

Have a teenager? Stay 'connected'

Coalition offers parenting class

To help battle local substance abuse and underage drinking, the Fountain Hills Youth Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition has organized two programs geared toward parents.

The first is "Safe Homes Network" of Fountain Hills, a loose alliance of parents who pledge to keep their homes free of underage drinking and parties.

The second is "Staying Connected with Your Teen," a series of classes for parents of teens.

With the Safe Homes Network, participants pledge:

- * To not knowingly allow youths under 21 to consume or use alcohol or illegal drugs at their home, property or gatherings at other locations.

- * To provide reasonable

adult supervision for parties of underage youths at their home.

- * When out of town, to not knowingly allow children to host parties at the house involving underage youths.

- * To welcome and encourage contact from other parents whose children are gathering at their home.

Stay Connected

Parents who sign up for a session of "Staying Connected with Your Teen" will receive \$100.

There is a total of 10 hours in the workshops.

The program is being funded through a grant awarded the coalition by the Governor's Office for Children, Youth & Families – Division for Substance Abuse Policy.

Karen Whalen-Bayne of the coalition said the "Staying Connected with Your Teen" program teaches parents and teens skills to improve communication.

She added that the coalition selected this program because it is a science-based prevention program that is grounded in rigorous research from a variety of disciplines.

Families who participated in the program showed improvement in five critical areas -- prevention of substance abuse, improved family discipline practices, improved family supervision skills, improved family bonding and reduced family attitudes favorable to anti-social behavior.

The program consists of:

- * Real life strategies to increase bonding, reduce risk factors and increase protective factors resulting

in a more effective relationship with your teen.

- * Ideas for parents to supervise their teen while reducing arguments and accusations about invading your teen's privacy.

- * Techniques to assist parents with setting family policies on health and safety issues.

- * Tools and methods for effective family problem solving.

The first round of classes has already been held. Sign-ups are currently being taken for sessions in October, January, February and March.

All sessions are conducted in the Fountain Hills Unified School District Learning Center.

To sign up or for more information, contact Whalen-Bayne at (480) 639-0519 or e-mail her at karob@cox.net.