

May 2010



SPRING / SUMMER 2010

PROJECT LEAP

Archdiocese of NY Drug Abuse Prevention Program (ADAPP)
2789 Schurz Avenue, Bronx, New York 10465 (718) 904-1333

When is the Best Age to Start Prevention Education?



LEAP Educator LaTasha Logan with the 2nd grade class at St. Stephen of Hungary.

Parents and educators are increasingly concerned about the effects of pop culture on our children's development. Messages and images that glorify drug use seem to be everywhere: in music, movies, videos, on billboards and other advertising. One RAND Corporation study found that "children as young as the 4th grade were very familiar with alcohol advertising and can tell you slogans and brand names." The average age of the onset of adolescent drinking is now 11 for boys and 13 for girls. One out of every two 8th graders has tried alcohol. As many as 300,000 4th and 5th graders began drinking alcohol before reaching 6th grade. (Pride survey, 2009)

The good news is that even very young children can gain valuable life skills from prevention education programs that will strengthen their resistance

to using drugs later on in adolescence. Project LEAP only uses programs that have been researched to prove their efficacy in changing attitudes and behaviors toward early drug use and experimentation, such as ***Too Good for Drugs, Second Step*** and ***Project Alert***.

NIDA (National Institute on Drug Abuse) has found, after 20 years of research, that some factors that protect children from drug use include positive relationships with family and peers. The Project LEAP Educator can help the school reinforce positive, prosocial attitudes and behaviors, such as student bonding, better communication skills, better self-management skills, and negative perceptions of smoking, drinking and other drug use.

Project LEAP uses the highly interactive techniques that have been

proven to be most effective in changing students' attitudes, such as role-playing, small and large group discussion, games, etc.

Research conducted by the Mendez Foundation in 2007 found that students in grades K through 5 who had participated in the ten-week ***Too Good for Drugs*** program had gains in emotional competency, decision-making and goal-setting skills, and higher resistance to social pressures to use drugs.

Project LEAP provides 10 weeks of service covering research-based substance abuse prevention and violence prevention education. We also offer Parent and Faculty workshops on various topics. For more information on the classroom education and workshops topics, please call Joanne Timmins at: (718) 904-1333 ext. 78.

Preventing Bullying by Promoting Tolerance

Everyday in the United States, children are teased, taunted, harassed or humiliated on school grounds. Recent studies have shown that bullying is quite common:

- 88% of students in junior high and high school reported seeing bullying.
- 76.8% of students reported that they had been targets of bullying.
- A study of 4th through 6th graders found that 1 in 4 had been bullied regularly within the past 3 months.

Bullying, defined as “being exposed repeatedly and over time, to negative actions, and having difficulty in defending oneself”, can have serious consequences for the target of bullying as well as for the climate of the entire school. Bullying can be subtle and difficult for the teacher to detect, as when it involves social exclusion, rumors and lies, or more overt, as in pushing, shoving and hitting. Either way, the target of the bullying can suffer



David Trinidad, Project LEAP Educator

lowered self-esteem, depression, or even suicide, as recent events have tragically reminded us.

It seems that tolerance education is more important now than ever.

Tolerance is defined as “the capacity to accept differences, respect one another and stand up for what’s right.” Children can be taught, beginning in the earliest grades, that our differences make us special and unique, and are an opportunity to learn and to expand our social and educational experiences. Even very young children can understand the importance of judging a person based on their inner selves, not on

their external characteristics, like clothing, appearance, or physical abilities or disabilities. Children are quick to grasp concepts of fairness and unfairness and can participate in discussions about the harmfulness of stereotypes and their negative impact on self-worth.

Enhancing children’s sense of empathy and fair play can help them decide to **stand up** for those being bullies, to **report** to school authorities, and to **not join in** with the bullying. Project LEAP has used research-based programs that help the young child develop a greater sense of empathy, a deeper understanding of friendship and its characteristics, and more peaceful methods to solve interpersonal conflicts.

With parental support and reinforcement of the school’s message of tolerance, empathy and fairness, we can work together to create safe, positive learning environments for all.

Project Leap

We hope you enjoyed reading our second bi-annual newsletter. Project Leap (Life Enhancement and Awareness Program) is now entering its ninth year of service to more than 70 Archdiocesan schools.

Schools, now more than ever, are looking to educate their students on leading healthy, drug-and violence-free lives. If you are continuing our service or are new to Project Leap, our 10-session program brings the latest research-based health education curricula to students in grades K through 8 on timely issues such as bullying prevention, substance abuse prevention, conflict resolution. We also offer parent and faculty workshops, and special topic one-day presentations, such as Peer Leadership Trainings.

Project Leap staff have received excellent reviews from principals, teachers and students alike. If you are interested in booking our services for the next school year, please call Linda Toscano at (718) 904-1333 ext. 11. Visit our website at: www.adapp.org



Project Leap Staff : (l to r) LaTasha Logan, Karen Barton, Joanne Timmins and David Trinidad

Workshops for Parents and Teachers

In addition to our ten-week classroom programs, we offer informative and timely workshops for Parents’ Meetings or Faculty Meetings:

- Bullying/Cyberbullying
- Drug Trends among Youth
- Alcohol and the Teenage Brain
- Peaceful Conflict Resolution for Kids

**Please call: Janit Bliss
(718) 904-1333, ext. 16
to schedule a workshop.**