

# The Official Newsletter of

Winter 2005  
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....*building partnerships to raise  
drug-free successful youth*

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## New Research On Teen Brain Development

by **Ken Winters, Ph.D.**

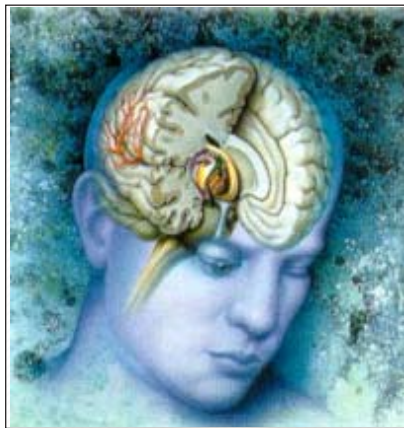
**Professor, Department of Psychiatry, University of Minnesota**

New scientific discoveries have put a much different perspective on the understanding of adolescent behavior. Research now suggests that the human brain is still maturing during the adolescent years, with changes continuing into the early 20s. The immature brain of the teenage years may not only explain why adolescents are prone to make poor decisions, but it may also place teenagers at an elevated risk to the harmful effects of drugs.

### Work In Progress

Advanced technologies in brain imaging have provided windows to the developing brain. Based on the pioneering work of Jay Giedd and colleagues at the National Institute of Mental Health, evidence is accumulating that the brain is not fully formed at puberty as earlier thought, but continues important maturation that is not complete until about age 24.

Three brain structures that undergo maturation during youth, the *nucleus accumbens*, *amygdala* and *prefrontal cortex*, are noteworthy in terms of their implications for understanding adolescent behavior. While scientists caution about suggesting a definitive linkage between neurodevelopmental findings and behavior, the discovery that construction is still in progress during adolescence offers suggestive hypotheses.



The *nucleus accumbens*, which directs motivated behavior, is responsible for how much effort the organism will expend in order to seek rewards. In teens, an immature nucleus accumbens is believed to result in preferences for activities that require low effort, yet produce high excitement. Real-world observations bear this out: most teens tend to favor activities such as playing video games, skate boarding and, unfortunately, substance use.

The *amygdala* is the structure responsible for integrating emotional reactions to pleasurable and aversive experiences. It is believed that a developing amygdala contributes to two behavioral effects: the tendency for adolescents to react explosively to situations rather than with more controlled responses, and the propensity for youth to misread neutral or inquisitive facial expressions of others as anger.

One of the last areas to mature is the *prefrontal cortex*, located just behind the forehead. Sometimes referred to as “the seat of sober second thought,” it is the area of the brain responsible for the complex processing of information such as making judgements, controlling impulses, foreseeing consequences, and setting goals.

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# A Message from the President...

**A**s we look to a new year, I am delighted and excited to have the honor of serving as President of the Kansas Family Partnership (KFP) Board of Directors. In this capacity, I want to send greetings from the Board and wish you a healthy and positive 2006.

If you are reading this newsletter, no doubt you have some sort of connection to KFP. My connection goes back to 1995 when I began working with families in prevention education. Then, KFP was and continues to be a great resource for training, education materials and the statewide promotion of healthy behaviors in children, youth and families.

Though we hit the 10-year milestone in 2005, we will have the official celebration this summer. I hope you can join us in August to celebrate the event. I guarantee that you will meet a highly devoted and passionate staff.

In the past 10 years, I've had the honor of working with several schools in Southwest Kansas to celebrate Red Ribbon Campaigns. I never tire of seeing the reactions on the faces of the students after they've heard the story of the murdered drug enforcement agent, the brave Enrique (Kiki) Camerena. It is their look of resolve to never be involved with drugs that stays with me. The children have told their own stories of relatives and friends who have abused drugs. Those stories made me think that our children have too much exposure to the world of alcohol and other drugs. It is up to us to change that.

When parents and communities band together to find constructive leisure time for children and youth, they have less time to engage in unhealthy behaviors. It is my challenge to you, this year, to volunteer in youth-oriented projects in your community. If you have a youth center, make sure it's staffed with volunteers. Enroll your children in activities such as 4-H, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts and YMCA programs, and be a parent volunteer. If you do not have children, be a community volunteer in those programs. Please join the Kansas Family Partnership in making our communities the best places to raise our children.

Happy Holidays!

Debra



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An immature prefrontal cortex is thought to be the neurobiological explanation for why teens show poor judgement and too often act before they think.

### The Developing Brain and Drug Use

Scientists are now beginning to explore how these new discoveries may help explain adolescent drug use and related impulsive behaviors. This is an important issue given that adolescence is a time of experimentation and novelty seeking. The 2003 *Monitoring the Future* study found that 70.1 percent of high school seniors had used alcohol in the past year and 34.9 percent had used marijuana. Over half had tried an illicit drug at least once in their lifetime. Even among 8th graders, 45.6 percent had already tried alcohol and 22.8 percent reported illicit drug use in their lifetime (*Johnson et al., 2003*). We know that most adult regular smokers begin using in adolescence, as do a majority of adults who meet alcohol abuse or dependence criteria (*Clark et al., 1998*). Youth who report first using alcohol before age 15 are more than five times as likely to report being an alcoholic compared to persons who first used alcohol at age 21 or older (*Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration, 2004*).

From a neurodevelopment standpoint, two central questions merit scientific attention: Do neurodevelopmental factors predispose adolescents to seek out and abuse alcohol and drugs? And, are there any deleterious effects on brain development as a result of drug use in adolescence? Evidence from both animal and human data pertain to each question.

### Are Adolescents More Vulnerable Than Adults to Abuse Drugs?

Several neurodevelopmental findings provide provisional answers to this question. As already noted, an immature prefrontal cortex increases the propensity of teenagers to act impulsively and to ignore the negative consequences

of such behavior. In addition, an immature nucleus accumbens increases the adolescent's tendency to seek out activities that are exciting, but require little effort. And, there is growing evidence that one direct result of a developing amygdala is that adolescents subjectively report greater feelings of social disinhibition when drinking alcohol compared to adults (*Spear, 2002*). This effect would create a more pleasurable social experience (e.g., feeling less shy) while drinking compared to adults. All these effects of the developing brain--poor impulse control, favoring low effort, yet thrilling experiences, and heightened sensitivity to the social benefits of intoxication--may contribute to an initial decision to use drugs and make the experience rewarding enough to repeat it.

There are other considerations. In studies of adolescent rats, they are observed to be less sensitive to the effect of intoxication than adult rats (*Spear, 2002*). A lower sensitivity to alcohol's effects would be consistent with the observation that young people are capable of drinking large amounts of

alcohol without feeling all that intoxicated. Hormones have a role as well. Hormones encourage novelty seeking and promote social competitiveness. Increased hormonal production during adolescence may promote drug use to the extent that drug involvement represents a novel experience to the youth who is also seeking social approval from peers during the experience.

### Implications

It is too early to say whether this new understanding of neurodevelopment will lead to revolutionary tools in the treatment of substance abuse, such as new pharmacotherapies or even a "vaccine" against addiction.

Even as researchers explore these questions, the field must examine existing policies and psychosocial treatment approaches in light of new findings. Creating age-appropriate curriculum to educate youth about their developing brain is one possibility. Another is to incorporate neurodevelopmental information into the educational materials used by prevention specialists and educators.

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*...One of the last areas (of the brain) to mature is the prefrontal cortex, sometimes referred to as the "seat of sober second thought." An immature prefrontal cortex may explain why teenagers show poor judgement and too often act before they think.*



# Mark your Calendar for these Upcoming Events!

## Red Ribbon Training

**April 25, 2006**

**Where:** Kansas Army National Guard Training Center, Salina  
**Who:** Youth and Adults  
**Cost:** Youth \$15; Adult \$30  
**Register:** Forms available online at: [www.kansasfamily.com](http://www.kansasfamily.com) (after January 1, 2006)  
Call: 800-206-7231 or 785-266-6161



## SADD State Leadership Conference

**April 25-26, 2006**

**Where:** Kansas Army National Guard Training Center, Salina  
**Who:** High School Students and Adult Advisors  
**Cost:** \$50/participant (Includes dinner on 4/25/06 and breakfast & lunch on 4/26/06)  
**Register:** Forms available online at: [www.kansasfamily.com](http://www.kansasfamily.com) (after January 1, 2006)  
Call: 800-206-7231 or 785-266-6161



## Kansas Youth Leadership Summit

**August 6-8, 2006**

**Where:** Rock Springs 4-H Center, Junction City  
**Who:** High School Freshmen and Juniors and their Adult Advisors  
**Cost:** FREE  
**Register:** Forms available online at: [www.kansasfamily.com](http://www.kansasfamily.com) (after January 1, 2006)  
Call: 800-206-7231 or 785-266-6161



### ***New Research... Continued from Page 3***

A third approach is to communicate findings to treatment specialists, helping them adjust therapeutic goals and expectations based on brain maturity. To some degree, older adolescents can engage in more complex cognitive tasks, such as weighing the pros and cons of unhealthy behaviors and considering more sophisticated approaches for resistance and relapse prevention. But younger teenagers will need to be taught relatively concrete strategies.

Finally, there are the public advocates whose role in treatment and prevention cannot be underestimated. An educational effort with these groups could yield empirically derived public service messages and campaigns, ones emphasizing delaying the onset of drug and alcohol use, preferably until adulthood, and/or after permanent neurological damage by abstaining or reducing use during adolescence.

*For More Information about Adolescent Brain Development and Substance Abuse, contact Ken Winters, Ph.D. at [kwinters@tresearch.org](mailto:kwinters@tresearch.org)*



## Photo Gallery

John Lasne, (right) author of the children's book, *Red Ribbon, a Story of Hope*, made a special appearance in Topeka to talk with area school children as part of the Red Ribbon 15th Anniversary Celebration.

See more photos at: [www.kansasfamily.com](http://www.kansasfamily.com).



## Non-Alcoholic Drinks for a Safe Holiday Celebration

### Fuzzy Noel

3/4 cup peach sorbet  
1/3 cup orange juice  
1 cup sparkling water  
1/8 teaspoon almond extract  
crushed ice

Blend sorbet, juice and extract until smooth. Stir in sparkling water. Pour over crushed ice and serve.

### Warm Orchard Wassail

1 64-ounce bottle cran-apple juice  
1/4 cup sugar  
2 three-inch cinnamon sticks  
1 teaspoon whole allspice  
Garnish: orange slices and ground clover

Mix all ingredients (except garnish) into saucepan. Bring to boil and lower heat to allow liquid to simmer for 5-10 minutes. Strain heated punch into punch bowl. Garnish with orange slices and sprinkle with ground clover.

### Snowcapped Raspberry Ice

2 ounces sweet & sour (non-alcoholic) mix  
2 ounces Sierra Mist soda  
4 ounces of raspberry puree  
Whipped cream  
Pour ingredients in a blender and add ice.  
Mix until desired thickness.  
Pour into a tall glass and top with whipped cream.



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# Welcome New KFP Board Members!

Kansas Family Partnership welcomes four new members to its Board of Directors. *Krista Postai, Anne deShazo, Rod Seel, and Jim Potter* were elected to the Board in September at the KFP Annual Meeting in Topeka. Each of these individuals bring unique skills and knowledge that will enhance the efforts of KFP.

**Krista Postai** is Chief Executive Officer of Community Health Center (CHC/SEK) of Southeast Kansas(CHC/SEK), a federally qualified health center based in Pittsburg. Prior to joining CHC/SEK, she was Vice President of Planning and Development of Mt. Carmel Regional Medical Center for more than 23 years. Krista also served as secretary to the Mount Carmel Foundation and has been active in numerous community organizations including United Way, the American Red Cross, Kiwanis and the Chamber of Commerce. She currently serves as Vice President of Family Resource Center and as chairperson of the Board of Cornerstone Village. Krista is a graduate of the University of Kansas, Lawrence, and currently resides in Pittsburg, Kansas.

**Anne deShazo** has had extensive experience in assisting with juvenile justice reform administration in both Leavenworth and Atchison counties. She currently is the First Judicial District Prevention Services Coordinator, and serves on the First Judicial District Juvenile Corrections Advisory Board (JCAB). Anne served as a part time local MADD advocate for eight years and helped establish and operate the Kansas State Victim Advocate Program with MADD. She has served on the Kansas Organization for Victim Assistance (KOVA) Board and has worked as a Victim Advocate with the Johnson County District Attorney's office. Anne is a Paralegal and has an associate's of arts degree from Kansas City Community College. Anne resides in Leavenworth.

**Rod Seel** is a veteran advertising and marketing executive. He began his career in 1978 in Kansas City and a year later formed his own advertising studio .In 1987, Rod left Kansas City to return to his home town of Topeka where he cofounded the Jones Seel Huyett (JSH) Agency and served as managing principal

of the firm for 18 years. This year, Rod formed his own full-service advertising, marketing and public relations firm, The Seel Group. Rod has received dozens of national, regional and local awards within his field. He is a past Board member of the Topeka Advertising Federation, and a recipient of that group's lifetime achievement award, *The American Advertising Federation Silver Medal Award*. Rod also is a nationally-recognized automotive illustrator whose works can be found in public and private collections around the world. Rod is an active or past board member on many business, civic and church boards. He and his wife reside southwest of Topeka in rural Shawnee County.

**Jim Potter** is a School Resource Officer (SRO) with the Reno County Sheriff's Department and has over 14 years of experience in the law enforcement field. He began his career as a patrol deputy in 1981, and was promoted to patrol sergeant in 1984. In 1998, he became the first school resource and crime prevention officer in Reno County and taught personal safety and Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.). Currently, Jim's SRO duties include programs related to youth development, education and prevention. Jim serves as a Board member on the Reno County DUI Impact Panel and on a number of committees including the Tobacco Use Prevention Committee, Community Health Coalition, and Communities That Care. He also serves on the education committee of the local N.A.A.C.P. Jim received both his bachelor's and master's degrees in history from Southern Illinois, Carbondale, Illinois, and a master's in Education from Lesley University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Jim resides in Hutchinson.

## New Resources Available

The RADAR (*Regional Alcohol and Drug Awareness Resources*) Distribution Center is a free service to any Kansan who would like to borrow videos or needs print materials relating to alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) use. A complete list of all materials and videos is available on KFP's website at: [www.kansasfamily.com](http://www.kansasfamily.com). Orders can be placed 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. Monday through Thursday, and 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. on Friday, by calling 1-800-206-7231. Orders for materials and videos also can be placed on-line 24 hours a day at [www.kansasfamily.com](http://www.kansasfamily.com). RADAR orders are filled and shipped on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, and delivery takes one to two business days. When ordering, please keep the shipping schedule in mind so that your materials will arrive on time.

### New Videos & DVDs:

**Title: *SMASHED***

***Toxic Tales of Teens and Alcohol***

A hard-hitting HBO documentary, filmed at the University of Maryland Shock Trauma Center, *SMASHED* pulls no punches in its graphic presentation of the devastating consequences of underage drinking and impaired driving. This DVD contains the documentary, *SMASHED*; a trailer with excerpts from a Live Panel Discussion of experts and teens; a Discussion Guide for facilitators and SADD chapter leaders; a Classroom Lesson Plan for teachers; Pre- and Post-Tests for viewing participants; and RADD Teen PSAs by actor, Chris Pratt, co-star of the WB's hit show, *Everwood*.



### New Print Materials:

**Title: *Faces of Change***

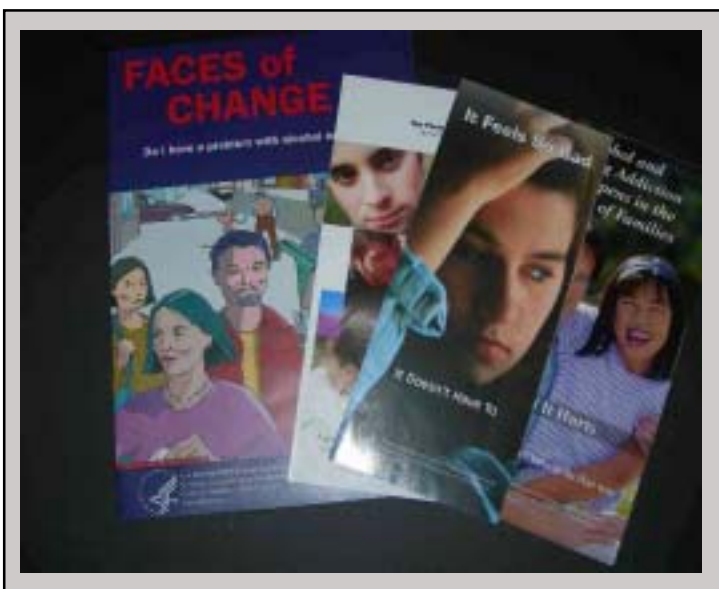
*Do I have a problem with alcohol or drugs?* - An illustrated, 16-page booklet for adults and youth that looks at five people, all from different backgrounds, who have a problem with alcohol or drugs.

**Title: *Hope, Help & Healing*** - A guide to helping someone who might have a drug or alcohol problem. A brochure for adults and youth.

**Title: *Alcohol and Drug Addiction Happens in the Best of Families ...and It Hurts*** - A brochure for adults and youth.

**Title: *It Feels So Bad ...It Doesn't Have To*** - A brochure for teens who have family members with drug or alcohol problems.

**For a complete list of print materials and videos, visit RADAR at: [www.kansasfamily.com](http://www.kansasfamily.com)**



# Community Calendar



**January 9-13, 2006**

*Building On Success: Providing Today's Youth With Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow*  
Washington, D.C.  
Contact: nationalconference@jjrc.org,  
or http://www.juvenilecouncil.org

**January 26-27, 2006**

*Baseline Training - Hays*  
Contact : Jodi at 785-625-5521

**March 14, 2006**

*KCPC Billing Training -Topeka*  
Contact Debbie at:  
dwoolaway@kansasfamily.com.  
Or, call: 800-206-7231 or 785-266-6161

**April 27-28 & May 25, 2006**

*ASI Training - Pittsburg*  
Contact: Debbie at: dwoolaway@kansasfamily.com.  
Or, call: 800-206-7231 or 785-266-6161

**April 25-26, 2006**

*SADD State Leadership Conference - Salina*  
Contact: 800-206-7231 or 785-266-6161  
www.kansasfamily.com

**April 25, 2006**

*Red Ribbon Training - Salina*  
Contact: 800-206-7231 or 785-266-6161  
www.kansasfamily.com

For a complete calendar list of all current training & events, go online: [www.kansasfamily.com](http://www.kansasfamily.com).  
To add your event to the calendar, e-mail: [shotchkiss@kansasfamily.com](mailto:shotchkiss@kansasfamily.com).

SRS/Addiction And Prevention Services provides funding for Kansas Family Partnership activities.



Kansas Family Partnership is a member of Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America.



Kansas Family Partnership is a member of National Family Partnership.



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