an "Acceptance Agreement," which defined the entire site as residential.

When the owners applied for a gas station in 1966, their application went through the Art Jury and was approved by the Art Jury with the Art Jury's incorrect belief that part of the property was zoned commercial, according to Smith.

The Rababys bought the gas station property in the early 1980s and at that time they were

aware of the fact that the gas station was operating under a non-conforming use and that the property the gas station sits on and the property behind it was zoned residential with the Association, according to Smith.

In the mid-1980s the Rababys began the process of changing the gas station property and the adjoining parcel (where they would like to build a commercial building) to commercial use zoning, according to Association records and Smith. In 1988, the RSF Association and the Art Jury approved a Covenant modification for commercial zoning and also approved the Rababys development plans for both properties. The membership has the right to oppose the modification by submitting a petition requesting a membership vote. A membership petition in opposition was submitted in November 1988 and a meeting of the Association membership was held on Dec. 1 1988, Smith said.

More than 500 people attended the meeting; 432 voted to keep the property residential, only 70 voted to uphold the Association board's decision to allow

the commercial zoning.

That 1988 vote kept the property zoning residential, although the gas station was allowed to stay as a nonconforming use, Smith said.

The Rababys' lawyers initially sued the Association in 2005 with the understanding that the original covenant — which allowed for half of the site to be used for commercial purposes — was binding, and that they didn't have to adhere to the rules of the Acceptance Agreement, under which they initially joined. The judge's initial ruling was that the Rababys' argument was correct, but based on additional argument by the Association attorneys the judge reversed his decision.

After several more decision reversals, the judge ultimately made the Sept. 26 decision, based on the Davis Stirling Act, that the property should be commercially zoned, according to Smith.

"The Association's argument is that it's not for the judge or the Association to decide. It's for the members, and they want it residential," Smith said.