

asac action

December 2008

Area Substance Abuse Council Board of Directors

Jim Sines
President

JC Engel
Vice President

Ann Stoner
Secretary

Dan Allison
Treasurer

BOARD MEMBERS

Lu Barron
Joan Craig
Don Davis
Keith Dirks
Norman Griser
Thomas Levi
Roseanne Matuszek
Nicole Pizzini
James Randall
Al Rathje
Dave Romont
Jason Sanders

John Garringer
Executive Director



Visit our web site at
www.asac.us

Jackson County Office Reopens

On December 1st, over ten months after a fire ravaged downtown Maquoketa, ASAC's Jackson County Office is back at 119 S. Main, Suite 2. On January 19, 2008, three neighboring businesses were destroyed with one falling on and crushing our office building. Luckily we salvaged our files and some of our furnishings and equipment. Within a week we were operational again; working from a temporary location with cell phones and a post office box. We are now back better than ever and can be reached once again at 563-652-2215.



ASAC's Jackson County Office is the low structure to the left of the burning building.

'Tis the Season for Responsible Hosting

Hosting a party this holiday season? Before you host a business party or do some holiday entertaining, be aware of your potential legal liability. Because of social host liability, you could be paying for your holiday party for a long time to come if you don't take the required steps to be a safe party host. Here are a few tips for hosting a fun but safe holiday party.

1. Have plenty of non-alcoholic drinks available. If there are other options available, your guests may not feel pressured to just drink alcohol.
2. Be sure to serve plenty of food. Alcohol consumed on a full stomach is absorbed slower than alcohol absorbed on an empty stomach.
3. Don't drink too much yourself. As the host, it is your responsibility to keep an eye on your guests. If problems should arise, you'll be able to handle them better if sober.
4. Don't allow guests to pour their own drinks. Most people drink more when they serve themselves. Mix the drinks yourself and avoid doubles.
5. Stop serving alcohol at least an hour before the party ends. Bring out more food and non-alcohol drinks for your guests. Remember food and non-alcoholic drinks do NOT sober people up. Only time allows the body to rid itself from alcohol.
6. Find out how all of your guests will be getting home. Go beyond just asking guests if they'll "be all right" when they are walking out the door.
7. Intervene if necessary. Your guest may be upset, but it is worth a friend being angry then a tragedy happening because you did not step in.

ASAC Annual Dinner

This year's Annual Dinner was held on November 14 at the Cedar Rapids Elks Club. John Garringer, ASAC Executive Director, presented clocks to three recent retirees: Audrey Bradford, Mel Boyer, and Carol Meter. In addition, the following staff were recognized for their years of service:

5 Years

Trisha Atkinson
Mary Austin
Gayla Creeley
Jennifer Gerdes
Rachel Kimble

5 Years

Sheila Raasch
Jennifer Reed
Deb Schultejan
Butch Walker
Karen Watson

10 Years

Garth Duffie
Stephanie Engledow
Angela Greeno
Debbie Kroeger
Tom Morrisey
Amy Santiago
Shirley Schneider

15 Years

Stephanie Boesenberg
LaVonne Johnson

20 Years

Dino Irvin
Vanessa Moreland
Janet Volesky

Test Your Knowledge about Teen Life and Lingo

What do "space cakes" and "skittles" have in common?

- a) They are popular snacks
- b) They are sold in many convenience stores
- c) They are harmless-sounding names for drugs
- d) They are sold as high-energy drinks and contain high doses of caffeine

Who have the media dubbed as "prosti-tots"?

- a) Teenage girls who date older guys to get drugs
- b) Scantily dressed teenage girls who emulate young, wild celebrities
- c) Teens who bring more than one date to a party
- d) Drug dealers who are known to deal to children

What is a "poke"?

- a) Making fun of someone over text messaging
- b) A new term for a teen's car
- c) An on-line form of flirtation on a social networking Web site
- d) A rude way to get someone's attention in class

Find the answers at www.TheAntiDrug.com/ParentChronicles.

The Way Home – ASAC's Transitional Housing Program

Nestled back off of busy Kirkwood Blvd. SW, this 24 unit apartment complex includes sixteen 2-bedroom units and eight 3-bedroom units. Each apartment includes washer/dryer, dishwasher, stove, refrigerator and microwave. There is also a playground for the children and a community room for gatherings. Rent for a 3-bedroom apartment is \$648 + \$648 security deposit and \$546 + \$546 security deposit for our 2-bedroom units. All utilities are included except for telephone and cable. The Way Home accepts Section 8 vouchers. To obtain an application, please contact Brenda Bedell, The Way Home Property Manager, at (319) 363-3985.

2 bedroom available early January 2009. New paint and carpet throughout.

Drunk and Drugged Driving Month

Impaired driving is one of America's deadliest crimes. Nationally, more than 17,000 people died in alcohol-related highway crashes during 2003. Every 30 minutes, nearly 50 times a day, someone in America dies in an alcohol-related crash. Hundred of thousands more are injured. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), about three in every ten Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some point in their lives.

The holiday season is supposed to be a time for family, friends, and festive celebrations, but it is unfortunately also a time when there is a tragic jump in the number of alcohol-related highway fatalities. Mothers Against Drunk Driving, (MADD) estimates that each year nearly 1000 people die due to impaired driving accidents from Thanksgiving to New Years. Because of increased consumption of alcohol and an increase in the number of special events and parties, drinking and driving is much more prevalent.

Since 1981, every President of the United States has proclaimed December "National Drunk and Drugged Driving (3D) Prevention Month" to help underscore the public's commitment to preventing impaired driving. The month of December and the New Year's Eve holiday are also often highlighted by significant increases in state and local law enforcement efforts to combat impaired driving such as the use of sobriety checkpoints and saturation patrols.

Driving impaired or riding with someone who is impaired is simply not worth the risk. The consequences are serious and real. Not only do you risk killing yourself or someone else, but the trauma and financial costs of a crash or an arrest for driving while impaired can be rally significant. Is that the way you want to spend your holiday season? If you catch a buzz, catch a ride!

Have a Safe and Happy Holiday Season!

Heart of Iowa Lending Library

ASAC has a lending library for the children at Heart of Iowa. It was started by Helen Garringer, ASAC volunteer and wife of ASAC's Executive Director, John Garringer.

In addition to checking out books, the library allows children to keep any book they want. For this reason additional books are continually needed.

If you have children's books to donate, please drop them off at either Heart of Iowa, 4050 Bowling Street SW, Cedar Rapids, or ASAC's main campus, 3601 16th Avenue SW, Cedar Rapids.

Thank You to the staff at Frank Magid and Associates for sponsoring holiday gifts for the children at ASAC's Heart of Iowa Mother and Child Recovery Center. Santa will arrive early this year to distribute the children's gifts at Heart of Iowa's Christmas Party on Tuesday, December 23rd.



(Left to Right) Charity Tyler, JLCR President, and LaRonna Orr, Heart of Iowa's Child Care Supervisor

ASAC's Heart of Iowa Mother and Child Recovery Center received a \$3,000 grant from Junior League of Cedar Rapids. The funds will be used to replace child care items lost is the June flood.

The grant awards were given on November 1, 2008 at the Cedar Rapids Junior League's 75th Anniversary Luncheon.

All I Really Need to Know (to survive the holidays) I Learned at a Twelve Step Group

In the mid-1980s, an essay by Robert Fulghum titled “All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten” became immensely popular. In it, Fulghum suggests that the world would be a better place if adults still adhered to the lessons they learned as children, like playing fair and sharing.

A Twelve Step group is like kindergarten for recovering people—a safe place where they learn basic life truths and rules that help keep them sane and sober. Much of this wisdom comes in the form of slogans or sayings that can resonate far beyond the walls of a recovery group meeting. Like Fulghum’s list of lessons, Twelve Step teachings can serve as practical reminders to *all of us* about how to be and act in the world. In the mid-1980s, an essay by Robert Fulghum titled “All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten” became immensely popular. In it, Fulghum suggests that the world would be a better place if adults still adhered to the lessons they learned as children, like playing fair and sharing.

Some Twelve Step insights can be particularly useful as we approach this holiday season—a time often fraught with stress, family tensions, and unmet expectations. For example, slogans like “Easy does it,” “Keep it simple sweetheart (KISS),” “Practice an attitude of gratitude,” and alliterations like the “Seven Ts: Take time to think the thing through,” remind us to slow down, pare down, and pause before we hurry about, driving ourselves (and no doubt those around us) crazy. Instead of getting caught up in the commercialized version of the holidays, try to recapture the meaning and magic of the season. Make a gift. Better yet, *be* a gift by doing something special for someone. Sing. Dance. Hug. Visit an elderly person. Write letters telling loved ones what you value most about them.

Twelve Step participants are often told, “When you’re home by yourself, you’re behind enemy lines,” or “If you share your pain you cut it in half, if you don’t you double it.” Others may say, “My head is like a bad neighborhood and I shouldn’t go in there alone.” They realize the importance of having a healthy and honest support system—especially during the Holidays. They know to develop strategies for situations that might jeopardize their recovery. Food addicts might eat a healthy meal before going to a holiday party. Alcoholics might ask an AA buddy to accompany them to a place where liquor will be served. Others may opt out of going to a stressful gathering with a dysfunctional family and choose instead to go to a Twelve Step meeting.

Recovering folks are also cautious about making New Year’s resolutions because they can be recipes for disappointment. As one recovering person put it, “For me, resolutions are about willpower, but AA has shown me that I can’t control everything. Resolutions set you up for ‘if only’ thinking. You will yourself to lose weight, for example, thinking that if you do, you will be happy. But I’ve already spent too many years trying to meet impossible standards of what I thought I was expected to be instead of celebrating and building on who I am.”

When we learn not to obsess about a goal but instead celebrate the journey, we can better embrace the Twelve Step philosophy of “progress, not perfection.” We recognize that we are imperfect beings who move forward one day, one experience, and even one mistake at a time.

Twelve Steppers are sometimes reminded to “Take the cotton out of your ears and put it in your mouth” or that “Anger is only one letter away from danger”—wise cautions for those of us who might have trouble holding our tongues at a holiday dinner when an irksome relative gets under our skin. Unsettling scenes can often be averted if we embrace another AA saying, “If you can’t love everybody today, at least try not to hurt anybody.”

Ultimately, happy holidays are about making healthy choices, a truism exemplified in a parable sometimes shared at Twelve Step meetings. A Native American grandfather told his grandchild, “Sometimes I feel as if I have two wolves fighting in my heart. One wolf is vengeful, angry, and violent. The other is loving and compassionate.” When the grandchild asked which wolf would win the fight, the wise grandfather replied, “The one I feed.”

Holidays can be laden with chaos, anxiety and anger, or they can be opportunities for authentic connections, spiritual reflection, and joy. Which wolf will you feed this holiday season? The choice is yours.