



Big Business of Synthetic Drugs

After gaining popularity in Europe several years ago, synthetic marijuana quickly began to catch on in the U.S. Now “fake pot” products like K2 and Spice have become part of the growing synthetic drug trend. The U.S. and other countries have struggled to get ahead of this wave by banning chemicals often used in these drugs; 32 states have passed laws and another 18 have legislation pending. However, as quickly as chemicals are banned, new ones are developed to take their places. Scott Collier, a diversion program manager with the DEA, estimates that there are at least 1,000 synthetic drug makers in the U.S. and that that number only includes those with recognizable brands. One manufacturer in Missouri sells about 41,000 packets of synthetic marijuana each month and projects that he will generate \$2.5 million in revenue this year. Although the main ingredient is a synthetic form of THC, the product is marketed as “incense” and can be purchased on the internet and in gas stations and convenience stores. Rick Broider, president of the North American Herbal Incense Trade Association, estimates that these products generate close to \$5 billion each year. While synthetic cannabinoids are the most common, products mimicking the effects of other drugs like meth, cocaine and LSD have also gained popularity. Read MSNBC’s article [“The big business of synthetic highs”](#) for more.

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News & Updates

Happy holidays from everyone here at PRIDE Youth Programs! We hope that you have a happy and safe holiday season and that you are able to enjoy time spent with family and friends!

After the holidays, deadlines for PRIDE2012 will begin approaching rapidly. Please remember that Adult Volunteer and PRIDE Guide applications are due on January 13 and Award nominations and applications for Challenge, Talent Show and workshops are all due on January 27. Please feel free to call or email the office with any questions.

PRIDE2012: Imagine!

Special thanks to Jen Pintar from Iosco PRIDE for suggesting our official PRIDE2012 conference theme: Imagine. We think this is a great theme for our 35th anniversary and encompasses what conference is all about: imagining safer communities full of positive youth leadership, imagining a world free of the tragedy of substance abuse and violence, imagining all the positive things each of us can do to make a difference...and then being ready to make all those things a reality! We look forward to joining together with you in Toledo to celebrate PRIDE’s rich history and look forward to an exciting future!

What You Don’t Know

Looking for a simple team activity that focuses on sending positive messages? Try “What You Don’t Know”: Tape a piece of paper to each team member’s back and give each person a marker (use markers that will not bleed through the paper). Explain that when people talk behind others’ backs, the result is often gossip, rumors and negativity. However, people can make a choice to avoid gossip and instead focus on sending positive messages to those around them. Ask each team member to write one positive statement on each person’s paper. You may want to ask them to avoid complimenting physical attributes (like “you have nice hair” or “your eyes are pretty”) and instead focus on character traits like kindness, friendliness, hard work or generosity. When everyone is done, team members can remove their papers and read the messages.

“Gift suggestions: To your enemy, forgiveness. To an opponent, tolerance. To a friend, your heart. To a customer, service. To all, charity. To every child, a good example. To yourself, respect.” –Oren Arnold