

Inside this issue:

New Era, New Problems	1
Quarterly Corner	2
Go Green For Teens	2
Your 'Teachable Moment'	2
What A Year!	3

NEW ERA, NEW PROBLEMS

Technology is a two-edged sword. It brings great benefits and presents serious risks. On one hand, technology allows us to lead more convenient lives. Information can be obtained in seconds and loved ones contacted immediately: by text, email, cell phone or twitter. Travel takes hours instead of days, and live television can be rewound to see that amazing play one more time. On the other hand, technological advancements have opened up new avenues for predators and reduced our ability to communicate with one another face to face. It exposes children to violence and sexual situations often with very little oversight or regulation. All our iPods, cell phones, palm pilots and nano technologies encourage us to tune in, listen up, get wired and distract us...In other words, technology allows us to avoid ourselves, our own thoughts and the blessing of silence.

As each week passes we are presented with new ways that technology can be corrupted. This is compounded by a legal system that has a hard time staying current with all the technological advances and abuses.

Remember when the telephone was the marvel of the modern world? The idea that one person could clearly communicate with

another, separated by thousands of miles, revolutionized modern society. When that technology became mobile, the possibilities for social growth seemed limitless. Now we have a mobile phone device capable of computer functions that is affordable to the general public. Remarkable as this is, it comes with a dark side as well. This brings us to the newest issue for the citizenry and legal system to deal with: "sexting". "Sexting" is the act of sending nude or semi-nude pictures of one's self to another person via camera phone. This issue takes on layers of legal and moral complexity when engaged in by minors.

In a nationwide survey conducted by the National Campaign to Support Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, 20% of teens admitted to taking part in "sexting". Around the country, recent incidents have led to high profile court cases representing perplexing challenges for lawmakers. Take for example a recent case in Pennsylvania in which three teenage girls sent nude photos of themselves to three male classmates. All six teens have been charged with receiving or disseminating child pornography, because of the age of the girls in the photos. If convicted under the current law, all six teens would have to register as



sex offenders, a label that would follow them for the rest of their lives. Is this appropriate given the age and intent of the perpetrators? The legal community needs to address the issue. Until then, the burden is on parents, educators, and involved adults to establish some oversights and guidelines. If you have a child who has access to a cell phone or computer please take the following tips into consideration.

- Talk with your child on a regular basis. Educate them about the dangers while you reinforce and empower them to make the right choice. The more you communicate, the more you will know about their lives, their friends, and their activities. These discussions can help establish values and expectations as well as improve your child's self-esteem.
- Check the call, text, and picture logs on their cell-phone or computer on a random schedule.

- Set the expectation with your child to monitor their use, ahead of time so that they know you have the right to do so, and that it will be a condition of usage.
- Place a net managing service on the computer/phone account your child uses. More importantly, supervise their usage while they are using it.
- Put the computer in a public room of your house. Consider removing the option to send and receive texts, picture texts, files, or IM's from your child's cell-phone plan.

We, the adults, need to make it our business to know the who, what, where, and when of our children's activities. Technology will continue to advance, and so will the problems related to it. No matter how advanced things become, they can't replace our obligation to oversee, control, and protect ourselves and our families from it.

QUARTERLY CORNER

June brought the close of another successful school year here at MaineTeenTalk. Our program was offered in twenty different high schools across the state, and reached close to two thousand students. The program also had the opportunity to present its curriculum to teens at the Long Creek Youth Development Center, Youth Alternatives Program and Sweetser. The research data gathered this year continues to help shape our content. The feedback from teachers and students has been overwhelmingly positive.

As our summer phase begins, the educators and staff are faced with several challenges to refine and improve the program for next fall. One such project is a revision of the student workbook. As the issues facing teens continue to develop, it is important for MaineTeenTalk to stay up to date with the most current research. The new workbook will help students receive the best possible Healthy Relationship course available.

All of us at MaineTeenTalk would like to say a huge thank you to all of the schools, administrators, teachers, and specialists who helped make our year a success. We look forward to continuing partnerships in your schools and an exciting 2010-2011 school year!



YOUR 'TEACHABLE MOMENT'

It is no secret that people experience stress on a daily basis. One only needs to review their own day to know that stress levels rise and fall from one situation to the next. When you couple everyday stress with issues such as social unrest, increased crime, economic distress, armed conflict, global pandemics, and environmental concerns, it becomes clear why divorce, suicide, domestic violence, road rage, and deadly crime have all shown increases in recent years. Factor in life's normal losses and the potential for each of us to experience grief and loss is on the rise.

People experience loss in many ways. For some, it could be the death of a person close to them. For others, it could be the loss of a relationship. For too many, lately, it has been the loss of a job or way of life. When faced with a loss, we all engage in the universally human experience of the grieving process. This experience is unique to each individual and situation. There is no set time frame for how long the process will last, nor is there a clear definition of what "over" looks or feels like. It is even possible for the same person to experience grief differently each

time. Successfully navigating one experience holds no guarantees for success with the next loss. At MaineTeenTalk, helping students to understand and recognize grief is an important part of creating and maintaining a healthy relationship over a life time. There are several things we suggest people consider.

- Remember grieving is normal. It is important, and it is okay.
- Grief can often make a person feel isolated. It is important to reach out, ask for, and accept help when we are grieving. Reach out to others who are grieving as well.
- It is not a weakness, but a sign of strength and courage, to seek counseling during times of grief. Treatment can be an effective tool for dealing with the intense emotions associated with grieving.
- Medication does not assuage grief. Listening to yourself, paying attention to your feelings, taking care of yourself and not judging yourself are all useful tools for coping with grief. Antidepressants can help with depression, which is often a side effect of grieving, but only

Grieving is normal, it is important, and it is okay!

Go Green For Teens!

In today's tight economy and go "green" world, MaineTeenTalk is proud to partner with CLYNK to accomplish two goals with one good deed. The "Go Green For Teens" initiative is a great way to help the community reduce, reuse, and recycle while helping support MaineTeenTalk's Healthy Relationship Education program. By donating your refundable cans and bottles in a specially coded bag, to any CLYNK location, MaineTeenTalk receives the value of the refundables. We use that money to help support our Healthy Relationship program.

MTT has already turned in close to 50 bags of cans and bottles. We have received support from private donors, as well as local businesses such as Sebago Brewing Company in Scarborough, Sebago Brewing Company in the Old Port, IDDEX Laboratories, Glacial Media, FallBrook Wood Assisted Living Center, and Grille 233. If you are interested in donating your cans and bottles to help support the continuation of Healthy Relationship Education in the State of Maine, please take your refundable items to one of the CLYNK stations nearest you. CLYNK stations are conveniently located in Hannaford Supermarkets across the state. CLYNK is the innovative drop and go bottle return system that is fast, clean and smart. To find a CLYNK location near you please visit CLYNK's website at www.clynk.com. For more information on MaineTeenTalk's cutting edge Healthy Relationship program please visit us at www.maine-teentalk.org or call us at 207-699-2464. Thank you ahead of time for **your** support!



time, and sometimes assistance, can bring closure.

For more information on how to cope with grief please visit
www.mayoclinic.com
www.webhealing.com
www.growthhouse.org
www.centering.org



MAINE TALK.ORG

1321 Washington Ave Suite 302
Portland, Maine 04103

Phone: 207-699-2464
Fax: 297-878-0576
best4teens.org

What A Year!

Thank you to the following schools and organizations for making the 2008-2009 academic year such a huge success!

- Belfast Area High School
- Bonney Eagle High School
- Casco Bay High School
- Cheverus High School
- Cony High School
- Deering High School
- Deering High School ACO
- George Stephens Academy
- Georges Valley High School
- Hall-Dale High School
- Hampden Academy
- Kennebunk High School
- Lisbon High School
- Long Creek Youth Development Center
- Madawaska High School
- Portland Arts and Technology High School
- Portland High School
- Portland High School ACO
- Schenk High School
- Skowhegan High School
- St. Dominic's Regional High School
- Sumner High School
- Sweetser
- Westbrook High School
- Yarmouth High School
- Youth Alternatives Program

We can't wait to include more of you on this list !

