

From the Desk of the School Social Worker...

Substance Abuse Awareness

Every year, Volusia County Schools participates in the **National Red Ribbon Week** awareness campaign. During this week, there are opportunities for students, parents, teachers, and others to join together to address the alcohol, tobacco, drug, and violence related concerns in our community. This year, Red Ribbon Week is from **October 24th to October 28th**.

While marijuana and alcohol are the most commonly abused drugs by our youth, there is a disturbing trend emerging. Both nationally and locally, there has been an increase in the illegal use and abuse of prescription medications. Three classes of drugs are most often abused: opioids (pain-killers), central nervous system depressants (used to treat anxiety and sleep disorders), and stimulants (most commonly used to treat Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). The abuse of these drugs has extremely serious health consequences that can result in dependence, and in some cases, death.

Most children who abuse prescription drugs admit getting them from family or friends. You can help protect your child by talking to them about the dangers of prescription drug abuse. Take an inventory of your medications and monitor them to ensure that nothing is missing. Dispose of old and unused medications. Share your concerns by talking with the parents of your child's friends. And, most importantly, if you suspect your child has a substance abuse problem or may be experimenting with any of these substances, seek professional help as soon as possible.

Your school social worker is a resource for students and families. Please feel free to contact your school social worker, Jamie Majors, at 322-6201 ext.34280, for help with accessing drug and alcohol treatment services, social service assistance, counseling services, medical insurance, referrals to community resources, or if you need help with your child's academic, behavioral, or emotional concerns. You may also e-mail any concerns to your social worker at jnmajors@volusia.k12.fl.us.