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## What Would Drive an 8th Grader to Drink or Use Drugs? STRESS

A new report released by the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission shows that 40% of 8th graders report stress as a top reason for why they drank alcohol or used drugs like marijuana or prescription drugs. It was the third leading reason for drug use. While it may be hard to believe that 8th graders are using drugs or alcohol to cope with stress, it's important to understand what is causing their stress.

Another survey by TeensHealth.org shows that 1 out of 3 teens said that schoolwork issues and social issues caused the most stress followed closely by appearance issues. Other stressors for kids can be family issues, loss of a loved one or physical impairment.

The American Academy of pediatrics and Drugfree.org offer guidance to parents on how to help a child handle stress. Now that we know one of the top reasons why 8th graders use drugs or alcohol, here's one of the top reasons why they don't use and that's YOU. 65% of 8th graders in Arizona report they aren't using drugs because they don't want to disappoint their parents.

When our kids come home from a busy day, let's take the time to talk with them and listen to their concerns and help them find healthy ways to cope with stress or any unsettling feelings they might be having.

- [Click here to learn about how parents can help kids handle stress](#)
- [Click here for 3 Mindful Practices for Calm, Focused and Happy Teens](#)
- [Click here for School Stress: Healthy Stress vs. "Red Flag" Stress](#)

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## Middle and High School Contests are Underway!



Our 3rd Annual Above the Influence Middle School Poster Contest and 4th Annual High School Essay Contest kicked-off last month with great enthusiasm at FH Middle and Charter Schools and FH High School. Students have the opportunity to win up to \$200 and \$1,000 respectively for first place thanks to the generosity of the Verne C. Johnson Family Foundation.

We will be announcing all of our winners in our March newsletter so stay tuned!

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## Middle School Madness! 6th-8th Grade

The Town of Fountain Hills, MCSO and the FH Coalition invite middle school students to a fun night out Saturday, February 11th from 4:30pm-9:30pm. Students will enjoy dinner at In & Out Burger before seeing the ASU Sun Devils basketball team take on Stanford. It's FREE and space is limited to the first 40 teens to sign up. For more information, contact [cpovar@fh.az.gov](mailto:cpovar@fh.az.gov) or call 816-5170.



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## Thank You! Spotlight

The success of the essay and poster contests are due to a number of wonderful administrative and faculty members. Thank you to FHHS Principal Cain Jagodzinski and English teachers Mr. Sunshine, Mrs. Julian, Mr Keating, Ms Abdelitaf and Ms. Brown for their support in this year's high school essay contest.

Thank you to FHMS Principal Mrs. Gomez and the following teachers for their participation in this year's poster contest: Mrs. Collier, Ms. Danson, Ms. Day, Dr. Manes, Mr. Yoder, Ms. Haarala, Mrs. Kelly, Mrs. Nichols, Mr. Peterson, Mrs. Larsen, Ms. Price, Mr. Pugliano and Ms. Tallarida. Lastly, thank you to FH Charter School Principal/teacher Ms. Lorance for her continued enthusiasm in the poster contest.

Your devotion to all of our students is amazing and greatly appreciated!