MONTHLY FOCUS

DRUG AWARENESS: RED RIBBON WEEK

October is the month to educate your families about the dangers of drug use. Drugs can take many forms: illegal drugs, prescription drugs, marijuana, alcohol, cigarettes, vaping and others. Use this month to educate your students about the dangers of these items. This is, also, a great time to inform your parents about all the ways that they can help.

The PTA has always supported Red Ribbon Week. Wearing a red ribbon in the month of October continues to represent our pledge to live drug free and honors the sacrifice of those that lost their lives in the fight against drugs.

In 1988, the National Family Partnership (NFP) first coordinated the first National Red Ribbon Week. Learn more about Red Ribbon Week and how to celebrate it here: (also contains a list of resources)

http://toolkit.capta.org/programs/popular-events/red-ribbon-week/

Red Ribbon activities are a great way to implement healthy lifestyles in your schools and community. Events like these are eligible to be submitted as an entry for the ‘Healthy Lifestyles’ Award for Thirty-Third District. Applications will be due in the spring. You may choose to submit another type of event, as well...your choice!

OTHER HAPPENINGS

Impacts of Air Pollution on Brain Health

The Community Engagement team at the Southern California Environmental Health Science Center (SCEHSC) has released an interesting infographic. A growing body of research suggests that the human brain may be impacted by air pollution across the lifespan. The community engagement core collaborated with scientists and community partners to summarize this emerging evidence using infographics, to expand the dissemination and reach of this information to local communities.
Impacts of Air Pollution on Brain Health

- Affects children by increasing risk of:
  - ADHD
  - Slower processing of information
  - Autism
  - Depressive and anxiety-like symptoms

- Affects adults by increasing risk of:
  - Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias
  - Cognitive decline
  - Parkinson’s disease
  - Stroke
  - Depression and depressive symptoms

Neuroinflammation

The brain’s response to infection, traumatic brain injury or toxins. It can delay brain maturation and lead to problems in:

- Learning
- Movement
- Decision making
- Planning
- Self-control
- Lower test scores
- Behavioral problems

Fine particulate matter (PM2.5) is one air pollutant that can harm the brain. Research has focused on the link between PM2.5 and brain health.

How air pollution affects brain development

- Blood Brain Barrier: Protects the brain from toxins in the blood. Air pollution may make this barrier ‘leaky,’ allowing toxins into the brain.
- Grey Matter: Made up of brain cells that control everything we do: muscle control, language, memory, emotions, and decision-making. Air Pollution may damage grey matter, resulting in cognitive and behavior problems.
- White Matter: Bundles of fibers called myelin. Myelin allows for faster processing of information. Air Pollution may damage myelin and slow the processing of information.

Strategies to reduce exposure to pollution levels that can protect brain health

- Check the air quality in your neighborhood:
  - Download the Air Quality/Alert/Visual app for hyperlocal air quality information
  - Check regional air quality on AirNow.gov

- Personal transportation choices
  - Take public transit and use human-powered transportation options when possible

- Connect with local organizations that work on these issues:
  - Improving air quality
  - Reducing pollution at homes & schools
  - Electrifying cars, trucks and diesel equipment to achieve zero-emissions
HEALTH RESOURCES

Parents and Child Helpline (Parents Anonymous & Gov. Newsom)
Parents Anonymous® Inc. launched the California Parent & Youth Helpline in partnership with Governor Gavin Newsom as part of his initiative to address the impacts of COVID-19.
https://caparentyouthhelpline.org/

Coping with Stress from COVID-19

Mental Health: Part of the Bigger Wellness Picture (California State PTA)
https://capta.org/focus-areas/health-safety/mental-health/

General Coronavirus Information (World Health Organization)
https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_1

Safe Schools During the Pandemic (American Academy of Pediatrics)

COVID-19 Information (County of Los Angeles Public Health)
http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/

National PTA Healthy Lifestyles Initiatives
https://www.pta.org/home/programs/Healthy-Lifestyles

NEXT MONTH

November 2021: Reducing Screen Time & Cybersafety
November is National PTA Healthy Lifestyles month!

CONTESTS & GRANTS

California State PTA releases Healthy Lifestyles Grant Applications
If you are interested in applying for a Program Grant in the area of healthy living, please click here: https://capta.org/pta-leaders/programs/grants-awards/

Hurry up, as these applications are due October 15th!
National PTA releases Healthy Minds information

The COVID-19 pandemic has put a spotlight on adult and children’s mental health, but it can be difficult to know how to really prioritize mental health and reduce the stigmas surrounding it. Mental health is an important part of everyone’s overall well-being. Although physical health tends to be talked about more frequently, mental health is just as important and is also directly linked to physical health. When we take good care of our bodies, we can sleep better and give our mind the nutrients it needs to stay healthy. When we take good care of our mental health, we can reduce aches, pains and digestive issues, which helps us feel better physically.

It is important to support the mental health of all children—before, during and after challenges arise. This means that mental health should be an everyday priority, woven into your families’ regular routines, and that all children (and parents!) should have access to the supports necessary to cope with the stresses of life.

Access the National PTA’s Healthy Minds resources at: PTA.org/HealthyMinds

THIRTY-THIRD
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