



Dear Maria,

If you are like most people, you're probably thinking, "How in the world did it get to be December 2014 already?". Once again a new year brings new beginnings and commitments for the year ahead. One of the best resolutions we can make is to connect with our children in ways that build trust and confidence. Below are a few tips to help create a stronger more resilient teen:

1. Keep the promises you make. If you do not keep your word, acknowledge that. Help your teen understand the circumstances or choices that precipitated the change in your plans.
2. Answer your teen's questions and be consistent. When you notice behavioral changes in them, make yourself available and encourage them to talk about what is going on in their life.
3. Be understanding when they have a difficult time and let them know that you love them no matter what.
4. Be diligent. Have ongoing conversations with your kids about the risks of drugs and alcohol.

Every parent-child team has a different strategy to approaching the "drug talk," but the important thing is that yours emphasizes honesty and the trust between you. Preventing drug and alcohol abuse - or helping a loved one seek help for an addiction - can be facilitated by a simple, honest conversation. It is truly the way to a fresh start to the New Year.

CAFFEINE TO COCAINE: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE IN THE BRAIN?

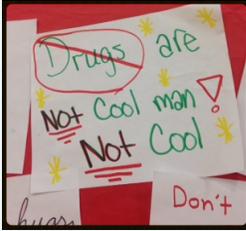


On November 17th, Dr. Stephen Dewey, a renowned neuroscientist and leading authority on substance abuse and the brain, spoke to parents on the impact different drugs have on the adolescent brain. The breakfast at Desert Canyon Golf Club highlighted the newest information that was unknown to most adults in attendance.

Later in the day, Dr. Dewey spoke to high school students during a luncheon on campus and shared research he collected over the last 24 years. Among the data presented were brain scans of those who have abused alcohol and drugs and how those substances had permanently altered the brain over time.

It was a very informative and educational presentation for parents and students alike.

EXCITING NEWS FOR MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS!



We are pleased to announce the first Annual Middle School Poster Contest beginning January 12th! This year's theme is LOVE YOURSELF: Staying Above the Influence.

Cash prizes will be awarded to 1st, 2nd and 3rd place along with a smoothie party for the classroom having the most entries. More details to follow!

The 2015 High School Essay Contest will soon be underway!



Once again, all high school students will be able to participate in an essay contest that will award prizes for 1st (\$500), 2nd (\$100) and 3rd (\$50) place along with 14 (\$25) Honorable Mention awards for the top essays. The contest begins January 5, 2015 culminating with an Awards Luncheon to be held February 13, 2015.

* Above contests are open to all Fountain Hills students currently enrolled in a middle or high school program including those in other districts, on line or home school. Required cover sheets and contest information will be available at the FH Library beginning December 22, 2014. For more information, please contact Maria at (480) 203-1568.

The FOUNTAIN HILLS COALITION WISHES YOU AND YOUR FAMILY
a **JOYOUS SEASON** and a **HAPPY, HEALTHY 2015!**



STAY CONNECTED

