

asac action

September 2008

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FLOOD RECOVERY UPDATE

The Novus Center is back downtown at their 5th floor offices in the Dows Building and Heart of Iowa has returned to its campus at 4050 Bowling Street. Not everything is back to normal, however. Downtown Cedar Rapids is gradually being rebuilt but the nearby parking ramp is closed and the bus depot has been relocated. At Heart of Iowa fourteen families are now living in two of the 12-unit apartment buildings with three of the apartments being used for treatment programming, administrative offices, and child care. We hope that by December the program will be at full capacity and back to providing services to thirty-six families.

Work is progressing on Heart of Iowa's treatment facility. We hope that treatment programming and child care can move back to the building by September 15th. The third apartment building will probably not be ready until the first of November. Apartment Building 3910 was covered by flood insurance which slowed up the rebuilding process.

We are very pleased that both programs are back into their facilities. The effect the flood had on program revenue, however, is substantial. John Garringer, ASAC Executive Director, estimates Heart of Iowa will experience over \$200,000 in lost revenue due to the flooding.

The cash and in-kind support for Heart of Iowa's flood recovery has been wonderful. **HEART**ful thanks to the individuals, businesses and faith organizations who provided volunteer support in the clean up effort and have contributed cash and/or in-kind support to our rebuilding process. We have received grants and cash donations totalling \$38,742 and furniture, household items and program supplies valued at \$42,794.

Access to Recovery Provides Helping Hand

Access to Recovery (ATR) provides services to persons who are working on recovery from alcohol and drug abuse. To date ASAC has provided services to 84 clients through the ATR program. The number one request for assistance has been transportation. Other examples of ATR services include rent assistance for transitional housing, mental health therapy, and gift cards for work clothes, eye glasses, and dental work. To obtain financial assistance a client must have exhausted all other resources.

Participation in ATR begins with talking to a Care Coordinator to determine program eligibility. Care Coordinators are located in ASAC offices in Cedar Rapids and Clinton. For Linn, Benton and Jones County, call (319) 390-461. In Clinton and Jackson County, call (563) 243-2124.

For more information on the ATR program, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/atr or call 1-800-923-1085.

Change the Drinking Age?

In the news recently, 100 colleges across the country came out in support of lowering the legal drinking age to 18. This news has brought some discussion in our community because Coe College President was one of the college presidents to support this concept. **The Underage Drinking coalitions in our area support keeping the current drinking age of 21.**

Why “21”?

By Erin Gavin, ASAC Prevention Specialist
Chair of the Linn County Underage Drinking Coalition

We are often asked why the legal drinking age is 21. The answer is very simple: A person’s brain does not become fully developed until early 20’s and adding alcohol to the mix is a recipe for disaster.

The brain goes through great changes during Adolescence and alcohol can seriously damage long and short term processes. Damage from alcohol at this time can be long-term and irreversible.

Here are some quick facts about alcohol and the adolescent brain:

- Alcohol affects the sleep cycle, resulting in impaired learning and memory as well as disruptive releases of hormones necessary for maturation.
- Alcohol affects all parts of the brain, which affects coordination, emotional control, thinking, decision-making, hand-eye movement, speech, and memory.
- Alcohol reduces the level of Serotonin in the brain. Serotonin is known as the brain’s peace-keeper, assisting in learning and problem solving and it enables our drive to live in harmony.

Overall, alcohol affects most of the brain, compromising memory, abstract thinking, problem solving, attention and concentration. It also alters motivation, emotions, awareness, thinking, movement, breathing, consciousness and more.

Web-sites to browse for more information: www.why21.org and www.sadd.org

ASAC Receives Grant Funding

Variety, the Children’s Charity Youth Residential	9,095	Facility Improvements
Heart of Iowa	2,873	Childcare Improvements
Drug Free Communities Grant Jones County	125,000	Prevention Strategies
Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation Heart of Iowa	5,000	Flood Recovery Support
Alliant Disaster Fund Heart of Iowa	5,000	Flood Recovery Support
Criminal Juvenile Justice Planning Benton County	10,250	Prevention Strategies

September is Recovery Month

Substance Abuse Recovery Month is an annual observance that takes place during the month of September.

Recovery Month highlights the societal benefits of substance abuse treatment, applauds the contributions of treatment providers and promotes the message that recovery from substance abuse in all its forms is possible. The observance also encourages citizens to take action to help expand and improve the availability of effective substance abuse treatment for those in need. Each year a new theme, or emphasis, is selected for the observance. The theme this year is Voices of Recovery.

Recovery Month also serves to educate the public on substance abuse as a national health crisis that addiction is a treatable disease, and that recovery is possible. *Recovery Month* highlights the benefits of treatment for not only the affected individual, but for their family, friends, workplace, and society as a whole. Educating the community reduces the stigma associated with addiction and treatment. Accurate knowledge of the disease helps people to understand the importance of supporting treatment programs, those who work within the treatment field, and those in need of treatment.

ASAC Prevention Holds Linn County Candidate Forum

Written by Erin Gavin and Lorna Richards, ASAC Prevention Specialists

On August 25, 2008, Linn County Supervisor and Sheriff Candidates gathered to answer questions on their views and thoughts regarding substance use issues in our community. The Linn County Supervisor candidates that joined the forum were, Linda Langston, Jim Houser, John Ecreg, Eric Rosenthal, Don Gray, Brent Oleson, and Dave Machachek. Both Sheriff candidate were also present, Brian Gardner and David Zahn. KCRG's Beth Maliki moderated the event,

Discovering the views of our local representatives is important to the integrity of prevention efforts in Linn County. Issues that were discussed covered a wide range of topics. Marijuana and Methamphetamine both ignited a discussion on what the candidates would do to increase awareness, increase prevention efforts and work in the Linn County area to enhance enforcement issues.

Marijuana is the most widely used illicit drug in the United States. According to the 2007 Office of National Drug Control Policy information, "Marijuana is readily available throughout eastern Iowa and is usually available in combination with cocaine and/or meth. The majority of the marijuana available in Iowa is imported from southwest border via motor vehicles and mail delivery services" Would you support more stringent state and federal laws/regulations when it comes to marijuana trafficking and convictions? What do you think can be addressed in Linn County in terms of the usage and trafficking of marijuana?

Other Issues that were discussed covered a wide range of topics. Possible support of county wide social host laws were well received as was compliance checks beyond tobacco to include alcohol, Interesting discussion followed an audience question of the possibility of following the Iowa City Council to further the smoking ban to public places. While only two candidates favored this concept, Jim Houser and Dave Machachek, the other candidates felt this type of restriction infringed on individual's civil liberties. The Sheriff candidates raised excellent points in that prior to enacting these types of policies to have a discussions with law enforcement to see how such policies would be enforced if possible as well as understanding the potential cost involved.

As the evening came to a close, the audience members were left with a better understanding of the candidate's views on issues that we in prevention face each and every day.