



Westlake Parent Connection

September 2005

News & Notes:

- WPC is a non-profit 501(C)(3) organization—your donations are tax deductible.
- Attend our regular monthly meetings October 5 at Porter Library—We meet the first Wednesday of the month September – May at 7:30 PM
- Email us if you'd like a free copy of the informational booklet **Recognizing Early-onset Mental Illness in Children and Adolescents** or a copy of **Keeping Your Kids Drug Free**. parentcon@wlake.org



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www.wlake.org/westlakeparentconnection

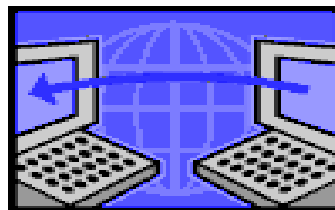
Parent to Parent Resource Guide Check it Out

WPC's Parent to Parent Resource Guide is a comprehensive on-line tool connecting parents to helpful information on a variety of hot topics.

Visit us online to learn more about:

- ⇒ Kids & Guns;
- ⇒ Internet Safety;
- ⇒ Bullying;
- ⇒ Helping Teens with Academic and Extra-curricular Pressures;
- ⇒ Teen Parties – hosting and attending;

- ⇒ Area Curfews;
- ⇒ Dating;
- ⇒ Warning Signs of Teen Depression, Suicide and Substance and Alcohol Abuse;
- ⇒ Where to go for Help.



Visit the WPC Parent to Parent Resource Guide at:

WWW.WLAKE.ORG/WESTLAKEPARENTCONNECTION

Help Wanted

If the WPC had a volunteer for every time we've heard, "What a great organization—keep up the good work!" then you wouldn't be reading this plea.

The truth is we are a great organization and we are committed to support healthy choices made for and by our children. Yet we are only a few able bodies, with

jobs and kids and other responsibilities. Please consider offering your talents to this worthy cause?

Consider these reasons why you should...

1. You'll be a creative force in a fast-growing and far-reaching organization.
2. You'll work side-by-side with

Did You Know?



The WPC webpage features a regular column by Resource Officer Scott Fortcamp, who's stationed at Westlake High School, Get updates on happenings at the schools and in our community. Tune into his column to:

- learn more about health and safety trends affecting our youth;
- get the facts on troubling situations;
- receive timely tips, or
- Email Scott questions.

Save the Date! WPC's Parent 411 Series

◆ Mon, October 17, 2005

7:00 p.m. Porter Public Library

“School Climate on Risky Behavior”

What the CWRU teen research says about our schools—Presenters:
Dr. Scott Frank & Mrs. Jean Frank, Case Western Reserve University

◆ Tues, November 15, 2005

7:00 p.m. WHS Performing Arts Center

New School, New Building-WHS”

Climate Check up for 9th grade and new to the school parents at
WHS—Q & A with a Panel led by Principal, George Scheckelhoff

◆ Thursday, November 17, 2005

7:00 p.m. LBMS Band Room

“New School, New Building-LBMS”

Climate Check up for 7th grade and new to the school parents at
LBMS—Q & A with a Panel led by Principal, Dave Newman

◆ Mon, January 9, 2006

7:00 p.m. Porter Public Library

“Are there bullies among us?”

How to help if your child is being bullied or is the bully—Presenter:
Maureen Mizerak, Executive Director, Conflict Resolution Center of
the Westshore, Inc.

◆ Tues, Feb 7, 2006

7:00 p.m. Porter Public Library

“What is Cutting?”

Self-mutilation and other destructive behaviors—Presenter: Kris Ja-
res, LISW, Teen Health Center Social Worker

◆ Mon, March 6, 2006

7:00 p.m. Porter Public Library

“Latest Information on Drugs & Our Kids” A Show & Tell for Par-
ents—Presenter: Agent In Charge Jeff Capretto, Westshore Enforce-
ment Bureau Drug Free Task Force.

◆ Tues, April 25, 2006

7:00 p.m. Porter Public Library

“Social Hosting”

What the law says about hosting teen parties. Presented by the Ohio
Parents for Drug Free Youth

Planning 2006 WPC Rummage Sale

Our annual rummage sale enables the WPC to promote and
conduct our Parent 411 Series and covers out operating ex-
penses.

Each year we are fortunate to have rooms filled with wonder-
ful treasures donated by our residents. We now have a loyal
following of shoppers.

Westlake's Church of the Redeemer will again open its doors
and turn over their community space for two days. Please
mark April 21 & 22, 2006 and help us by collecting your no
longer used treasures.

Helpful Hint:

*Set aside a spot in the
basement or garage to
store your donations for
the 2006 rummage sale*

The WPC and our energetic teens
from the High School look forward to
seeing you on shopping day!

Your Donations at Work...

So you write a check supporting the WPC—a wonderful
idea—but how is that money spent? We are glad you
asked, please read on...

The WPC uses support drive dollars to manage operating
expenses such as: printing and mailing and reminder post-
cards for upcoming events and maintaining our extensive
website.

Donations from organizations or grant funding helps with
specific programs or projects such as: professional presen-
tations, trainings, speakers or programming; informative
booklets and materials; videos and books for the WPC
public lending library; and any other one-time purchases
helpful in educating, networking or communicating with
parents in our community.

**WPC is a non-profit 501(C)(3)
organization-your donations
are tax deductible.**

WPC Launches Lofty Goals for 2005 School Year

As the WPC embraces a new academic year we look forward to the following goals:

- ◆ Promote the **Westlake Family Resource Guide** – a comprehensive on-line tool connecting parents to local and national resources
- ◆ Achieve comprehensive WPC community outreach to include **private, home and parochial school families**.
- ◆ Continue community-wide **diversity programming** efforts.
- ◆ Achieve **Family Pledge community-wide**.
- ◆ Initiate a **wellness coalition** that includes public and private members of the Westlake community.
- ◆ Expand fundraising efforts beyond our annual rummage sale and support drive to access foundation and grant dollars for specific programs and educational tools.

In My Opinion—Why NOT lower the drinking age? - Johanne Belzile

On July 17, 1984, President Ronald Reagan signed the national 21 minimum drinking age legislation. Hailed as one of the most effective anti-drunk driving laws ever passed Mothers Against Drunk Driving and members of Congress estimate that 20,000 young lives have been saved from highway crashes since the law was enacted.

John M. McCardell, a former University president, has publicly stated that the nation should consider lowering the legal drinking age to 18-years to cut down on college campus binge drinking.

Solving binge drinking by lowering the legal drinking age is a trivial approach to a far more complex problem, addressing the effects without considering the real causes. For proof look no further than to our northern neighbor, Canada, where the legal drinking age is 18 and their campuses are equally affected by binge drinking.

Binge drinking does not start in col-

lege, although it might be more prominent, but rather during middle and high school. As parents, educators, friends, coaches, heads of churches or local organizations and even college campus presidents we should start by setting an example.

Actions speak louder than words. When we ourselves break the law by either serving, allowing or not reporting under age drinking; how can we expect our children to uphold the law regardless of the legal drinking age?

No law will ever be a substitute for our moral responsibilities towards the generations to come. No doubt we have to change our approach to prevention as our students enter college and are no longer directly under our supervision.

However, there is still a legal issue to contend with not to mention all of the other risky behaviors that go along with underage consumption.

Are we to change the rules and regulations on college campuses because it's too hard to do our job? Throw in

the towel because it's too hard to keep fighting? I think not.

Can we make a difference? Absolutely:

Choose actions instead of social critique with empty words. Choose to put your reputation and your position in the community on the line to create change. Choose to look honestly at what is happening rather than looking the other way. Choose to do what is difficult.

This is how we teach our youth to become healthy and responsible citizens.

-Johanne Belzile is a parent of two college students and a middle schooler, and a founding member of the Westlake Parent Connection.

Please send your opinion pieces to parentcon@wlake.org

"No law will ever be a substitute for our moral responsibilities towards the generations to come."

WPC Book Review

Yes, Your Teen is Crazy—by Michael Bradley

The WPC has a lending Library—and this book is in it! Ask for it at parentcon@wlake.org

If you have a teenager living under your roof—RUN—don't walk to the nearest copy of Dr. Michael Bradley's book, Yes, Your Teen is Crazy.

Bradley, a psychologist, presents a simple argument: teenagers are basically nuts. And by using current brain research and 30 years of family counseling experience as his jumping-off point, his easy-to-read style, sense of humor and real-life examples make this a quick and helpful read.

While 95 percent of the brain develops in early childhood, the most advanced parts aren't completed until adolescence is nearly over. As a result, teens can appear unstable, dysfunctional and unpredictable, with temporarily impaired judgment and decision-making

processes.

Bradley introduces contemporary culture; the prevalence of sex, drugs and violence as issues that further impair the teen's cognitive thinking skills.

Bradley says parents do make a difference, and clearly explains how we can encourage and guide our kids through these tumultuous years.

Stressing that teens are still "children," Bradley encourages parents to respond like "dispassionate cops," teaching and remaining calm even when teens behave outrageously.

Bradley's admits his style might be

shocking and offensive at times, but his believable anecdotes, which are alternately poignant and humorous, zero in on real-life scenarios, showing parents how to respond when their teen is seemingly out of control.

Bradley draws a vivid picture of what teens are going through, and gives parents the tools to tackle contemporary issues together. - Dani Altieri Marinucci



A word from WPC President...Dani Altieri Marinucci

Under aged drinking—What is the big deal? We all did it—and a lot worse so why should I care if my kids have a few beers?

I grew up in the 70's: the legal drinking age was 18, pot was the drug of choice and smoking Marlboros was cool.

Parental controls in my Bay Village home were non-existent and I ran unhampered and unchecked throughout my teenage years. It's a miracle I didn't kill myself or

someone else as I careened recklessly through adolescence.

But times have changed and we know so much more now. We know our children's brains don't develop fully until they reach their early 20s and that alcohol use before that development occurs hampers their abilities enormously.

I'd be a fool not to allow my four children to benefit from today's research and science.

It is a fact—The more my husband and I let our kids know our expectations the more likely they'll think twice before making unhealthy choices.

And even if they make the choice to drink—chances are they'll drink less if they hear the sound of our voices whispering words of wisdom in their inner ear.

Kids will be kids—so we must be the adults.