

# asac action

July 2009

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## Heart of Iowa Elevator Project

ASAC is conducting a fund drive to add an elevator to Heart of Iowa's program building. This has been a need since ASAC purchased and renovated the former Flights Lounge for the Heart of Iowa Mother and Child Recovery Center in 2001. At the time, however, the building renovation budget was not sufficient to include an elevator. The second floor of the facility is only accessible by two flights of steps. Clients must access the second floor for their treatment groups, individual counseling sessions, their initial medical exams, and to receive prescription medications for themselves and their children.



Accessing the 2nd floor has been a problem for both clients and staff due to health concerns. There have been periods of time when substance abuse treatment programming has had to be held in the first floor lounge to accommodate disabled clients and those with at-risk pregnancies who are advised not to climb stairs.

Since the Heart of Iowa program building has a main level area to conduct treatment programming, the facility meets ADA handicapped accessibility requirements. The Heart of Iowa lounge, however, is not conducive to the treatment process. It is an open area located next to the front entry way and two child care programs. Clients become distracted and sessions become disrupted by walk-by traffic. The lounge also offers no client confidentiality.

The addition of an elevator will improve Heart of Iowa's treatment programming and help safeguard the health and safety of our staff and the families we serve.

## Assistance for Flood Victims

Thanks to funding from United Way of East Central Iowa Flood Recovery Fund and The Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation's Flood 2008/Embrace Iowa Fund, ASAC is providing substance abuse treatment services to families who were impacted by the 2008 Flood with no out-of-pocket cost to the client. The exception to this will be OWI assessments. The client will still be responsible for the \$100 OWI assessment fee. All other treatment fees (including treatment fees to OWI clients) will now be covered. ASAC will continue to bill insurance and Medicaid but grant funds will cover any remaining costs.

ASAC has also received a \$25,000 grant from The Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation Flood 2008/Embrace Iowa Fund to provide direct assistance to flood victims. The intent of the grant is to provide funding to clients who have unresolved flood-related issues. The use of these funds is flexible but could include items such as hearing aids, eye glasses/exams, furniture, and clothing. Generally, assistance will be no more than \$500 per household.

## **Study: More Than 1 in 10 Children Live with a Substance Abusing Parent**

Almost 12 percent of children under the age of 18 years of age live with at least one parent who was dependent on or abused alcohol or an illicit drug during the past year, according to a report by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The report is based on national data from 2002 to 2007.

“The research increasingly shows that children growing up in homes with alcohol- and drug-abusing parents suffer – often greatly,” said SAMHSA Acting Administrator Eric Broderick, D.D.S., M.P.H. “The chronic emotional stress in such an environment can damage their social and emotional development and permanently impede healthy brain development, often resulting in mental and physical health problems across the life-span. This underlines the importance of preventive interventions at the earliest possible age.” Among the findings:

- Almost 7.3 million children lived with a parent who was dependent on or abused alcohol
- About 2.1 million children lived with a parent who was dependent on or abused illicit drugs
- 5.4 million children lived with a father who met the criteria for past year substance dependence or abuse, and 3.4 million lived with a mother who met this criteria.

Findings for Children Living with Substance-Dependent or Substance-Abusing Parents: 2002 to 2007 are drawn from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, an annual nationwide survey of persons aged 12 and older. This report focused on questions asked of 87,656 parents aged 18 and older about their substance dependence and abuse. The full report is available on the web at <http://oas.samhsa.gov/2k9/SAParents/SAParents.cfm>.

## **Prescription Drug Misuse**

According to the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), the abuse of prescription drugs to get high has become increasingly prevalent among teens and young adults. Past year abuse of prescription pain killers now ranks second—only behind marijuana—as the Nation’s most prevalent illegal drug problem. Use the following step to prevent prescription drug misuse:

- Use medications as prescribed
- Store them in a secure place
- Dispose of unused medications properly

Prescription drugs should be stored in a safe, secure place and counted regularly to help ensure that they don’t get into the hands of unauthorized users. Consumers should always check patient information accompanying the product to see if it contains specific directions for disposing of unused medication and should follow those instructions.



If no specific directions are provided, unused medication should be discarded by mixing it with undesirable substances (e.g., old coffee grounds, used kitty litter), sealing the mixture in a container, and placing it in the trash. Whenever possible, unused medication may also be donated to authorized community take-back programs for prescription drugs.

## PREVENTING TEEN ALCOHOL & DRUG ABUSE: WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

As young people move into their teens, parents face seemingly endless challenges to ensure their adolescents' health and safety - an increasingly difficult and stressful task as teens push for more independence. Parents want to ensure that their teens make the right choices, hang out with the "right" people, and live productive, alcohol- and drug-free lives.

It is important for parents to know the facts about alcohol and drug use and to be prepared, considering nearly a third of 12- and 13-year-olds has been offered and used an illicit drug. However, it's promising that when teens know the facts, dangers, and risks associated with drug use they are 42% less likely to use them.

To help teen parents and families prevent and address teen alcohol and drug abuse, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Health Information Network created *Caring for Our Youth* Web site (<http://ncadi.samhsa.gov/cfoy.aspx>).

The Web site includes quick links to information, available for quick download or hard-copy mail order. The resources offer parents and families access to trusted information to help prevent and address alcohol and drug use, including research and facts, signs and symptoms, tips for talking to teens, and more. Some resources are also available in Spanish.

When parents are actively involved in their teens' lives, teens are more apt to avoid circumstances involving alcohol and drugs. Research shows that teens who are not regularly monitored by their parents are four times more likely to use drugs, compared with regularly-monitored teens. The family guide, *Keeping Your Kids Drug Free* offers the following tips for teen parents:

- Know what your children are doing — their activities and how they spend their time.
- Know who your teen's friends are.
- Check in with the parents who are hosting the party your teen will be attending.
- Praise and reward good behavior.
- Before going out, have them tell you:
  - WHO they are going to be spending time with
  - WHAT they will be doing
  - WHEN or what time they will be at their expected destination
  - WHERE they are going to be. Every one in a while, check on your teens to see if they're where they said they would be.

*It's not pestering, it's parenting*

### ***A Note of Thanks***

ASAC would like to thank Glady McMellor and D'Lynn Swenson for their years of service on the Heart of Iowa Advisory Council. Besides being actively involved in a number of volunteer and fundraising projects for the Heart of Iowa Mother and Child Recovery Center, both Glady and D'Lynn served as chairpersons for the Advisory Council.