

The Life Education Center

The Life Education Center (LEC) program teaches students in kindergarten through high school the benefits of making sound, healthy choices for their bodies and minds.

Two mobile units travel to 60 public and private schools in Kankakee and Iroquois counties -- reaching approximately 14,000 students annually.

The LEC's curriculum aligns with Illinois State Standards. Instructors use hands-on materials, visuals, discussion and role playing to teach students about the human body, the dangers of its abuse and about the different skills needed to deal with peer pressure. TAM, a transparent anatomical mannequin, teaches the younger students about their bodies and provides older students with an inside view of how chemical substances harm the body. LEC mascot, Harold the Giraffe and his friend, Jocko the Monkey, are favorites with the younger students who learn the importance of exercise and eating good foods.

The LEC also provides a forum for older students. A three-part research-based curriculum proven to delay the onset of alcohol use is taught to 6th, 7th and 8th grade students at participating schools and "Class Action" is being used with high school students. Junior and senior high school students, along with their parents, are encouraged to make a pledge to follow and support laws prohibiting underage alcohol use in the Partnership's annual "***Make a Pledge - Make It Stick***" social marketing campaign.

LEC program parent guides were paid for in part by the Illinois Department Human Services.



**Life Education Centers
Pledge for Life Partnership**

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Parents of Eighth Graders

In the Life Education Center, eighth graders learn how to choose ***Wise Highs . . . Choices You Can Live With!***

Your eighth grader will be involved in a new and exciting program entitled PowerLines. This program is part of Project Northland, an effective research curriculum proven to delay the onset of alcohol use and reduce alcohol-related problems among young people.

The role that alcohol plays in our children's lives -- especially as a "right of passage" points to the importance of prevention. Research has proven that delaying the onset of alcohol use by as little as one year, can reduce the chances of children developing a substance abuse problem later in life. Other concerns are immediate. Alcohol-related automobile accidents, for example, are the leading cause of death for young people ages 15 to 24.

Last year, sixth and seventh graders participated in the Slick Tracy Home Team Project and Amazing Alternatives components of Project Northland. Slick Tracy was designed to get parents and their kids talking about alcohol-related issues while Amazing Alternatives capitalized on the importance of peer-leadership to achieve its goals. While teachers are effective sources of factual information about alcohol, students find same-age peers the most credible.

PowerLines uses shared leadership and reinforces the messages and behaviors learned in the two previous courses. It also goes a step further and introduces 8th graders to those professional and political groups that influence an adolescent's decision to use alcohol.

POWER LINES

An Eighth Grade Alcohol Use Prevention Curriculum

In addition to teaching skills to identify and resist influences to use alcohol, PowerLines helps students look beyond family and friends and into their community to see how advertising, legislation and other matters may affect their decision to use or not use alcohol. They will work on major activities in small groups and each group will select different leaders. In addition to receiving guidance from the teacher, leaders use Shared Leadership Sheets detailing how they should conduct their small group activities.

During the next four weeks, students will meet eight times to examine the mythical town of Waterlawn, its residents and its sources of influential power. They will explore issues and opinions about alcohol and discuss how students can influence their friends, younger kids, their schools -- and even their communities -- about not drinking alcohol. Here's a recap of weekly lesson plans:

Lesson One:

During the first session, students review refusal skills, consequences of alcohol use and alternative ways to have fun without drinking. They identify the things they want to see happen for themselves and a plan to achieve those goals during the upcoming year.

Lesson Two:

Students examine the meaning of "community influences" and look at those things that define their own community. Through a number of classroom activities, they begin to explore how schools, law enforcement, the media, business establishments and government influence their decisions about drinking.

Lesson Three:

Students study the case of a teen who is stopped for driving under the influence of alcohol after attending a party. Students discuss the case and examine the people or institutions that may have played a role in the teen's decision to drink.

Lesson Four:

The citizens of Waterlawn call a town meeting where students brainstorm for ideas to deter underage drinking. They are asked to look at the issues from the perspectives of parents, teens, police and educators and vote on the ideas they believe will be the most effective.

This is just one way that we can teach our children how special they are and how important it is for them to take care of their bodies and minds. These discussions will help them to choose Wise Highs...Choices You Can Live With! To visit the LEC or to learn more, call Brenda Wetzel, LEC coordinator, at 937-2950.

Lessons Five through Eight

Students review the ideas from Lesson Four and examine the role of personal responsibility in making the decision to drink and having an influence on others.

The next three lessons of the PowerLines program are devoted to small group projects that help students understand the complexity of alcohol use and demonstrate how students can become involved in changing the attitudes of friends, younger students and even adults.

Projects cover a variety of topics including interviewing and surveying police, judges, liquor store owners and teachers. They also examine organizations such as M.A.D.D. (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) and review alcohol-related laws and policies in their community. They also are asked to set goals to remain alcohol-free. Students will present their community projects during Lesson Eight and give their personal goals to the teacher to put in a time capsule for future reference.

Additional resources

For a listing of local resources or additional tips to keep your child alcohol and drug free contact:
The KAN-I HELP Information Network
815.936.4606 or **www.i-kan.org**

A parent brochure entitled "Keeping Your Kids Drug-Free" also is available from the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign. To obtain a copy, call **1.800.788.2800**. Or, visit the website at **www.theantidrug.com** for additional tips and advice.