

*The Small Book*  
*of Big Issues*

**by the**

**Crescenta Valley**

**Drug and Alcohol Prevention Coalition**

*Dedicated to Aileen Bristow  
and in loving memory of Christopher McCulloch.*

*“You’ll be with me  
Like a handprint on my heart”  
..Wicked*

# Parent & Student Help Agencies

## Extreme Emergencies.....911

Crime Stoppers	(818) 507-7867
Glendale PD	(818) 548-4840
Sheriff's Department (La Crescenta, La Canada, Montrose)	(818) 248-3464

## Help lines & Resources:

Action Family Counseling	(800) 367-8336
AIDS Hotline	(800) 922-2437
Alcohol & Drug Helpline	(800) 821-4357
Battered Women Hotline	(800) 548-2722
California Youth Crisis Hotline	(800) 843-5200
Child Abuse Hotline (24 hours)	(800) 540-4000
Cocaine Anonymous (24 Hours)	(310) 216-4444
Domestic Violence (YWCA)	(818) 242-1106
Eating Disorders	(818) 242-5428
Front Point (Counseling)	(626) 396-9502
Glendale Adventist Alcohol & Drug Prg	(818) 242-3116
Head to Heart (Counseling)	(626) 833-1602
In-Sight Program	(818) 990-3973
Institute for Women	(626) 585-8075
Jewish Family Services	(310) 247-1180
Pasadena Council on Alcoholism & Drug Dependency	(626) 795-9127
Phoenix Academy House	(818) 896-1121
Poison Center	(800) 876-4766
Runaway Hotline	(800) 786-2929
Sexually Transmitted Diseases Info.	(800) 227-8922
Suicide Prevention Hotline	(310) 855-4673
Tarzana Treatment Center	(818) 996-1051
Twin Town Treatment Center	(818) 985-0560
Youth Crisis Hotline	(800) 843-5200

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>YOUR CHILD'S ASSESTS</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>SUBSTANCE ABUSE</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>FACTS ABOUT SUBSTANCES COMMONLY ABUSED</b>	
<b>BY STUDENTS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>STAGES OF DRUG ABUSE</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>SIGNS &amp; SYMPTOMS OF DRUG ABUSE</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>ADOLESCENT SUICIDE</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>LEAVING CHILDREN HOME ALONE</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>RUNNING AWAY, TRUANCY, CURFEW, PRANKS</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>TEEN PARTIES</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>ADOLESCENT SEX</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>EATING DISORDERS</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>SERIOUS COMMUNICABLE DISEASES ON THE RISE</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>CONNECTING TO THE COMMUNITY</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>GANG AWARENESS</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>THINGS TO DO IN THE CRESCENT VALLEY</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>COUNSELING</b>	<b>35</b>

*This Handbook has been prepared for parents of children ages 11 through 18. As children mature and respond to situations differently at various ages, the material presented here is general in nature and may not appropriately address the specific needs of your child. For further information, please consult a qualified professional.*

## Introduction: What are the problems?

Kids today are exposed to critical choices at younger and more vulnerable ages; what was typical for high school students 10-20 years ago is more typical for our middle school students today.

Living and growing up, even in the '60's and '70's was simpler, safer, and less stressful. Today, drugs are dangerously stronger, easier to use, less expensive and accessible to the very young. Sexually transmitted disease can be fatal. Assault with weapons is common. Gang activity has spread dangerously close to our community, and the solution to violence is not within reach. A powerful media impacts kids' values through radio, CD's, movies, TV, newspapers, books, magazines, even your home computer and telephone. Multi-cultural communities, family financial problems, and increasing amounts of information to be learned add to the stresses of children's lives.

Parenting is tough today. A significant number of families have two working parents or a single parent in the home. Grandparents and relatives are usually far away. Parents are often tired, have less time, contact, and influence over children than they have had in decades. Kids have less opportunity to learn values, problem-solving skills and healthy ways to relieve stress from their families. Neighbors and neighborhoods are less interactive and more isolated. With far less guidance from positive role models, children are making critical and life-changing decisions.

Even in the Crescenta Valley, a community of fine neighborhoods and schools, our families and students are not immune to the problems of society. The Small Book of Big Issues offers a "reality check" for parents. Quotes from student's help parents recognize some of the issues students face during their school years, and emphasize the critical need for consistent adult guidance from childhood to adulthood. Throughout the booklet, you will find information you may need to make important family decisions. You will be urged to learn more about your child's world through his/her friends and their parents, by carpooling, joining PTA and booster groups, attending day and evening school activities, and keeping in contact with teachers. You will learn to recognize potential problems, and take active steps toward finding the solutions. In the last section of the book, you will find valuable resources for information, advice, counseling, health referrals and hotlines.

With proper guidance and good information, you and your children will make better decisions for life.

## Your Child's Assets

*ASSETS are factors promoting healthy child development. These assets may result from "external" relationships with family, friends and groups, or from "internal" personal values and attitudes.*

(Have your child fill in the form first in pencil if you want a better picture.)

- o Parents are loving, easy to talk to and available when teens want to talk.
- o Parents frequently take time to talk seriously with their children.
- o Parents express their own standards for teenage behavior.
- o Parents talk with their teenager about school and sometimes help with schoolwork and attend school events.
- o Parents set rules and enforce the consequences when the rules are broken.
- o Parents check on where their teenager is going, with whom, and for how long.
- o Parents are approachable when the teen has something serious to talk about.
- o The number of nights the teenager may spend out of the home "for fun and recreation" is limited.
- o The teen has three or more adults, in addition to parents, to whom he or she could go for help.
- o The teenager has frequent serious conversations with an adult that is not his or her own parent.
- o The teenager's friends are a constructive influence, are doing well at school, and are staying away from contact with drugs, alcohol and other at-risk behaviors.
- o The teenager is connected with a place of worship.
- o The teenager sees the school atmosphere as caring and encouraging.
- o The teenager participates in band, orchestra, or takes lessons on a musical instrument involving 3 or more hours of practice a week.
- o The teenager participates in school sports activities or other organizations 3 or more hours a week.
- The teenager participates in non-school-sponsored sports or other organizations 3 or more hours a week.

## **How many of these internal assets are present in your child's life?**

- o Tries to do his or her best in school
- o Hopes to be educated beyond high school
- o Earns above-average school grades
- o Does six or more hours of homework weekly
- o Is good at making friends
- o Tries to stand up for his/her beliefs
- o Cares about others' feelings
- o Is good at planning ahead
- o Is good at making decisions
- o Has a positive attitude toward self
- o Envisions a happy future for him/herself
- o Shows concern for the less fortunate
- o Is interested in helping and improving life for others
- o Holds values that prohibit having sex as a teen

***The more assets a child have the less at-risk behaviors.***

**Ideally, children should have 25-30 of these external and internal assets for healthy adolescent development. According to a study of nearly 47,000 students in grades 6-12, the average young person has 17.**

***Reprinted from "The Troubled Journey, A Profile of American Youth" 1993, with permission of Search Institute, a private, non-profit research organization specializing in national studies of children, adolescents and families. For more information 1(800) 888-7828.***

# Substance Abuse

## Why substance abuse?

One of the main reasons kids experiment with drugs is peer influence. Young people notice acquaintances and friends using alcohol and other drugs without visible harm and they want to be “cool” like “everyone else.” Kids are curious about drugs. They are intrigued by what they hear about drugs on television, in music, and movies. They may see their parents using alcohol and other drugs at social events or at home.

Students may try alcohol and other drugs to dull the emotions, insecurities, and school or family problems that often go along with adolescence. Temporarily, drugs may seem to work. A shy or troubled child may feel surer of him/her or accepted on alcohol or drugs, while unaware of the dangers involved.

## Reasons kids experiment with drugs

Because friends use them  
To have fun  
To see what it's like  
To escape from problems

## Facts About Substances Most Commonly Abused By Students

### **TOBACCO** (cigarettes, chewing tobacco, snuff)

- The number of teen smokers is rising, not falling.
- Initiation of *daily* smoking is highest among middle school students (ages 12-14).
- Nicotine, the addictive substance in tobacco, is so toxic that it has been used as an insecticide.
- However, the immediate effects of smoking are not evident, long term effects are drastic, and can include heart, bronchial and lung disease, cancer and other diseases.
- Chewing tobacco and snuff can cause mouth lesions and cancer.

## **TOBACCO continued**

- The addicted smoker may suffer from withdrawal symptoms including irritability, nervousness, headaches, compulsive eating, inability to concentrate, sleeplessness, and reduced heart rate.
- Kids who smoke cigarettes in elementary and middle school often “graduate” to using marijuana.
- Paraphernalia associated with use include cigarettes, tobacco products (i.e. lighters, matches and smoking devices), and cans of chewing tobacco or depleted tobacco pouches.

## **MARIJUANA** (pot, hemp, bud, kush, dope, grass, weed, reef, herb, chronic)

- Marijuana comes from the crushed leaves, flowers, and seeds of the *Cannabis sativa* plant, which contains over 400 chemicals, which many are toxic. (Hashish comes from this plant too.)
- The *effects* of marijuana grown today can be 3-10 times stronger than marijuana grown in the 1960's and 1970's due to a highly increased delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) content.
- It takes about one month for the THC in one marijuana cigarette (joint) to leave the body
- Between 2005 and 2007 there has been a 150% increase of marijuana use among 7<sup>th</sup> graders in the Crescenta Valley.
- Statewide, 40% of the young people who use marijuana have also used one or more other illegal drugs.
- The earlier a person starts smoking cigarettes and marijuana, the more likely he/she is to progress to other drugs, and the more effect “It won’t hurt you” and “chicken” carry within the peer group.

Paraphernalia associated with use includes smoking pipes, cigarette papers, water pipes / bongs, vaporizers and home made devices using aluminum foil, toilet paper tubes, soda cans and apples.

## **ALCOHOL** (beer, wine cooler, wine, hard liquor)

- Alcohol is the drug most widely used by youth, and it is easily obtained in many homes. Alcohol is sometimes brought to school in flasks, sports bottles and other containers.
- Young people have fewer defenses against acute intoxication and rapid addiction to alcohol than adults do. It takes only 5 to 15 months for a 14-19 year old to become addicted to alcohol. It takes 5 to 15 weeks for a child under 14 to become addicted.
- Wine coolers contain as much alcohol as a full shot of whiskey.
- The use of alcohol and other drugs by adolescent couples often leads to unplanned, unprotected sex.
- Aside from the toxic effects of alcohol on the organs of the body, heavy use can cause aggressive sexuality, uncontrollable outbursts of rage, blackouts, vehicle and other accidents, and violence leading to homicide or suicide.
- The combination of marijuana and alcohol can be extremely dangerous. The THC in marijuana turns off the vomit control center of the brain, which is nature's way of getting rid of toxic substances when they are reaching a dangerously high level.
- Weekend "binge drinking" and alcohol games are common among high school teens and can cause death.
- In 2007, 10% of 11<sup>th</sup> graders said they had forgotten what happened or passed out after using alcohol or another drug.

Paraphernalia associated with use include flasks, sports bottles, water bottles and other containers.

## **INHALANTS** ("sniffing," "huffing")

- Glue and inhalants are often abused by children 7-17 years old because they are sold legally, are easy to get, and low in cost.
- Any aerosol or substance, which produces fumes, can be inhaled by your child in an attempt to get "high."
- Solvents and aerosol sprays decrease the heart and respiratory rates and impair judgment.
- Repeated sniffing of concentrated vapors over time can permanently damage the brain, nervous system, lungs, kidneys, liver and nasal passages.
- High levels of inhalants may cause dizziness, vomiting, decreased heart rate, violent behavior, unconsciousness or death. Death can occur the first time an inhalant is used.

## **INHALANTS** Continued

- It is estimated that 1 in 3 children will experiment with inhalants.
- Common inhalants include compressed air (“Dust Off”), nitrous oxide (cans of whipped cream), and solvents such as glue, spray paint and acetone.
- The user feels alcohol-like effects such as slurred speech, clumsy movements, dizziness and euphoria. Additional effects may include lightheadedness, hallucinations, delusions, and after heavy use drowsiness and a lingering headache.

Paraphernalia associated with use include empty cans of aerosol products, solvent containers, rags, plastic bags, small silver tanks and balloons.

## **COCAINE** (coke, crack, blow, white, flake, rock, nose candy, snow )

- Your child’s lunch money can buy enough cocaine to get high.
- Cocaine is a highly addictive stimulant, sold as a white powder or Hydrochloride (HCL) form or a base form, which is a hard wax substance.
- Cocaine HCL is often found as a fine white powder, but it can be hard and chunky. It is most often snorted or injected into the body.
- Cocaine Base (crack and rock) can only be smoked is no longer water-soluble and cannot be broken down by the body.

“Crack” is a deadly and highly addictive form of cocaine. It has become an introductory drug for kids in some communities because of its availability and low cost.

- Cocaine generates a brief high followed by an intense depression and craving for more of the drug, agitation, and physical and mental depletion.
- An overdose of cocaine can cause extreme agitation, respiratory failure, heart failure or death.

Paraphernalia associated with cocaine use include straws, mirrors, rolled paper or dollar bills, paper bindles, small plastic resealable bags, hypodermic syringes, spoons cotton balls and eye-drop medicine bottles.

## **OPIATES** (Heroin (smack, horse, chiva, negra, “H”)

- Heroin is a semi-synthetic narcotic, made from derivatives of the opium poppy. Heroin depresses the central nervous system. A few of the visible signs and symptoms of intoxication include relaxed soft muscle tissue (i.e. facial expression, droopy eyelids, gravel voice) and constricted pupils.

- Heroin is primarily imported from the Middle East or Mexico. However, it has been reported that the Opium Poppy is being harvested in the US.
- The most common heroin found in Southern CA is Mexican Tar Heroin. It is named “tar” because of its black pliable appearance. It has an ammonium odor, similar to vinegar.
- Tar Heroin is usually packaged in colored water balloons or plastic/cellophane wrap.
- Heroin is water soluble and can be smoked, injected or snorted.
- When heroin is smoked, it is usually placed upon aluminum foil and will leave black trails on the foil.
- It can also be placed on the opened paper clip. Black residue will be left.
- Tar Heroin can be injected by the use of a hypodermic syringe.
- When snorted, heroin is usually found as a light brown powder.

**METHAMPHETAMINES, AMPHETAMINES** (speed, tweak, crank, uppers, meth, crystal meth, ice, glass, crystal, bennies, shabu )

- Methamphetamines are increasingly used by students for alertness, energy, and weight loss with severe consequences.
- Methamphetamines and amphetamines are dangerous, addictive stimulants, available in pill, capsule, and powder form, and swallowed, injected or inhaled through the nose.
- Methamphetamines can be produced from supplies and chemicals found in any hardware or drug store in America.
- Long-term use can cause impaired vision, poor coordination, dizziness, paranoia, weight loss, convulsions and collapse. High doses can result in fever, high blood pressure, stroke and cardiac arrest.

Paraphernalia associated with cocaine use include straws, mirrors, rolled paper or dollar bills, paper bindles, small plastic resealable bags, hypodermic syringes, spoons cotton balls and eye-drop medicine bottles.

**LSD** (acid, tabs, psychedelic, microdot, white lightning)

- LSD is a powerful, chemically manufactured hallucinogen. The drug’s effects on the brain are highly unpredictable. Users may experience extreme and often frightening distortions of reality, seeing, hearing and feeling things that are not real.
- Liquid LSD is so potent that a dose may be a tiny drop added to a drink, or absorbed by paper, pills or anything that can be eaten or swallowed.
- LSD can cause panic, suspiciousness, and behavior that mimic mental illness. Extended use can cause permanent brain damage.

Paraphernalia associated with use include small dark glass bottles, eyedroppers, stamps, stickers and sugar cubes.

## **STEROIDS** (roids, sauce, juice)

- Steroids are taken illegally by athletes or people who want to increase body build.
- Steroids are often sold illegally in gyms, locker rooms or through magazine ads and are taken orally as tablets, or through injection in the buttocks or thigh.
- Steroids cause widely different and unpredictable results. Some symptoms are: gain in muscle mass or body weight, increased eating, insomnia, acne, "bold" rage or aggression, puffy face, bad breath, yellowing of eyes, swelling of feet and legs, trembling, injury especially to tendons, deepening voice.
- Long term, high dose use can lead to addiction, depression, uncontrollable behavior, date rape, homicidal and suicidal behaviors, and serious problems with the reproductive system, cancer, and heart, brain and liver disease.

### ***Important Note:***

Many other substances fall into the category of abused drugs. **As a parent, you are your child's best defense against drug abuse and best advocate if a drug problem arises.** Your parenting will be most effective if you are well informed.

The Crescenta Valley High School Library and the La Crescenta Public Library have current periodicals, leaflets and books with pictures, descriptions and much more in-depth information on these and other drugs.

### **Substance Abuse Prevention Tips:**

- Remember that you are a role model in everything you say and do. If you are drinking alcohol or taking drugs, your children are noticing and learning from you. Children resent the double-standard adults often present.
- Know your children's friends. Ask to meet them. Know their names, phone numbers, and if possible, get to know their parents.
- Clearly communicate your family policy on alcohol and other drug use. Do not assume your children know you do not want those using drugs. Be a credible source of information: do not exaggerate the effects of a given drug or play it down.

## Substance Abuse Prevention Tips continued

- Teach children clear standards of right, wrong and responsibility. Set and enforce rules for behavior.
- Do not involve your children in any form of alcohol or other drug use.
- Let everyone involved with your children, including parents and friends, know that your children are not allowed to use drugs, including alcohol. Network with other parents to create alcohol and drug-free environments for your child.
- Identify and discuss with your child, the “do drugs” messages on the radio, in CD’s, movies, videos, TV, magazines, computer networks, and even in sports.
- Host drug and alcohol-free parties in your home.
- Reduce the amount of time your child is “hanging around.” Know where she/he is, what she/he is doing, and whom she/he is spending time.
- Avoid giving your child excess cash.
- Keep children busy with activities that challenge, excite, encourage independence, and provide a fulfilling “high” without the use of drugs. Include activities that promote the welfare of others. Accept your child’s individuality, without comparisons to siblings or relatives.
- Accept your child’s individuality, without comparisons to siblings or relatives.
- Spend enough time with your children each day to allow them to share their feelings and opinions. Do not wait for a problem to arise to take time to communicate. Ask questions that require more than a “yes” or “no” answer, and **ACTIVELY LISTEN** to your child without judging. The escalation of day-to-day crises is often due to a failure to communicate.
- If you can’t be there as a parent, make sure your child has at least one positive adult figure - another parent, a relative, teacher, counselor or friend - who listens, cares, and gives your child nurturing and support.
- **Do not be so naïve as to think that your child would never use drugs.**

## **STAGES OF DRUG ABUSE**

Most professionals see the progression from experimental alcohol and other drug use as a process that involves stages. This process can occur quickly or slowly, depending on the adolescent's emotional stability, availability of drugs, peer pressure, and other factors. The following four stages are an overview of the typical progression from experimental drug use to chronic abuse.

### **EXPERIMENTAL STAGE**

The initial stage of drug use is usually experimental. The adolescent is curious about the effects of drugs and wants to experience the "high." Experimentation may occur once or several times, usually on the weekends or during the summer when there is more free time. Initiation to drugs usually comes from friends or acquaintances. Abuse may occur at this stage.

### **SOCIAL STAGE**

In the social stage, the most common reasons for using drugs are peer pressure and acceptance. If the adolescent perceives that "all the kids" are smoking marijuana and drinking alcohol, drug use easily becomes an accepted way to be part of the group. Social use most often occurs on weekends or during idle time after school. The adolescent usually sets limits on his or her consumption. Sometimes he or she goes beyond those limits. Abuse of drugs becomes more frequent at the social stage.

### **DEPENDENT STAGE**

In the dependent stage, the adolescent becomes pre-occupied with the drug. The adolescent no longer uses drugs for a temporary "high" from which he or she returns to a normal state. They feel emotionally guilty, knowing that drugs have become the focus of his or her life. Attitude, appearance, and behavior change dramatically. The social aspects of drugs taper off. The adolescent abuses drugs alone more often.

### **CHRONIC STAGE**

In the chronic stage, the adolescent feels constant emotional or physical pain, which can only be lessened by the drug. The adolescent's main thoughts focus on obtaining and using more drugs. Effects of chronic abuse are most dramatic if the adolescent has grown addicted to those drugs, which cause *emotional or physical withdrawal* when not available. At this stage, the adolescent requires long-term treatment to assist in recovery.

# **SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF DRUG ABUSE**

Early signs of alcohol and other drug use are subtle and may be confused with normal adolescent behavior. However, if several of these signs are present, consider it a warning and seek further help.

## **Physical Symptoms**

- Smell of alcohol on breath
- Loss of coordination, dizziness, stumbling, staggering
- Change in speech and vocabulary patterns (rapid speech or slurring)
- Nausea, vomiting, or “illness”
- Change in sleep patterns (sleepless for long periods, then sleeping or “crashing” for long periods)
- Bloodshot, red, or glazed eyes, droopy eyelids
- Imprecise eye movements
- Wearing sunglasses at inappropriate times
- Sudden appetite, especially for sweets
- Altered perception
- Lethargy, lack of energy and vitality
- Neglect of personal appearance and grooming
- Abnormally pale complexion
- Picking at skin, scabs, scratching
- Slowed physical development
- Unexplained weight loss, loss of appetite
- Needle marks

## **Behavioral Changes**

- New interest in drug culture (drug related posters, clothing, magazines, paraphernalia)
- Change in friends, unwillingness to introduce friends to family
- Change in values, beliefs
- Withdrawal from family
- Unexplained mood swings, depression, irritability, paranoia, anxiety
- Inappropriate overreaction to simple requests or mild criticism
- Loss of motivation and enthusiasm
- Preoccupied with self, less concern for the feelings of others
- Loss of interest in previously valued hobbies, sports and activities
- Decrease interaction and communication with others
- Becomes secretive
- Becomes isolated
- Lying, stealing, vandalizing

- Use of fake ID (indicating legal drinking age)
- Frequent attendance at late night “dance” clubs or parties
- Unnecessary risk taking
- Unexplained aggressiveness, hostility, fighting
- Loss of ability to assume responsibility

## **School Changes**

- Distinct and complete change in peer group
- Loss of motivation for school activities
- Decline in academic performance
- Frequent tardiness and absenteeism
- Reduced short-term memory, concentration and attention span
- Slow to respond, apathetic
- Increased discipline and behavioral problems
- Unexplained dozing in class or meetings

## **Physical Evidence**

- Alcohol or prescription drugs missing from the home
- Flasks or sports bottles in the backpack
- Money or valuables that could be easily sold are missing
- Marijuana cigarettes (joints), rolled and twisted at each end
- Odor of marijuana (like burnt rope) on clothing, in the home
- Cigarette rolling papers in possession
- Uses room deodorizers, incense
- Increased use of eye drops and mouthwash
- Leaves, seeds, plants, mushrooms, powders, compact chunks
- Pipes, Pipe filters, screens, strainers
- “Roach” clips (metal clips to hold the butts of a marijuana joint)
- “Bongs” (water pipes, usually glass or plastic, sometimes large)
- Stash cans (soft drink, beer, deodorant and other cans that unscrew at the top or bottom)
- Small plastic baggies or small glass vials
- Unfamiliar small containers or locked boxes
- Capsules or tablets
- Small spoons, straws, rubber tubing, razor blades, mirrors, pipes (for use with cocaine)
- Drug related books, magazines, comics

**NOTE: These are possible but not conclusive signs of drug use.**

If you suspect your child is using alcohol or other drugs, she/he may well be. Learn all you can about the subject. Your child's teacher (s), counselor, administrators, school resource officer, deputy and school health aide may be good sources of support and information. Seek any professional help you might need to decide how to best approach your child.

**If you protect your child from the negative consequences of drug use and dependency, you will only contribute to his/her continued abuse.**

There are reassuring, confidential sources of help available for you and your child in the "Parent and Student Help Agencies" section located on the inside cover of this book.

## **ADOLESCENT SUICIDE**

**FACT: More young people have died by suicide in the last decade than were killed in the war with Vietnam.**

One of the most important issues that sometimes surround adolescent substance abuse is suicide.

An adolescent who is having serious substance abuse or family oriented problems has a higher tendency to attempt and/or complete suicide. There are, of course, other factors, but the use of drugs and other substances may make it easier to complete the act.

### **Motivations for suicide**

- Desire to escape a seemingly intolerable situation
- Desire to end the pain of powerlessness over one's own life
- Desire to cause grief for another person
- Desire to be a martyr

## Young people at risk of suicide

- Prior attempts of suicide
- Severely depressed or in trouble
- Low self-esteem
- Abusers of alcohol or other drugs
- Abused, neglected or molested
- Perfectionists
- Unnecessary risk takers
- Loners
- Learning Disabled
- Gay/Lesbian
- Rejected or socially isolated due to a variety of reasons

Although a single, highly traumatic event can trigger a sudden suicide without warning, young people who are thinking about suicide almost always give signals in advance of what they are contemplating. The key to preventing suicide lies in our ability to recognize and respond to this cry for help.

## Warning signs

- Suicide threats
- Recent loss of a loved one or major disappointment
- Feeling that it is impossible to face tomorrow
- Sudden changes in personality or attitude
- Sudden changes in appearance
- Heavy use of alcohol or other drugs
- Making final arrangements, giving away personal possessions.

## How you can help

It has been said that a person who threatens suicide will not follow through. **This is not true.** Suicide threats are a cry for help and must be taken seriously.

If you have any reason to believe that someone you know is exhibiting suicidal behaviors, talk to him/her honestly, be a good, non-judgmental listener, and seek help for the person through professional services found in the "Parent and Student Help Agencies." Many of these services are free. Counseling for the family may be important to help them be supportive, and to provide support for those at home.

[IN AN EMERGENCY SITUATION, CALL 911](#)

# Leaving Children Home Alone

If you frequently leave your children home alone while you are away on errands, at work, on a business trip or a weekend away, be aware of the following things:

- The possibilities of home accidents and break-ins are greater where there are no adults.
- Unsupervised children can be construed as child endangerment.
- **Homes without adult supervision** for long periods are common party sites, made available for experimentation with tobacco, alcohol, drugs and sex.

## If going out of town and leaving children home alone

**Guidelines:** Consider your child's age and maturity level

- **Inform your child about his/her responsibilities** and the consequences of his/her behavior during your absence.
- **Leave information about where you can be reached**, phone numbers and addresses of people to be contacted in case of need.
- **Call periodically to check on your child.**
- **If you will be gone more than a day, have a responsible adult live in your home during your absence.** Explain to him/her your family policies and rules. As an alternative, think about having your child stay with a friend whose parents will be home or take your child with you.
- **Inform your neighbors of your absence.** Request that they contact you or a responsible adult, or even the police if they notice strange activities or a party in your home.
- **Let the parents of your child's friends know of your absence.** Networking and cooperation is both productive and essential.
- **If a party was held while you were away**, contact the parents of those who attended as soon as possible.

## When parents are out of the country

In recent years, there have been increasing cases of parents who leave youngsters on their own or under the supervision of a sibling or elderly relative for lengthy periods, even months or years - while the parents work or live in another country. In addition to being illegal in some cases, (California Penal Code 11165.2, Neglect) it presents overwhelming problems for children:

- Anger, resentment and depression over being “abandoned” by parents, especially when the child compares his/her situation with a two-parent family
- Lack of self-discipline, no rules or enforcement, out of control behavior
- Difficulty in obtaining medical assistance in case of illness or accident
- Little exposure to parents’ values, problem solving skills or safe ways to relieve stress
- Use of alcohol and other drugs to fill the “void”
- Sexual involvement for connectedness and intimacy
- Association with undesirable groups or gangs to replace “family”
- Home available for drug dealing and other illicit activities.

**Even if the child is set up with an adult guardian, the need for connectedness with parent is so great that many of these problems still exist.**

### **RUNNING AWAY**

Almost everyone, at some time, thinks about running away and leaving all the problems that make him or her feel bad. If your child, or a friend of your child is determined to run away, try talking to him/her to find a way to change how things are going. Have your child talk to someone else (friend, neighbor, counselor) who can help him/her understand the situation better, and help him/her make good decisions based on realistic choices. If talking does not help, advise your child go to a safe place (a friend, neighbor or relative). Even the most streetwise people are ripped off, harassed or seriously hurt while trying to make it on their own. If you need more support for a runaway situation, contact one of the services from the “Parent and Student Help Agencies” section at the back of this booklet.

### **Truancy**

Truancy is absence from school without permission from school officials or parents. California law requires everyone between the ages of 7-18 who has not completed 12<sup>th</sup> grade to attend school. Students over 16 who are employed full-time or work part-time may attend school part-time with school approval.

## Curfew

La Crescenta and the City of Glendale follow the California State Juvenile Loitering ordinance that prohibits juveniles from loitering after 10:00 p.m., but does not prohibit juveniles from attending school-related events or reasonable social or cultural events. Juveniles found loitering after 10:00 p.m. may be picked up by the LA County Sheriff.

## Pranks

Your child should be aware that a prank (a practical joke), such as throwing fruit and other objects at cars, smashing mailboxes, tearing up lawns with cars, using paint-ball or BB guns, or involving other vandalism can do serious and financial damage, and lead to charges in juvenile court, especially if someone is hurt.

## Teen Parties

**“You have to do things to be cool;  
if you don’t, you’re an outcast.”**  
*Middle school student*

Parties are a part of teenagers’ lives, and are a testing ground for socializing and group acceptance. Sadly, drugs and alcohol are often a dangerous ingredient in teen parties. Improperly supervised parties can result in substance abuse, uncontrolled behavior, sexual activity, date rape, unwanted intruders, violence and property damage.

In some cases, parents will serve alcohol at teen parties, falling for the teen tactic, “all the other parents do it.” You may be liable for the criminal charges and monetary damages in a civil lawsuit if you furnish drugs or alcohol to a minor.

**Parents can make a *priority and success* of safe, drug and alcohol-free teen parties through cooperation and networking with other parents and friends.**

## **When your teenager is attending a party**

- Obtain the address and phone number of the host.
- Have your teen agree to call you if the location is changed.
- Personally contact the parents of the party giver to:

***Offer assistance and support***

***Verify the occasion and location***

***Make sure the parents will be present***

***Be certain that alcohol and other drugs will not be permitted***

- Get to know the parents of your teen's friends.
  - Discuss a curfew for the evening.
  - Agree that you or a specified friend will come to get your child if she/he calls you for a ride, no questions asked. Provide phone numbers and discuss situations that might necessitate this. Reinforce that under no circumstances should your teenager allow someone who has been drinking or using drugs to drive him/her anywhere.
  - Be awake, or have your teen awaken and talk to you when she/he arrives home. Teens are less likely to abuse drugs including alcohol when they will need to talk to you when they come home.
  - If your teenager stays overnight with a friend after the party, personally check with the parents.
- 
- If your teen attends a party where alcohol is either served by the parents or allowed, it is important to:

***Call and discuss your feelings with the parents.***

***Discuss the legal ramifications with them.***

- Express thanks and support to parents and students who give parties within these guidelines.

## **When your teen is giving a party**

- Do not allow teens to have a party while you are away.
- Share responsibility for hosting the party. Know who the guests will be, and have your teen use invitations to curb the "open party" situation. Do not allow teens to sell tickets or distribute flyers for the party. Set defined time limits.

- Plan some activities ahead of time (dancing, movies, and sports).
- Notify your neighbors that a supervised party will be held, and give them your phone number.
- Plan to have plenty of food and non-alcoholic drinks.
- Do not have your own alcohol easily available in your home.
- Know your responsibilities. Be present, visible and aware. Help with the serving of snacks and drinks to keep the party running smoothly and meet your teen's friends.
- Be aware that it is illegal to serve drugs including alcohol to anyone under 21. In the Crescenta Valley, if the sheriff is required to respond to your home on a party disturbance, you may be charged for all police and/or emergency services.
- Anyone who leaves the party should not be allowed to return. This discourages people from leaving the party, drinking or using other drugs in their cars or elsewhere, and then returning to the party.
- Be alert for signs of alcohol and other drug use.
- Notify the parents of any teen who arrives at your party under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.
- Provide a safe ride home if you ask an intoxicated teen to leave.
- **Never let an intoxicated teen drive.**
- Discuss the party with your teen afterwards and share observations and possible frustrations.

## **Adolescent Sex**

***“I wanted to see what the world had to offer me. Not much. A lot of heartache, a lot of mischief. A boy's there “loving you” and then he's gone.”***

A high school student

### **FACTS:**

- Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) including AIDS are increasing rapidly among teenagers of all incomes and ethnic groups. Almost half of STD victims are between the ages of 15-24. Many are between the ages of 11-14. Every year, 3 billion teens acquire a STD.
- A STD grows faster and becomes serious more quickly in an adolescent than an adult because she/he is still growing.
- Reports show that adolescents often have sex at home in the afternoon when the parents are out of the house.

## Talking to youth about sex

Children need preparation from their parents for the physical, mental and emotional impact of sexual involvement, yet studies show that kids are not getting that important information at home. While some children want to learn about sex from their parents, most of them do not.

***“My parents didn’t tell me anything about sex.  
I learned it from TV.”***

sexually active student

Parents may have misconceptions about discussing sex with kids:

***“I’d have to know everything about sex.”***

***“I’d have to be totally comfortable talking about sex.”***

***“I should wait until my child wants to know about sex.”***

***“The schools provide all the information my child needs to know about sex.”***

The average parent knows enough to discuss sex with his/her child, and there is nothing wrong with saying, “Let’s find the answers together” or “I’ll get back to you on that one.”

Most parents are not comfortable talking about sex, but by acknowledging your discomfort in talking about the subject you may actually put your child at ease. Everyday situations (the dating experiences of others, pregnancy, birth, nudity) can present perfect moments to talk to your child about sexuality. Do not expect to teach everything in one discussion. Be approachable about sexuality, and anything your child is curious about - relationships, friends, school, family affairs, and money.

If you wait for your child to bring up the subject of sex, you may have grandchildren before you have a discussion. If you are counting on the schools to teach him/her about sex, you will miss an important opportunity to educate your child as your values direct you.

If you do not talk to your child about sex, society will - with mixed messages. Adolescents who are confused will test sexual behaviors to find the answers.

## **Help your child develop these assets for healthy adolescent sexuality.**

- The ability to ask parents or a trusted adult about sex
- A positive image of him/herself and his/her body
- Responsibility for his/her actions
- The feeling he/she has positive things to offer in a relationship
- Understanding of the male/female reproductive system and body changes during the teen years
- Knowledge that sexual feelings are normal and healthy and need not be acted out
- Clear sense of personal values and the ability to act according to these values
- Comfortable with setting limits. Has decided ahead of time what is OK and not OK sexually
- Knowledge that one's feelings about sex and other issues deserve respect from others
- Has a sense of future and is planning for it
- Has confidence in self, based on accurate knowledge
- Understands that sex is more than intercourse (connectedness, commitment, love, pleasure, responsibility to others and self, emotional and physical risk)
- Understands the difference between sexual feelings and love
- Has an accurate understanding of birth control and the consequences of sexual activity
- Is able to handle refusal for sex without feeling hurt
- Understands that "No" means "No"

## **Factors, which may contribute to early sexual activity, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and teen parenthood.**

- Overexposure to TV and media hype, "Just do it!"
- Sexual pressure: "If you love me, you will." "Have you done it with her yet?" "If you don't you'll lose him."
- Lack of parental bonding, interest, support
- Alcohol and other drug use
- Curiosity, low exposure to self esteem and responsibility-based sex education program
- Lacking self-control
- Home empty after school
- Parents not authoritative, weak discipline style
- Excessive idle time
- Marked need for independence
- Out frequently at night, attends drinking parties or "dance clubs"

- Easily influenced by peers
- Self-serving values, lack of responsibility for others
- “Hanging out” with older people
- Unnecessary risk-taking behavior
- Dressing seductively
- Members of the family have been teen or single parents
- Parents involved in substance abuse
- Low grades in school
- Poor expectations for the future
- Depressed, stressed out
- Experienced early sexual abuse or neglect

### **If you believe your child is sexually active**

- Wait to discuss the subject until you can talk calmly.
- Work out your feelings about sex and decide what you want to say.
- Both parents, even if divorced, should develop a unified view about sex to avoid confusing the child.
- Reassure your child that she/he is loved.
- Tell your child honestly why you think she/he is sexually active and how you feel about it.
- Listen to your child’s views.
- Make your values on sexual behavior clear. Focus on behavior that is appropriate, as well as emotionally and physically healthy for your child. The discussion can include your feelings about responsibility in relationships, the consequences of sexual activity, sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy and self-respect.
- If tempers flare, postpone the discussion, take time to think and talk again.
- If you feel you *cannot* talk with your child about sex, ask a trusted relative, a friend of the family, or counselor to speak with him/her.
- For some adolescents, becoming more aware of the responsibilities and consequences of sexual activity helps them decide to abstain from sex until they become involved in a serious, mutually exclusive, long-term relationship. In most cases, a sexually active child will not curtail sexual activity just because parents do not approve.
- Contact the father responsible for the pregnancy and his parents.

**Even If your child does not agree with your values, factual information about sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy prevention must be given to youth for their own protection.**

*You may want to schedule a check-up for your child with your family doctor.*

Resources for health services and other information are listed in the “Parent and Student Help Agencies” section in the back of this book.

**For your child’s own safety, do not rule out the possibility that he/she *could* be sexually active.**

**If you believe your child is pregnant**

- **Start talking.** Open and honest dialogue is a necessary part of working through this dilemma.
- **Consult a physician.** Your child will need to be examined by a doctor as soon as possible.
- **Educate yourself and your child about the options available.** Your physician and community resources can be valuable sources of information. Counseling can help with decision-making and working through the stress, anger, guilt, and depression, which frequently accompany teen pregnancy.
- **Maintain parental decision-making responsibilities.** While it is important to listen to your child, validate her feelings, and contain some of the anxiety, remember that *you* are the parent. A minor child may not be mentally or emotionally prepared to make final decisions with regard to pregnancy.
- **Take care of your own feelings.** In order to be fully available to help your child, you will need to be sure to take care of your own emotions and initial reactions. Do not use your child as a sounding board for your shock, anger or disappointment. These feelings are best shared with another adult such as a spouse, close friend, school counselor or family therapist. Remember that the information is sensitive, and your child has a right to have privacy respected.

- **Talk about birth control.** It is important that you and your child be fully aware of the birth control options available. Birth control will need to be an important part of your child's future planning.
- Confidential services for pregnancy testing, pregnancy counseling, medical and financial aid are listed in the "Parent and Student help Agencies" section in this book.

## **RAPE/SEXUAL ABUSE**

SEXUAL ASSAULT IS ANY COERCED SEXUAL ACT - anything from unwanted touching to rape. It is an act of violence and abusing power, not the result of an uncontrollable sex urge.

### **Rape**

Victims of rape/date rape are often vulnerable because they know and trust their assailants. If you or your child is assaulted:

- Do whatever you need to do to get away.
- Do not change your clothes or wash up as it will destroy evidence
- Go to a safe place and call 911 or a rape hotline. 24 hour, confidential, reassuring rape assistance is listed in the "Parent and Student Help Agencies" section in the back of this booklet.
- Rape victims and their families may need the additional help of a family counselor.

### **Sexual Abuse**

If a family member, adult friend or anyone else is touching your child, and it makes you or your child uncomfortable or confused, she/he may be a victim of sexual abuse.

Talk with your child and help clarify the situation. In the case of sexual abuse, your child will need immediate protection and help from a counselor or trained professional. Sexual abuse must be reported to the Department of Children's Services or the L.A. County Sheriff's Department. Counseling for the family and child will be important.

# EATING DISORDERS

## Anorexia Nervosa

Anorexia is a physically dangerous eating disorder. Deliberate starvation is one of the symptoms. A person may be obsessed with the idea of eating food, but because of emotional, environmental or physical factors, ignores hunger and does not eat. Anorexia can cause severe chemical imbalances in the body, and in severe cases, death.

## Bulimia

Bulimia is closely related to Anorexia, but has different symptoms. Bulimics consume enormous amounts of food in short periods of time, and then quickly vomit or use laxatives to get rid of the food before it digests. The sufferer may feel trapped in a destructive eat/vomit cycle and have no idea how to stop. A person can be anorexic, bulimic or both.

## Overeating and compulsive eating

Overeating and compulsive eating are also unhealthy habits and can be symptoms of emotional or physical problems.

## Attempted weight loss through drugs

Weight loss pills and stimulants, such as methamphetamines (speed) and amphetamines, are increasingly used with severe consequences by middle school and high school students attempting to lose weight.

**An appointment with a physician is an important first step toward assessing the physical condition of your child. Your physician will be a valuable resource for information and referrals.** Additional help for eating disorders can be found in the “Parent and Student Help Agencies” section.

# Serious Communicable Diseases on the Rise

## Tuberculosis

Increasing numbers of students in our area are testing positive to the Mantoux test for tuberculosis, either through vaccination or actual infection, but does not necessarily indicate active illness or ability to transmit the disease to others. People born outside the United States may test positive on the Mantoux test due to a BCG vaccination given in another country, however, the BCG vaccination is not given in the United States. Students who test positive on the Mantoux test and have never received a BCG vaccination need to seek medical advice.

Tuberculosis is spread through coughing and sneezing, and is a serious bacterial infection that attacks the lungs. Treatment with antibiotics is very effective, though if left untreated, TB can lead to progressive damage to other organs, and eventual death. At this time, regular testing for tuberculosis is not *required*, though because of the number of students testing positive to the Mantoux test in our area, you may want to have your child tested for his/her own protection. All staff and volunteers are required to be tested for TB.

## Hepatitis B

The incidence of viral hepatitis B is also increasing in the San Gabriel Valley. The hepatitis B virus attacks the liver, causing inflammation and cell damage that can eventually lead to hardening of the liver, liver cancer, and death. Hepatitis B, like AIDS, is mainly a sexually transmitted disease, spread through the exchange of body fluids and blood. The virus can also be spread by the sharing of drug needles, razors, tattoo needles, nail files, and ear and body piercing tools. The hepatitis B virus can persist for years with few symptoms, during which time, carriers can spread the disease. A vaccine is available against hepatitis B. Contact your family doctor to see if the vaccine series is recommended for your child.

# Connecting the Community & Cultural Understanding

The Crescenta Valley reflects an increasing blend of diverse cultures. Cultural diversity can develop understanding between people, yet cause tension as we attempt to understand each other's viewpoints. To create a positive atmosphere in our community and our schools, it is vital for us to work together to produce a climate where communication about our differences becomes our strength.

Beginning in our middle schools, and continuing throughout high school, students start to separate into groups for connection and support. Often these groups are defined by similarities in language or culture; former schools or athletic teams; interests in music, the arts, athletics or academics; and even attitudes of rebellion.

As students go through separation as a part of the maturing process, it is important that their groups not become exclusive or isolated. Parents can encourage healthy socialization by stressing the significance of relating to people as human beings rather than as members of one group or another, and by modeling an all-encompassing attitude toward the community.

As Crescenta Valley citizens, we have an opportunity to share traditions, energies and ideas to develop a better community, and a better understanding of the world and ourselves .

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## **Conflict Resolution Through Mediation**

Knowing how to resolve conflict peacefully is a skill that is important throughout life. When a problem is too heated or complicated for two parties to solve, mediation may help. Mediation is a negotiation process in which a third party helps two individuals or groups to communicate. A mediator can be anyone not involved in the problem, a close friend, a teacher or parent, a school administrator or a counselor. Mediators ask questions, listen, keep the discussion fair, determine what each party wants, and help the two sides agree on a way to resolve the problem that will be of benefit to both sides.

Mediators do not show bias, decide which side is right or wrong, discipline the parties, or spread information about the mediation. The mediation process demonstrates responsibility, respect, and appreciation for diversity and individuality.

## **Violent Behavior**

Nobody is entitled to hit or act violently toward another person or their property, no matter whether it is an older person, a relative, or a stranger. If you, your child, or a friend is being threatened with violence, you must get help. The emergency number to **call for the L.A. County Sheriff's Department is 911. The non-emergency number to report an incident after the fact is 248-3464.** If the incident happens on your school campus, tell your principal, assistant principal or counselor. Hot-lines are listed in the "Parent and Student Help Agencies" section in the back of this book.

## **Zero Tolerance Policy**

The school district and city are taking a policy of ZERO TOLERANCE for persons involved in violence and/or drugs in the schools and community of the Crescenta Valley.

Simply put, young people who use or sell drugs, commit serious acts of violence, or possess weapons at or near schools will be expelled from school and turned over to the Sheriff's Department or the Glendale Police Department for possible criminal prosecution .

## Gang Awareness

### What is a gang?

A gang may be described as a group of people who may individually or together, commit unlawful criminal or violent acts for financial gain, control over a certain territory, or promotion of the gang. A gang may use specific clothing, hairstyles, and marks on the body or graffiti to identify its existence, members, activities or territory. Gangs today are younger, more affluent, and from all races, genders, and cultures.

*“The California State Penal Code, Section 186.22(A) describes a gang member as “any person who actively participates in any criminal street gang with knowledge that its members engage in, or have engaged in, a pattern of criminal gang activity, and who willfully promote, further or assist in any felonious criminal conduct by members of that gang.”*

### Why do young people join gangs?

Children join gangs for many reasons, including the power and excitement of gang activity, financial gain, and lack of self-esteem, fear caused by racial tension or another gang, the feeling of protection and belonging, family problems, family tradition, idle time, peer pressure, and a lack of understanding of the dangers involved.

Parents often do not know their children are active in a gang until it is too late . . . when they are in too deep. In some families, parents *do not* discourage gang activity. Young gang members and “wannabies” rarely comprehend the violence involved in gangs, or the finality of death.

### Why should I care about gang behavior:

- Anyone can be a target of gang violence (drive-bys, hate crimes, car jacking, and victim of extortion or robbery). In the San Gabriel Valley, violence has included gang vs. gang, gang vs. gang look-alikes, and gang vs. innocent victims.
- A young person may create a very dangerous situation if she/he chooses to antagonize or fight with a member of a gang.
- Gang participation may be forced as repayment of a debt or favor: students should *not* accept a loan, gift or favor from anyone they do not know well.

- Students are the best source of information for the school and community about gang activity. Students should be encouraged to use school and community hotlines to anonymously report any suspected gang activity (weapons, drugs, theft, extortion of money) on or near the campus and in the community.
- Even *your* student could be attracted by the image of “belonging,” protection, power and money that gangs attempt to portray.

## **What are the signs of gang involvement?**

Significant changes in friendships, style of dress, evasiveness about activities, and reduced interest in family (exceeding normal adolescent behavior) are all warning signs of gang or drug involvement. Be observant. If you suspect that your child is involved with gangs, she/he may well be. Take action immediately. Don't be caught later saying, “I thought there was a problem.”

### **Signs:**

- Does your child and his friends all dress in the same colors, and style their hair similarly? Gang attire and hairstyles, like other fashion trends, are constantly changing, though the wearing of loose clothing and baggy pants is traditional because it easily conceals weapons.
- Graffiti on school notebooks, clothing, or items in student's room.
- Tattoos, cigarette burns, or body marks indicating initiation into a gang.
- Possession of items you have not seen before (i.e., watches, wallets, walkmans, beepers, valuables).
- Possession of large sums of money or expensive items that cannot be explained.
- Staying out later than usual, away a lot.
- Desiring excessive privacy.
- Associating with undesirables, “strangers” coming to the house.
- Withdrawing from family members.
- Developing attitude problems with parents, teachers or those in authority.
- Use of alcohol and other drugs.
- Decline in school attendance/grades.

- Use of gang verbiage, hand signs.
- Use of nicknames.
- Possession of a firearm.
- Trouble with the law.

**NOTE: *These are possible but not conclusive signs of gang involvement. Contact the L.A. County Sheriff's Department or the Glendale Police Department for more information on current gang styles and behaviors.***

## **Risk Factors of Gang/Drug Involvement**

- Ineffective parenting and supervision
- Excessive idle time
- Low self-esteem, lack of personal identity
- Need for attention
- Limited-English speaking home
- Conflict between home/school culture
- Conflict between parent/child culture, generation gap, especially if parents were raised in a different country
- Lack of responsibility
- Fear for personal safety
- Stressful home life
- Behavior/discipline problems
- Parental abuse
- Alcohol and other drug abuse
- Community inattentive to alcohol/drug use
- Family members involved in gangs
- Low exposure to prevention programs
- Low teacher expectations, negative school environment
- Low educational and occupational aspirations
- Negative police involvement

Joining a gang assures a child's exposure to alcohol and other dangerous drugs, illegal activity, weapons, and violence, and increases his/her chances of dropping out of school and ending up in prison or dead.

**FACT: *Whether we acknowledge it or not, gangs are active in areas around La Crescenta. We cannot completely insulate our city from the effects of outlying areas, but we can help "gang proof" our children by following these guidelines.***

## Gang Prevention

- Place a high priority on expressing acceptance, love and support to your child. Don't assume that high school aged kids are less in need of these expressions than younger adolescents.
- Know your child's friends and their parents.
- Know your child's whereabouts.
- Monitor school attendance, by periods and entire days.
- Do not allow your child to style his/her hair, dress like, or mimic gang members. Gang recruiting, confrontation, or escalation to violence may occur.
- Reduce the time your child spends alone at home and/or "hanging around."
- Teach and model clear standards of right, wrong, and responsibility.
- Set and enforce rules for behavior; be diligent.
- Limit the time your child spends out of the home in the evenings.
- Involve your child in family "helping" projects that aid others in need and develop compassion and responsibility.
- Become an active participant in your child's education by monitoring progress, offering support, attending parent meetings and supporting the school.
- Involve your child in sports, clubs, music or other groups to give him/her a sense of group identification.
- Talk with your child about gang values and violence. Be an accurate source of information.
- Support activities through community centers, recreation departments, schools, places of worship, and youth organizations that offer young people a place to gather and do constructive things together.
- If possible, remove your child from any situation in which you suspect she/he is being actively recruited.
- Act early. Pre-gang behavior can start in elementary school. Gang affiliation is usually solidified by middle school.
- Report any information about gang activity, weapons, drugs or any activity that could put students in harm's way.
- If your child is already a member of a gang, you *will* need outside help. It is not advisable to intercede in gang activity on your own. For advice and information, contact the L.A. County Sheriff's Department and/or the Glendale Police Department, and gang prevention organizations from the "Parent and Student Help Agencies" section in the back of this booklet, and in your phone book.

## Things to Do In and Around the Crescenta Valley

It is important for students to put aside time for themselves to have fun, meet challenges, and make new friends.

Local community centers, places of worship, and schools are good places to find youth groups, clubs, service activities, sports and classes that offer challenge, adventure and fun. Some local activities involving adults who enjoy helping kids grow and enjoy life are:

- Crescenta Valley High School and Rosemont Middle School extra-curricular activities, including sports, music, drama, art, and school sponsored clubs.
- Crescenta-Cañada Family YMCA sponsored activities.
- Y Tribes, Brownies, Girl Scouts, Campfire Girls.
- Local Youth Programs.
- Local arts and humanity programs.
- AYSO Soccer, Little League Baseball.
- Gladiator Football.
- Foothill Flyers.

Unusual activities like karate, drama, horseback riding, rollerblading and skiing can provide the thrills and adventure some kids seek. Other children will prefer music, cooking, crafts, and dance or art classes. You can find all these activities in and around La Crescenta. Network with other parents and PTA members for recommendations.

The job of parenting is much easier when children are challenged and too busy to think about drugs and other destructive activities.

## Counseling

Counseling is an opportunity to discuss personal issues that are negatively affecting your life, with a trained or licensed therapist in an atmosphere of trust and confidentiality.

Most often, you, your child's friends, or other parents and relatives who are good listeners can help your child make decisions. However, if your child's problems seem too difficult or personal to discuss with you or a friend, she/he may need the help of a trained counselor.

Counseling can clarify the issues, options and choices necessary to bring about positive change. Professional counseling helps individuals take responsibility for their own actions and make more knowledgeable decisions for greater personal satisfaction and enjoyment of life.

*Counseling services may be available free through your child's school. In addition, several local counseling centers have sliding fee scales that are based on what you can afford. Services may include child and teen groups, individual and family therapy, play therapy, and special services such as parenting classes, substance abuse treatment, domestic violence programs, help for depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and many other problems.*

Resources for local and affordable counseling services are listed under "Parent and Student Help Agencies" on the following pages. You and/or your child should call to determine the services available, fees and appointment times. **Don't let anything keep you or your child from getting the help you need.**

### Counseling, Support, Referrals, Treatment

Action.....	(800) 367-8336
Asian Pacific Family Center.....	(818) 287-2988
Because I Love You.....	(818) 8824
Hillside Center.....	(818) 790-3044
Pasadena Council on Alcoholism & Drug Dependency	
	.....(818) 795-9127
Toughlove.....	(800) 333-1069

**The Crescenta Valley  
Drug and Alcohol Prevention Coalition,**

**a group committed to educating and supporting parents of adolescents, expresses it's thanks to the La Cañada Community Prevention Council, the Arcadia Educational Foundation, the Arcadia Unified School District, and the Arcadia PTA for their assistance in the creation of this publication.**



