

Nonprofit Chamber of Services Nonprofit of the Week

This series has been established with the intent of increasing awareness of the many causes and efforts taken on by our nonprofit brethren. If your nonprofit has a particular event taking place during the course of a week, an anniversary for example, please make this known and we will do all possible to accommodate a spotlight that coincides. On behalf of our membership, we wish to say “thank you” for taking a few moments from your busy schedule to learn a bit more about our community of nonprofits.

The **Regional Prevention Center (RPC)**, 1421 E. Second, wants to break the cycle. Studies show the first use of controlled substances to be around age 12. In addition, these behaviors bring about an entire world of problem behaviors such as missing school, fighting and low school performance. Their mission is three-fold: primarily to build coalitions, offer direct support services and operate a library.

The Center is in its 36th year of helping children and adolescents avoid addicting behaviors. The program was started by the Presbyterian Church as an alcohol and drug prevention program. They have been in their present location, a converted 1916 mansion, since the early 1990's.

Some of the coalitions the RPC support include the Substance Abuse Coalition of Wichita, Derby Drug-Free coalition, Haysville Drug Free coalition, the Return Offender Support Coalition, Tobacco Free Wichita, Safe Streets, Wichita Independent Neighborhoods, and an Infrastructure that seeks to pool efforts of other agencies with similar interests to create synergistic teams focusing on problem behavior issues.

A Reward & Reminder program is used to reward the owners/clerks of retail stores which consistently check identification of children attempting to buy tobacco products. The clerk is rewarded with certificates to movie theaters. The direct services offered include: Strong Family Ties Initiative, Wichita Promise Youth Council and the Good Gang. The Strong Family Ties Initiative mentors the children of incarcerated parents. As 80% of these children are destined to spend their life times in prison, the partnership teaches life skills and meets with these youth weekly. The Wichita Promise Youth Council is an organization of high schoolers from Sedgwick County. The Council is presently working on polling other high schoolers on what issues are important to them, how they can affect them, and plans to present this information to the City Council and local government officials. The Good Gang is a program designed to replace the negative effects of gangs with positive effects by offering activities to 8 to 18 year olds on Thursday nights at the Atwater Center. The Regional Prevention Center keeps an extensive library of video tapes and brochures on all topics of substance abuse.

Danny Walters, the executive director, is a retired U.S. Air Force officer with experience in aerospace quality control. He has been the director for almost three years. His experience fit in with the needs of the Center as he has brought process improvement and changes for the better.

On Tuesday, March 28, 2006, a town hall meeting will discuss the issue of underage drinking. The “Wichita Prevention of Underage Drinking Town Hall Meeting” will be held at the WSU Metroplex at Oliver and 29th North from 3:30 – 7:00 p.m.

For more information, look at rpcwichita.org or please call (316) 262-2421.