

# Peer Pressure And Substance Abuse

BY JEREMY SKOW

SPECIALSECTIONS@ANTONMEDIAGROUP.COM

Would a teen really jump off the Brooklyn Bridge if all his friends were doing it? Hopefully not. We can try to tell our teenage son or daughter that they are falling off that bridge a little bit at a time every time they use drugs. They might listen or they might think that we are reciting the same hackneyed rhetoric that parents, who are no longer in touch with what it's like to be a teenager, tell their children. The fact is school-aged children spend most of their time surrounded by their peers. Classmates and teammates far outnumber the adults in a teenager's life. As our children begin to branch out socially, peer pressure can become a formidable influence.

The Canadian Lung Association found that 70 percent of teens who smoke have friends who smoke or they started smoking because of peer pressure. The Monitoring the Future Survey showed that 28 percent of teenagers felt that giving in to peer pressure improved their social standing.



Jeremy Skow

These researchers went on to conclude that:

- Teens with friends who do drugs and drink alcohol are more likely to do the same.
- Teens who do drugs and drink alcohol are more likely to convince their friends to do it too.
- Teens who do drugs and drink alcohol are more likely to seek out other teens who do the same.

see SKOW on page 18A



## SACRED HEART ACADEMY OPEN HOUSE

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2015

Presentations at 11:15 • 12:15 • 1:15

Sacred Heart is rooted in a mission of the Sisters of Saint Joseph and the Gospel of Jesus. Our dedicated teachers and administrators have made **Sacred Heart Academy an outstanding Catholic College Preparatory School** for young women on Long Island. We invite you to learn more about our school and how we foster courage, compassion and commitment in our students and motivate them to **Lead With Heart™**.

Sacred Heart Academy is sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph, Brentwood.

516.483.7383 | [sacredheartacademyhempstead.org](http://sacredheartacademyhempstead.org)  
47 Cathedral Avenue, Hempstead, New York 11550

/Sacred Heart Academy Hempstead, NY @SHAHempsteadNY

140411

You will be **KNOWN**

You will **LEAD**

**OUR LADY OF MERCY ACADEMY**  
815 CONVENT ROAD, SYOSSET, NEW YORK 11791

**OPEN HOUSE**  
**SEPTEMBER 26, 2015**  
**11AM - 1:30 PM**  
Register at [www.olma.org](http://www.olma.org)

You will **LEARN**

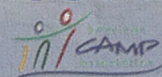
You will grow in **FAITH**

140494





## COME JOIN US TODAY!!!



### THE PREMIER PRESCHOOL

Toddler through Kindergarten

- Flexible Schedules
- Amazing Curriculum
  - Toilet Training
- Extended Days (7am-6pm)
  - 2-5 Days Available
  - Small Class Sizes
  - Certified Teachers
- Optional Transportation

### THE PREMIER ALL INCLUSIVE DAY CAMP

Toddler through 7th Grade

- Complete Program
- Camp Backpack & T-shirt
- Daily Towel Service
- Hot Lunches & Snacks
- Flexible Schedules: 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 Weeks or Any 16 or 24 Days
  - Midi Day or Full Day
  - Transportation

**Ask About Our NEW Super Senior Summer Adventure Trips Program for Grades 3-4 and Grades 5-7**



**Enroll Now For Camp 2015 & School 2015-16 SPACES ARE LIMITED!**



**878 Jericho Turnpike, Westbury**  
(On the Jericho Border)

**516-334-1144**

**redrobincountrydayschoolcamp@gmail.com**  
**www.redrobincountrydayschoolandcamp.com**

FULLY NY STATE LICENSED ▪ ACA ACCREDITED  
CHILDREN IN DIAPERS WELCOME

140400

### COURSES from page 15A

PSAT. That will give them a feel for both exams, which will help them make their decision.

Because of all the changes to these exams, PowerPrep is offering more sections of its courses this year than last. The most important thing is for students to prepare conscientiously for whichever tests they are going to take and not to worry that the new tests are going to be harder than the old ones—they will be different, not harder, and all students are in exactly the same boat.

The entire PowerPrep program is supervised by Wolf, the founder of PowerPrep and a nationally-known

expert in the field of test preparation. Wolf is the author of more than 10 books on test preparation, including Barron's best-selling SAT and PSAT books, as well as a book for the SAT subject test in Math Level 1. He has been helping students to achieve their maximum PSAT and SAT potential for over 40 years.

Every year, hundreds of thousands of students use Wolf's books to prepare for the SAT, but only students here on Long Island can actually take the PowerPrep courses that he personally designed.

For more information on PowerPrep's courses for the PSAT, SAT, ACT, and SAT subject tests, call 516-484-4468.

### SKOW from page 17A

The truth is kids get involved with drugs for a variety of reasons. Some teenagers use substances as a way to fit in. The entrance requirements for most drug cliques are easy. Just use and buy drugs and presto, you have a group to hang with. For kids who are lonely or feeling they lack what it takes to fit in with others, this is very seductive. Some kids use drugs to self-medicate for depression, anxiety or low self-esteem. They may feel more comfortable meeting people and socializing if they use substances to either relieve their worries or provide them with artificial courage. Some kids may use substances to get attention from their parents. She might feel that if she were the perfect child she wouldn't she get anywhere near the same amount of attention from you.

As parents, we want to be vigilant about potential warning signs. Your child may have a sudden or extreme change in friends, eating or sleeping pattern, physical appearance or school performance. She may have suddenly lost interest in previously enjoyed hobbies or family activities. He may present with a more hostile or uncooperative attitude. She may be more secretive about actions or possessions. He might start stealing money from you or have an unexplained need for cash. You may find medicine containers, despite a lack of illness, in your teen's room.

It is important for us to be our child's parents, not their friends, because there is a significant difference. Friends think it's alright if another kid does drugs, puts himself in danger, and lies about it. Parents love their children and are willing to set limits and boundaries to keep them safe, no matter much strife it causes in the household. Your daughter may feel she is ready to be on her own, but you try to hold on. This may cause frustration and resentment but you do not have to argue with your adolescent when it comes to peer pressure. You

can help your child through this tough time by:

- Knowing your child's friends and their parents.
- Knowing your child's activities and paying attention to their whereabouts.
- Trusting your instincts. If your gut is telling you that something is off, there has got to be a reason. Make it as easy as possible for your teen to talk to you. Ask what is going on. Talk about specific things you see and concerns you have, and then be ready to listen.
- Educating yourself about physical signs of substance use (bloodshot eyes, slurred speech, etc.).
- Offering support and advice without judgment. A strong bond between you and your teen might help prevent your teen from abusing drugs.
- Establishing rules and consequences. Make it clear that you won't tolerate drug abuse. Agree on the consequences of breaking the rules ahead of time—and enforce them consistently.
- Keeping an eye on prescription and over-the-counter drugs. Over-the-counter cough medicines contain dextromethorphan, an ingredient teens can drink in excess to get high.

Parents sometimes have to do the opposite of what they considered good parenting when their child is engaged in abusive behavior. Instead of protecting your child and taking care of his needs, you have to put the responsibility on him. Don't let your emotions take over and try to fix everything. Take a step back and analyze what is going on. Like many parents, you may have been dealing with symptoms like hair, dress, curfews and contraband. The actual problem may stem from issues like feelings, peer pressures, family dynamics and addiction.

*Jeremy Skow, LMHC, CASAC, MBA, maintains a private practice in Great Neck. Visit [www.mentalhealthcounselingny.com](http://www.mentalhealthcounselingny.com) or call 516-322-9133 for more information.*