

*FH Coalition gets ready for new year

By Bob Burns
Times Reporter

The Fountain Hills Coalition has had a successful school year with its outreach programs, according to Coalition Director Carole Groux.

Groux made a presentation to the Town Council at its Aug. 16 meeting and highlighted some of the activities the coalition has sponsored or participated in over the past year.

She particularly highlighted the work with the Fountain Hills Unified School District with participation in Red Ribbon Day at the Middle School that included a DUI simulator and exciting speakers.

Groux also said the coalition has been present at a number of events including coffees, fairs and the Middle School Madness activities.

The coalition has established an "Above That" positive peer influence club at the middle school.

The Maricopa County Sheriff's Office has been an "amazing partner," according to Groux. The coalition works with MCSO to market the Text-A-Tip program

implemented last year.

Coalition members have participated in training by the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA), of which the Fountain Hills Coalition is a member.

Groux said coalition members have also worked in presentations and meetings with members of Congress to get their message across to lawmakers.

The Coalition is also making available Early Action Kits, which are drug testing kits parents can use at home.

The coalition helped sponsor a YABOY anti-drug production at Fountain Hills Youth Theater.

The coalition is also working to sign up parents for the Safe Homes Network in Fountain Hills, which provides a listing of community parents who have pledged not to host underage drinking parties.

More than 400 parents have signed up, and a new smart phone app was launched earlier this year to help accommodate the program.

Mayor Linda Kavanaugh and council members thanked Groux for her coalition work.

Medical marijuana Dispensary lottery winner speaks before Town Council

By Bob Burns
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When Mark Steinmetz stepped to the podium before the Town Council last week, he did so as a person surrounded by much quiet curiosity.

Steinmetz introduced himself as someone about to open a business in Fountain Hills, and then stated he is the medical marijuana dispensary registration certificate holder for the town.

Steinmetz's application was drawn in an Aug. 7 lottery by the Arizona Department of Health Services.

With his remarks at the council's call to the public, Steinmetz followed a presentation by the Fountain Hills Coalition, which has asked the town to cease paperwork associated with the potential dispensary.

Steinmetz said he has great admiration for the coalition's work and agrees with its mission of keeping alcohol and drugs out of the hands of young people.

The potential dispensary owner said the medical marijuana system is an adult program designed to provide a legitimate source of relief for patients with a variety of medical problems.

"We fully intend to follow the rules of the (AZDHS) and the state's medical marijuana act," Steinmetz said.

Steinmetz says he and other potential medical marijuana dispensary owners are waiting and watching the efforts of Arizona Attorney General Tom Horne and Maricopa County Attorney Bill Montgomery to stop the implementation of Arizona's medical marijuana law.

However, he is hopeful they will be able to open the dispensary here by the end of the year.

In an earlier communication with Mayor Linda Kavanaugh, Steinmetz provided biographical information on himself and his family.

He is a Scottsdale resident who moved to the Phoenix area in 2003 as a senior vice president/general manager with CBS Radio.

Steinmetz said he has spent the majority of his broadcasting career in Minneapolis. He was a manager for ABC Radio/Disney stations and was instrumental in starting

Radio Disney outlets as well as ESPN Radio.

Steinmetz said he takes great pride in the work of the KMLE-FM radio staff in efforts to raise \$1.2 million for Phoenix Children's Hospital.

He currently serves as a board member for the Walter Cronkite School of Mass Communications and Journalism at Arizona State University.

He adds that his family donates time to a variety of fundraisers and outreach programs such as Habitat for Humanity and Humane Borders.

In his letter to Kavanaugh, Steinmetz explains his commitment to medical marijuana.

"Although not a current patient or caregiver of (medical marijuana), I believe that big business has historically lobbied to demonize (medical marijuana) in their self-interest," Steinmetz said.

"We now know that (medical marijuana) eliminates suffering and is a treatment for a variety of serious illnesses and medical conditions.

"I am proud to play a credible role in pioneering the implementation of the (medical marijuana) dispensary model for the benefit of all Arizona registered patients who need this medicine."