

U NEED 2 KNOW

By the North Hawaii Drug-Free Coalition

Heading off summertime blues

School's out for summer, and kids are ready to kick back and enjoy some free time. But for tweens and teens old enough to be home alone, too much free time can lead to a first experience with drugs and alcohol.

In fact the summer months, June and July, are when *most* first-time use occurs, according to a recent National Survey on Drug Use and Health from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. U Need 2 Know that the odds tend to be against good choices during these months, and take steps to turn that around.

We already know that kids whose parents talk to them about drugs and alcohol are less likely to use them, so why not use summertime as something to talk about?

Major league help. To help get the conversation started, Partnership for a Drug Free America has put together a new "Take Time to Talk—Healthy Competition" kit in cooperation with the Major League Baseball Players Association. Geared towards active to athletic kids, the website features videos from Torii Hunter of the LA Angels, Phillies pitcher Jamie Moyer, and Yankee first baseman Mark Teixeira among others. It also includes a downloadable kit with lots of examples for different scenarios and tips on talking to kids—not just for parents and caregivers, but grandparents, older siblings, aunties, uncles, teammates and long-distance family. www.timetotalk.org/healthycompetition/pdf/TTT_MLBPA.pdf

Get physical. Communication is key, but outdoor activities, shared sports, and outings to interesting places can be full of "teachable moments," plus offer some fun family time and exercise too. Not only that, recent research from the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill found that "physically active adolescents are not only improving their health – they also are decreasing the chance that they will get into trouble....The study found that teens who participate in a wide variety of physical activities, *particularly with their parents*, are at decreased risk for drinking, drugs, violence, smoking, sex and delinquency, compared to teens who watch a lot of TV."

North Hawaii offers a wide variety of summer activities for kids and families. Many are still available this year and many are free or low-cost.

Golf. Almost every public golf course has a junior rate, with an accompanying adult player. From June 1 to July 31, Waikoloa Beach Resort offers "Waikoloa Family Days" after 3:30 p.m. for only \$50 adult, \$25 junior (under 17), which includes cart, bottled water and rental clubs for the junior. The Hilton Waikoloa Village has a 30,000 sq. ft. "Seaside Putting Course," open to the public 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. daily. And the Mauna Lani Bay Hotel and Bungalows has an actual 9-hole Keiki Course, designed for juniors 18 and under, open daily 10:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m., for only \$35 adult, \$25 junior. Waimea Country Club takes it a step further, with a very special "First Tee" junior program for only \$25 *per year*, that includes golf coaching, life coaching, play and more.

Tennis. If golf is not your kids' thing, HPA has an ongoing series of tennis camps through August at the Rutgers Tennis Center. "Mini-Stars" for keiki 4-7 years old takes place from 10:30-11:30 a.m. on

Mondays and Fridays, for only \$30 per child per week. A more intensive “Junior Camp” for aspiring players 7-14 years old happens 3 days per week from 9:00 a.m. -12:00 noon for \$135 per player. There are also two camps for experienced high school players. For information, contact Colleen Patton: cpatton@HPA.edu, 881.4037. (Or, if your kids are swimmers, they might want to try HPA’s Water Polo Camp.)

Music and more. For those more artistically than athletically inclined, there are opportunities to enjoy music, dance and more, many right in your own back yard. At Five Mountain Fitness Gym (in the Tropical Dreams complex in Lalamilo), there are free Girls Fitness Classes for ages 9-12, from 3:30-4:15 p.m. on Thursdays in June, including Zumba and Maori Poi Balls (2 classes each). For information call Brenda Resendiz (640-4476). Tutu’s House in Waimea offers “Hula for Tweens” (age 9-13) every Thursday from 2:00-3:00 p.m. (free) or Beginning Guitar and Vocals with Bobby Texeira, Wednesdays 3:00-4:00 p.m. for ages 12-16, and all ages are welcome to join from 3:00-5:00 p.m. Tutu’s House has many other classes and healthy activities to choose from, all free at their facility on Kamuela Business Center Road (turn in across HPM/Uilani Plaza.) [www.http://tutushouse.org](http://tutushouse.org).

In **Honoka’a**, NHERC has Beginning ‘Ukulele for all ages, with Keoki Kahumoku, Thursdays 2:15-3:15 p.m., July 1-29, for only \$45. They offer Slack Key Guitar, Introductory Hawaiian Language and other classes to spark imaginations, young and old. To sign up, contact NHERC@hawaii.edu or call 775-8890.

Honoka’a is also home to the Hamakua Youth Center, a partner of North Hawaii Drug-Free Coalition. This free drop-in after school center for youth in grades 6-12 is more than recreation and a safe place to hang out. HYC gives help with homework, snacks, access to computers, a community garden, Hawaiian cultural studies, a new multi-media studio for music production and more, as well as referrals to other services. www.hamakuayouth.org, 775-0976.

In **North Kohala**, multi-generational activities, arts and cultural programs, fun volunteer opportunities and numerous nature projects are available through the North Kohala Community Resource Center. www.northkohala.org/projects_current.html. A remarkable organization, NKCRC “has been unique in its purpose to listen to the ideas and goals that residents of North Kohala have for their community, to act as a link for funding and education to create projects to support those ideas, and to assist in seeing those projects through to successful completion.”

Also in North Kohala, Roots Advocates for Youth is gearing up for their second annual Go Skate Day Parade & Celebration on Saturday, June 19 in Kapa’au. Skaters meet at Aloha Gas at 10:00 a.m., then roll down to Kamehameha Park for a Blessing to open up the first 3,000 sq. ft. of skateable concrete. Everyone welcome, especially volunteers and financial supporters.

In **Waikoloa**, look for “Mega Sports Camp” July 12-16, where a team of coaches will cover baseball, basketball, soccer & cheerleading for K – 6th grades. To sign up, call 883-9512. And, a Waikoloa Skatepark Fundraising Event is planned for July 17 with skateboard competitions, music and more. For information, call 936-4400.

Movies. More free family fun happens every Friday night at Queens’ MarketPlace, with recent movies at the outdoor Coronation Pavilion, near the Food Court. The Resort also invites the community to its annual free “Family Fourth Celebration” July 4, 10:00am-9:30pm, with Zoo Choo rides, face-painting, entertainment, cotton candy, popcorn and a fireworks show after dark.

This is just a sampling of summer opportunities in North Hawaii. Many more exist through the County Parks and Recreation, faith-based communities, schools, clubs and volunteer programs. Remember that communication as well as physical activity can help kids discover new interests, develop talents and head off troublesome summertime blues.

The North Hawaii Drug-Free Coalition is a regional volunteer organization committed to developing strong, sustaining relationships for Healthy Communities Choosing to Live Drug Free. NHDFC is a project of Five Mountains Hawaii. For more information, visit www.fivemountains.org/nhdfc.