

# Letter: Drug Store Project a community success

To the community,

“Choices, what are yours?” was the theme of our efforts in keeping our youth drug free. I want to thank the many agencies, service clubs, businesses, and volunteers who provided assistance with the 14th annual Drug Store Project event on April 4 at Lake Tahoe Community College.

Teaching our youth about the dangers of all drugs; marijuana, alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes, over-the-counter as well as prescriptive medications, gets more challenging each year as states provide new legislation and products are packaged to entice our minors. This year our 320 sixth-grade students had the assistance of over 200 volunteers to send a clear message that they are valued.

The agencies and groups who provided this program strongly believe that a difference can be made for our kids. Collectively we believe that if youth are provided knowledge about the effects drugs have on the body, the mind, family and social life, productivity, and overall life experiences, many more will choose not to experiment and not to participate in drug use. If we can collectively put off the “age of onset” to experimentation, then we can see a difference for our youth. Less drug use means less demand. Less demand is less costly in lives and in all facets of the economy.

We’re especially proud of the South Tahoe High School Friday Night Live members, themselves past participants in the program when younger, who took their day to emphasize to the younger youth that drugs do not need to be a part of their lives. They can “choose” to stay healthy and safe. We also continue to have the assistance of our California National

Guard assigned to the Joint Task Force Domestic Support – Counter Drug and Naval Air Station-Fallon military personnel.

Tahoe Youth & Family Services is the agency under which our program is based. It takes money and people to make this event happen for our youth. The Drug Store Project continues to be supported completely through donations, grants, and in-kind donations from businesses.

I'd like to extend my gratitude to the following entities:

Barton Health, California Conservation Corps, California Highway Patrol, CalStar, Cal Tahoe JPA, Camelot Party Rentals, Diamond Valley School, El Dorado Community Foundation, EDC District Attorney, EDC Mental Health, EDC Probation, EDC Public Defender, EDC Search and Rescue -Tahoe Team, EDC Sheriff's Office, EDC Sheriff's STAR, EDC Superior Court, Harrah's H.E.R.O.s, John Valverde-photographer, Joint Task Force Domestic Support-CD, Kiwanis Club of Tahoe Sierra, Lake Tahoe Community College, Lake Tahoe Resort , LTUSD, Lake Valley Fire Protection District, Lake Valley Firefighter's Association, Naval Air Station-Fallon, Nevada Funeral Services, Optimist Club of Lake Tahoe, Sierra Community Church, Soroptimist International of Tahoe Sierra, South Lake Tahoe Fire Department, South Lake Tahoe Police Department, South Lake Tahoe Police Officers' Association, South Tahoe Drug Free Coalition, STHS Friday Night Live, South Tahoe Middle School, Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District, Tahoe Douglas Rotary, Tahoe Turning Point, Tahoe Youth & Family Services, Zephyr Cove Elementary and the many amazing community volunteers.

We hope that you and your child openly discuss the dangers of all drugs on a regular basis. Get educated together and know what is happening in your community. We invite every parent of a child who experienced the program to take the time to complete the parent survey **online**. Your input will help our program for future years.

Gratefully,

**Lisa Huard, Drug Store project coordinator**