

Letter to the Editor. April 7

With a recent survey showing increased use of marijuana and alcohol among older teens in Weston, we want parents to know about an important resource available to help students cope with peer pressure and other issues, including drug and alcohol use. Weston's Alcohol and Drug Awareness Program runs a youth group, in which students in grades 9 through 12 meet once a month with a trained youth coordinator.

Here's what one parent had to say about it in a note to the ADAP board: "By involving teens seriously in difficult discussions, ADAP's able to cut through a lot of the cynicism and mistrust kids often have for the advice adults give them," said Francis Phillips, whose daughter is a member of Weston's Youth Leadership Council, ADAP's youth group.

Andrew Katz, who is now a college freshman and a former co-president of ADAP, wrote this about his experience: "Exchanging viewpoints with the group has strongly impacted the choices I have made in the pressure-filled world that is high school. We are not an abstinence group; however, we do promote healthy choices."

ADAP used to offer a peer group for students, starting in grade 7. If enough students were interested, we could consider offering that again. **However, membership in YLC is lower than it used to be even three to five years ago. ADAP needs your involvement and more students to join its youth group. In the current academic year, 20 students are members of ADAP's YLC.**

ADAP board hired a new facilitator last year, continues to run the Evergreen dance in the winter, and arranges a pre-Prom speaker. In March, 10 YLC members and ADAP's youth leader, visited a youth AA meeting in Danbury and provided feedback that they found it worthwhile.

On May 1, Carl Antisell, a motivational speaker who is in long-term recovery from substance abuse, will speak to all high school students in assembly programs. This year, for the first time, ADAP has also arranged for Mr. Antisell to speak at a workshop that night for parents.

Why does this matter to you as a parent in Weston?

According to a 2013 survey in Weston conducted by Positive Directions and other groups, including ADAP, as reported in *The Weston Forum* on March 27:

--Students in grades 11-12 showed a 16% increase in 30-day use of alcohol from 2000 to 2013. Students in the survey were asked if they had used alcohol within 30 days of taking the survey. Among this group of older students, use of alcohol was considerably higher than the national average.

--Forty-one percent of 12th graders said they have used marijuana within the past 30 days. However, student perception of harm from regular use and their perception of parental disapproval for smoking marijuana decreased considerably in 2013 compared with 2008, according to Michelle Albright, Weston's director of youth services.

We urge you to attend Carl Antisell's parent workshop on May 1 at 7 pm at Weston High School. Consider having your high school students join ADAP's youth group: it provides a safe forum to discuss issues they face every day.

The link to ADAP's website is: www.westonadap.org. If you have any questions or comments, please contact us at westonadapylc@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Eilene Brostoff, President of ADAP

Rose Horowitz, Secretary of ADAP

Sitta Harris, Treasurer of ADAP

Ellen Gurman, Former President of ADAP

Alison Martin, Former President of ADAP

Jamie Berger Katz, Website manager