

Talk about health with kids

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To the editor:

This year marks the fifth annual Chemical Health Week: Faith Communities as Caring Communities. The Chemical Health Initiative is eager to have all faith communities across Goodhue County mark this special week with activities that highlight chemical health.

The focus of the Chemical Health Week is parent-child communication.

The CHI encourages faith organizations around Goodhue County to incorporate chemical health into their services and faith gatherings the week of April 4-10 through bulletin announcements, CHI Sunday/Week posters, bulletin inserts and youth handouts. These materials can be found on the faith leader page of the CHI website at: www.chi-goodhue.org/faithbasedorgs.php.

Both national and local research data confirm that parental disapproval is a significant determinative factor in a child's decision not to use alcohol or drugs. When parents discuss the harmful effects of alcohol and drugs upon a young person's physical and mental well-being, children are less inclined to become involved in risky alcohol and drug behaviors. The evidence is clear that parental disapproval of underage drinking and illegal drug use is a critical factor for raising healthy children.

We are asking all of our faith community leaders to take a moment during the worship services over the week of April 4-10 to encourage parents/grandparents/aunts/uncles within the congregation to talk about chemical health with their families. We also encourage your organization to include chemical health awareness into your other faith activities during the week such as Sunday school classes, confirmation classes, Bible study groups and other related activities.

"Start Talking Before They Start Drinking" is more than a catchy byline. The basic reality underlying successful child rearing in all of its variety of forms is parent-child communication. Affirming parents' understanding that dialogue between parents and children is critical to healthy outcomes for children is a highly effective prevention strategy. Chemical Health Week 2011 aims to send the clear message to parents that it's never too early or too late to begin the healthful habit of regular conversations with children about healthy living.

Carmen Nesseth

Kenyon-Wanamingo CHI Board-Faith Sector