Teen Social Problems Essay, Research Paper

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There are many social problems that teenagers go threw. I think the two most recognized problems are Teenage Drinking and Driving, and Teen Suicide. These two social behaviors teenagers go threw are two of the leading causes of teenage death in the state of New Mexico. Alcohol, the most widely used and abused drug among youth, causes serious and potentially life-threatening problems for this population. “New Mexico holds one of the nation?s highest DWI (Driving While Intoxicated) rates” (Ulibarri, 1999). Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for teenagers in New Mexico. Society must now face several questions, why do teens drink, what are the results of teen drinking and driving, and how can society change this pattern. Every year hundreds of teens die in the state New Mexico. Teen suicide is the fastest growing killer of youth in America and if left unaddressed it will affect are future generations.

Why do teenagers drink alcohol? Peers play the major role in shaping attitudes about alcohol use. Prior to this time, television and movies played the most influential role. The attitudes of parents toward alcohol correlated strongly with the attitudes of their children. There are several reasons why teenagers give to drinking alcohol which include recreation, rebellion, relieve depression, fatigue, and boredom. Also because they have personal problems at home that make them turn to alcohol. Other reasons are a loved one passing away, fighting with parents, divorce, and separation of family. The

main factor of teenage drinking is influence from their peers. Teenagers in our society are pressured into trying out alcohol for the first time to see how it tastes like. If they give in to their peers they become part of the group, but if they do not they are not accepted into the group.

As a result of teens being under the influence of alcohol, they are not aware that once they get behind the wheel they are risking their lives and the lives of other innocent people on the road. Teenagers think it?s cool to drink and drive. They feel nothing will happen to them. A survey concluded, “Males having higher rates of daily drinking and binge drinking than females, but these difference are diminishing. While white students report the highest levels of drinking, Blacks report the lowest, and Hispanics fall between the two” (Alcohol Alert, 1999). The causes that lead them to automobile accidents are driver inexperience, driving late at night, having consumed alcohol, speeding, youthful risk, and driving during emotional stress. Many programs are being offered to educate teenagers and people on how to prevent alcohol-related accidents. The gentleman that came to talk to us on DWI related accidents had very interesting facts on Rio Arriba County. I found it vary informative. In Rio Arriba County there is a DWI course being offered to anyone interested in developing strategies to prevent DWI from occurring by informing teens the DWI penalties, and laws in New Mexico, what happens in a DWI arrest and trial, and what the blood alcohol concentration level is. Education can help teens become aware of the consequences of drinking and driving. Yet effective ways of dealing with teen drinking and driving are formal treatment. Teens can be taken to visit a

Rehabilitation center, which is a process of putting the treatment plan into action. It consist of (1) education, (2) Group therapy, (3) life story, (4) individual therapy, (5) peer assessment, (6) recreational therapy, (7) coping skills and relaxation therapy, (8) support group attendance, and (9) spiritually. Rio Arriba County is one of six communities across the nation to participate in the Rapid Responses Team Pilot Project, which is designed to study whether a team of experts can work with community members to develop effective ways of reducing underage drinking. The teams are comprised of one expert from each of the following profession: law enforcement, education, prevention, public policy, and strategic planning.

Every year thousands of teens die in the United States, not from cancer or car accidents, but by their own hand; they make the choice that they want to die, and they take their life. Suicide is the fastest growing killer of youth in America ( HYPERLINK http://www.yellowribbon.org) www.yellowribbon.org) , and “if left unaddressed, it will help bring about disastrous consequences for the United States. Teenage suicide is indeed a great plight in the United States. It is the eighth leading cause of all deaths in the country; third for persons aged 15 to 24 (Waters and Ingressia). Statistics show that more than 13 of every 1000,000 teenager took their life in 1998, and that number is rising every year. In fact suicide kills teens 3 to 6 times more than homicide. Although suicide rates over the past 40 years are relatively stable, the incidence of suicide among 15-24 years olds has tripled, while the rate among 15-19 year olds has quadrupled (Garner and Rosenberg). The numbers of deaths by teen suicide are rising quickly, and it must be stopped. Why is it

that teenagers are committing suicide? There are many factors which lead teenagers today to take their own life. There is the social environmental factor, which suggest that the greater access to firearms has caused a rise in the death of teens. Teenagers can easily kill themselves with such deadly weapons as guns. Suicide is genetically influenced. It may be the result of an underlying personality or predisposition to mental illness that is inherited. One other cause is the imitative thinking of our youth (Garner and Rosenberg). The two major causes of teen suicide are the homphopic sentiments of the people and struggles within the family unit. Struggles and problems within the family are also a big factor of teen suicide. Youngsters who commit suicide are somewhat more likely to come from a “broken” home than are youngsters of the same ethnic group but about half lived with both biological parents at the time of the death. ( HYPERLINK http://www.spanusa.org) www.spanusa.org) . The absence of a strong relationship to parent-child friction and a significant excess of poor parent-child communication also lead to teen suicide. What can be done to cripple the rise in teen suicide? According to the National Strategy for Prevention of Suicide there are three steps in the fight against the problem access, illumination, and methodology. They suggest that access to services and programs dealing with the issue must be enhanced, the public?s awareness be broadened or illuminated, and the scientific approach to the problem be continued ( HYPERLINK http://www.afsp.org) www.afsp.org) . I think that the problem is still not being addressed as it should be. Many teenagers are still dying. At least, the government has now recognized that teen suicide is a national problem and measures for it are now in the works. Teen suicide is a grave national problem indeed. It has taken the lives of many American youth already.

In conclusion Society is coming to understand that there is a major social problem with teenagers drinking and driving and teen suicide. In regards to teens drinking and driving, society can change the behavior of teenagers who drink and drive by using community involvement and educating our youth about dire consequences of drinking and driving. We must look towards igniting and mobilizing the passion, energy, imagination, and idealism of our youth to make a real difference. I do hope with future changes in society, the issues of Teenage drinking and driving will be addressed and community solutions will be found for our youth. It is our role and responsibility to become involved in our youth because they are our future.

Teen suicide is a grave national problem indeed. It has taken the lives of many Americans youth already. The future of America?s next generation is at stake. Let us take action now before it is too late, before the teen suicide epidemic devours the whole nation. In other words, let?s deal with the problem. First, let?s recognize it. Then let?s become aware about it. After that, let?s take action to diminish it.

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