



One community where residents are celebrated for their diversity and are engaged, informed and empowered to attain ...and maintain a good quality of life.

March 24, 2008

Dear Community Leader,

I am writing to invite you to participate in an important, action-oriented grassroots initiative One East Palo Alto (OEPA) is coordinating to call attention to and address longstanding problems of **Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs (ATOD)** in the East Palo Alto community. Thanks to a contract with the Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) unit of San Mateo County's Behavioral Health and Recovery Services Division, OEPA has joined forces with a core group of local organizations including Free At Last, Bay Area Community Resources/New Perspectives and El Concilio of San Mateo County to create a comprehensive community-wide ATOD prevention plan.

We need your help with this important initiative. If you agree that attention to ATOD problems in the EPA community is long overdue, then please get involved! Our community is overrepresented in the data on drug use and drug abuse. It is also in dire need of prevention services, as well as intervention and other direct services that together will enable us to eliminate this problem. You can begin getting involved by coming to and participating in the following very special event:

One East Palo Alto's 1st Quarterly Membership Meeting
"Alcohol and Other Drugs in Our Community: The Impact on
You and Your Family"
Tuesday, April 1, 2008, 6:00pm to 8:30pm
@ College Track 1877 Bay Road, East Palo Alto, CA

This is only the beginning of how we can work together to prevent substance use and promote a healthier community. According to the *One East Palo Alto Community Survey* (March 2004), drug use and crime rank high among East Palo Alto residents' safety concerns. Sixty five percent of survey respondents reported that they feel unsafe in their community and 43% said drug-related issues were their number one concern. East Palo Alto youth have echoed similar safety and health concerns. At Bay Area Community Resources' (BACR) New Perspectives program, youth have consistently cited ATOD problems as being one of the highest priority youth concerns. We need to take action to address these problems today.

Another way you can get involved in this initiative is to become part of the East Palo Alto Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Steering Committee (EPAATODSC). The EPAATODSC's purpose is to design and establish an ATOD prevention partnership amongst community agencies in East Palo Alto. The Committee will create a prevention strategy and a comprehensive ATOD implementation plan for East Palo Alto in which ATOD service providers will play a major role. The Steering Committee meets the second and fourth Wednesday morning of every month at 10:30 am to develop the prevention plan. If you are interested in participating in EPAATODSC, please call or email OEPA Community Organizer Julio Garcia (650-330-7467 or jgarcia@lepa.org) to sign up.

Please complete the attached survey to give us your input on what we should do about alcohol and other drugs in our community and return it to One East Palo Alto by 5:00pm this Friday, March 28, 2008. I look forward to seeing you on April 1st or soon thereafter.

Sincerely,

Faye C. McNair-Knox, Ph.D.
Executive Director