

CORAL GABLES GAZETTE

ggazette.com

JUNE 3-9, 2004

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Informed Families helps children become adults

In response to the Informed Families article (May 13-19), I would like to comment on the 22-year old mission of Informed Families: Helping kids grow up safe, healthy, and drug-free.

There is supporting evidence that stronger family interaction can mean a lower inclination to abuse drugs.

According to a NIDA research study to determine the extent parental influence plays on teen substance abuse reinforces the fact that teen drinking and smoking does not occur in a vacuum. Dr. Bruce Simons-Morton, lead author of the study, further observes

that one way to help teens resist negative influences is by parents showing respect, keeping informed about their teen's life, and establishing clear behavioral expectations.

The parental involvement message is one that all parents should heed. An organization that is encouraging parents to not only listen but act is Informed Families/ The Florida Family Partnership. Informed Families is working to ensure that parents and teens begin to take serious steps in accepting each other's responsibilities in the fight against drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. Through

the "Safe Homes/Safe Parties" program, parents agree to sign pledges to set guidelines for their children's behavior and encourage drug-free and alcohol-free activities.

The challenge for organizations such as Informed Families is to find effective ways of reaching not only the parents but also their children. Hopefully, the message will be well received by both parties within the family unit.

MARINO E. CARBONELL
*Board of Directors,
Informed Families
South Miami*