



Southeast Harris Community Coalition



Bringing the pieces together to protect our youth and communities from substance abuse.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LOCAL FORUM URGES COMMUNITY TO RECOGNIZE THE LOCAL IMPACT OF UNDERAGE DRINKING AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Pasadena, TX – On September 22, 2009, from 7:00-9:00 pm, prevention experts, treatment and recovery experts, community leaders, and concerned citizens of Pasadena will be at Pomeroy Elementary, 920 Burke, Pasadena, TX 77506 to participate in an educational forum regarding underage drinking and drug abuse. The Southeast Harris Community Coalition in collaboration with Jenkins Village Neighborhood Association and the Pasadena Police Department is hosting this forum in an effort to educate and inform the community about the problem and consequences of underage drinking and substance abuse. It also will educate people about the positive effect that treatment and recovery can have on loved ones and the community's well-being, and celebrate people in recovery – as well as those who help them.

"It's time for Pasadena citizens to start helping their friends and neighbors by noticing the signs of addiction and offering places to turn for help," said Bobby Keen of the Pasadena Police Department.

During the *National Recovery Month Initiative* in September, communities across the country join together to help people recognize that substance use disorders are treatable diseases. Treatment and other recovery support programs are as effective as treatment for other chronic conditions. *Recovery month* aims to ensure that all those affected by addiction are aware of and can seek treatment so they can reclaim their lives in recovery.

With the support of guests, local businesses, and families, including Jenkins Village Neighborhood Association and Pasadena Police Department, will encourage people to raise public awareness of substance use disorders and seek to change the perceptions associated with treatment. In fact, fewer than 20 percent of Americans say that they would think less of a family member or friend who is in recovery from addiction to drugs or alcohol.

"This issue warrants immediate action. It's important to showcase the value of long-term recovery, because increased knowledge can help improve our community's health and safety, as well as alleviate addiction's damaging effects on our residents," said Liz Bias, president of the Jenkins Village Neighborhood Association.

Bias adds "This forum reminds us about the reality of this disease, the importance of making treatment accessible, and the advantages of prevention, communication and education, which can open doors to treatment, support, and long-term recovery."

"By working together as a community, we can foster awareness of addiction, treatment, and recovery and encourage those in our community to seek the services they need," said Bias.

For more information about the Coalition's prevention efforts, please contact Vanessa Ayala, Coalition Coordinator at vanessa.ayala@bacoda.com or 713-256-8746. The Coalition is a project of the Bay Area Council on Drugs and Alcohol (BACODA). BACODA is a community based substance abuse prevention organization that provides sustained leadership and support for the Southeast Harris Community Coalition. BACODA has provided comprehensive prevention/intervention services for over thirty years.

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