

# **ALLIANCE of BARRINGTON COMMUNITIES for DRUG EDUCATION**



## **PURPOSE OF ABCDE**

**ABCDE is a community action group made up of concerned citizens including professional social service and health representatives, parents, school personnel, students, clergy, police and other interested people who donate their time. It is organized for the purpose of preventing the use of alcohol and other drugs among school children in the Barrington area communities.**

To this end, ABCDE promotes awareness of the problem, informs parents and students of the potential dangers and symptoms of alcohol and other drug abuse, and supports those who take the position that the use of alcohol and other drugs among school age youth is inappropriate.

Major intervention and prevention objectives are to mobilize parental communication involvement at the parent-peer group level and to support school, police and other agency or organization prevention and intervention programs.

ABCDE does not duplicate any service provided by other agencies or organizations. Rather, the awareness and education that it provides makes existing groups stronger and more committed to the overall goal of prevention.

## **BACKGROUND OF ABCDE'S DEVELOPMENT**

School and community leaders have cooperated on drug abuse programs since early 1969 which resulted in the formation of the Drug Abuse Committee; in 1972 this effort culminated in the organization of Barrington Youth Services (BYS), which has been the chief source of crisis intervention and prevention services available to Barrington area students.

In 1980, a high school parent group was formed whose major goal was communication between the home, school and community; it sponsored several drug awareness/education workshops. In 1983, the school board and staff were seeking more effective alternatives for students involved in school-related incidences of substance use/abuse. A group of BYS and school officials traveled to Minnesota to observe several types of programs functioning effectively in Minneapolis schools and to formulate recommendations for our community. Barrington police and village officials adopted an ordinance which held parents responsible for children's drug-related offenses, supported by a Parents Who Care group.

In March 1983, Dr. Clyde Slocum, Superintendent of Schools (S.D. 220), called together representatives from village governments, police departments, parent, church, professional and service organizations to assess the extent of the student drug use/abuse problem, identify the community agencies in place to deal with such problems, and to develop a coordinated community action plan. By July 1983, a Steering Committee was planning an umbrella organization which would increase community awareness and bring greater cooperation and coordination among the various community programs providing prevention and intervention services. As that group began its work, "The Chemical People" network television program series was announced and the Steering Committee assumed the leadership responsibility for the local organization of that event. On October 27, 1983, the Barrington COURIER REVIEW published results of its drug use survey of high school and middle school students. The survey results "confirmed" that many Barrington area children use alcohol and other drugs regularly, especially alcohol, much like national survey results suggested. The publicity from the survey results set the stage for an excellent community reception of "The Chemical People" (CP) programs.

Over 1,600 people attended the two CP televised programs, which were set up at three locations in Barrington, connected via closed circuit cable (Centel) television. Following the first program, ten panel members, including three BHS students, told of the alcohol and other drug scene in Barrington. After the November 9, CP program, people in attendance were enlisted for committees which were set up according to CP recommendations. An Ad Hoc Steering Committee developed a set of By-Laws and proposed a slate of officers and board of directors with broad community representation. ABCDE became an official umbrella task force to combat student use of alcohol and other drugs on December 8, 1983. It has a not-for-profit 501 3 (C) status.

To celebrate its tenth year, the ABCDE board of directors re-dedicated and re-committed its efforts to provide community awareness and response to the needs of youth in an effort to intervene and prevent high risk behavior.

Beginning with a group of ten, including the Superintendent of Schools, teachers, counselors, a school board member and a parent, attended a 5½ day training workshop at Community Intervention, Inc., in Minneapolis, MN. Several other representative groups went to Minnesota and then, in 1985, Community Intervention, Inc., was invited to provide a four day workshop during summers in Barrington. Funds to cover cost of tuition, food and supplies have been raised by ABCDE for any parent, school personnel, police or other person who lives or works with Barrington area youth. The focus of the workshop is to understand the disease of alcohol-drug addiction and cultural aspects and effects of it on children, families and community, with the understanding that all skills and tools can be translated to other addictions and high risk behaviors of youth. A community panel presents the local resources and networking possibilities. In 1994, the workshop was reduced to three days and included information on eating disorders.

Continued sponsorship of the summer workshop and provision of panel programs when indicated fulfill the goal of awareness and education. Board meetings, which are open to anyone, bring together school, parents, and community representatives to continually update, suggest ideas and provide networking opportunities to all who work or live with children in the geographic area of School District 220.