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ABSTRACT

The Drug Infusion Project is designed to assist rural school districts in their efforts to infuse drug education into their regular curriculum through comprehensive and integrated programming, which includes: (1) developing a statistical base through surveys; (2) training teachers in infusion techniques; (3) broadening the definition of "education" to include things learned from the family and community; and (4) involving the community in supporting a consistent, comprehensive, anti-drug message. The implementation process for the public information component of the Drug Education Infusion Project has combined schools with communities in an integrated effort to provide communitywide awareness of the regional adolescent drug problem and drug use risk factors. A critical element in attracting the support of necessary community leaders has been a systematic community awareness campaign. The media has responded by informing citizens of the region about project activities and drug education topics. The impact of the project has only begun with initial steps producing a glimmer of community involvement to combat the pervasive problem of drug abuse. (ABL)

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and
Community Leaders

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Part IV of Symposium: Dealing with Substance Use and Abuse in the Rural Northwest

Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Western Psychological Association, Reno, Nevada, April 30, 1989 This research was supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (Grant No.G00 8720244)

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Project Implementation through Cooperation with School Personnel and Community Leaders

The need for community-based programs for effective drug education and prevention programming has been well documented. In recent years many schools and communities have developed and tested a variety of programs. Research has found that effective programs, whether urban or rural, utilize not only school systems but also families, the media and entire communities. The success of these programs has been based on a comprehensive and integrated approach to programming.

The Drug Education Infusion Project is designed to assist rural school districts infuse drug education into their regular curriculum through comprehensive and integrated programming, which includes:

- (1) developing a statistical base through surveys;
- (2) training teachers in infusion techniques;
- (3) broadening the definition of "education" to include things learned from the family and community; and
- (4) involving the community in supporting a consistent, comprehensive anti-drug message.

The implementation process for the public information component of the Drug Education Infusion Project has combined schools with communities in an integrated effort to provide communitywide awareness of the regional

(1)

adolescent drug problem and the drug use risk factors. This has involved an integrated effort to encourage regional community members to participate in a Parent and Other Citizens Survey to determine adult attitudes and perceptions regarding drugs and drug use.

A critical element in attracting the support of necessary community leaders has been a systematic community awareness campaign. The results of the adolescent survey has provided a "vehicle" of extreme interest and concern from the viewpoint of the schools as well as the communities. With the potential for controversy in this rural Northwest region in revealing the results of the adolescent drug use survey, the initial presentation of the survey results was given by project personnel at the Idaho Region II Superintendents meeting. An invitation was extended to the Superintendents of the participating districts in southeastern Washington as well. A News Press Release to all regional media followed this presentation to the school district superintendents.

From this initial point, the process of informing citizens of the region about drug education efforts, accomplishments and challenges for schools, and expanding knowledge of problem areas has been programmed simultaneously with media involvement in drawing community awareness and support. County Commissioners in the eight regional counties, the Elks Lodge, and Lions Clubs in the eight county area have been receptive to

(2)

the results represented in the adolescent survey. Informational presentations to this constituency have provided media involvement as well. These constituencies have also been instrumental in distributing Parent and Other Citizens Surveys. The distribution of the adult survey was based on 5% of the population of each county. County Commissioners endorsed the attachment of a Parent and Other Citizens Survey to county payrolls. Employers in the region have also been receptive to attaching the Parent and Other Citizens Survey to their payrolls. The Elks and Lions Clubs assisted with random distribution in each of the counties as well. Other agencies in Idaho and Washington participated in the distribution on a cooperative basis. They include: Region II R.I.C.C. (Regional Interdepartmental Coordinating Committee) of the State Department of Health and Welfare representing Clearwater, Idaho, Latah, Lewis and NezPerce Counties in Idaho; and Whitman County Alcohol Center, Garfield County Coordinator of Human Services and Prevention Coordinator, and Asotin County Drug/Alcohol Program Coordinator in southeastern Washington.

A list of informational presentations, some of which attracted media involvement, given by project personnel to regional school and community agencies and organizations follows:

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| | School | Community |
|------------------|---|--|
| 1988 December | Region II Superintendents Meeting | |
| 1989 January | PTA Jenifer Jr. High, NezPerce County District II Principals Association, Region II Idaho Here's Looking at You, 2000 Training NezPerce County | Interagency Council, NezPerce County RICC Region II Idaho Rotary, NezPerce County Troy, Idaho Community Meeting, Latah County |
| February | PTA Jenifer Jr. High, Centennial School, St. Stanislaus School, Webster, McSorley Lewiston High School, Jenifer Jr. High, NezPerce County | Asotin County Commissioners NezPerce County Commissioners |
| March | PTA Parent Advisory Group, NezPerce County PTSA Whitman County Natural Helpers (School Coordinators), Whitman, County Orchards, McGhee, Whitman, Sacajawea Jr. High, NezPerce County | Whitman County Alcohol Center Clearwater County Commissioners Lewis County Commissioners Center for New Directions Advisory Board, LCSC, NezPerce County Whitman County Commissioners Latah County Commissioners Indian Health Center, NezPerce County Garfield County Commissioners Elks Lodge, Clearwater, Idaho, Lewis, Latah, NezPerce, Asotin, Garfield, and Whitman Counties Lions Clubs, Asotin, Lewis, Latah, and NezPerce Counties Idaho County Commissioners Governor's Regional Council for Children and Youth, Region II Idaho |
| April | Camelot School, NezPerce County PTF, Garfield County | Kiwanis, Garfield County Kiwanis, Clearwater County Kamiah, NezPerce Tribe, Clearwater County |

(4)

The media has responded to the efforts of the Drug Education Infusion Project in informing citizens of the region. Following the News Press Release of the adolescent survey results numerous newspaper articles have been published to date in regional daily, weekly, high school and college newspapers. The topics have covered the results of the adolescent survey; teacher training and workshops sponsored by the project; cooperative school programs and assemblies involving project personnel; and editorials. One regional editor of a weekly newspaper coordinated an eight week alcohol/drug education campaign from the Partnership for a Drug-Free America. 'Ad slicks' were sponsored by local hospitals, clinics, attorneys, agencies and organizations and featured personal messages from community leaders discussing the problems associated with drug abuse. In addition to newspaper articles and interviews, project personnel have participated in local television interview segments, radio talk shows, and public service announcements. A bi-monthly newsletter originates from the project to assist in maintaining an update of information and regional awareness.

With a view of the critical element of implementing the informational component to regional rural Northwest citizens, the impact of the project has only begun. These initial steps have produced a glimmer of community involvement to combat the pervasive problem of drug use. The returns to date of the Parent and Other Citizens survey have been low. With every bit of support for the problem there is non-support or denial of a problem.

(5)

The message to the community in the 'drug use risk factors' is clear. Schools actually have some direct influence over only three of the nine risk factors: educational achievement, truancy, and educational plans. These are three of the four lowest-occurring risk factors in the survey (7.4%, 5.4%, and 27.9% respectively). All other factors are parental and community concerns: alcohol use at an early age; low religious commitment; perceived levels of adult and peer drug use; and perceived parental and peer approval of drug use. The influences on our youth from the family and the community are the most powerful. The road to a drug-free society is long, but we all must accept the challenge.