

Juvenile Assessment Center  
of Lee County  
2107 Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd.  
Fort Myers, FL 33901  
(239) 258-3450  
www.swfjac.org

September 2015

# The JAC Perspective



*The Juvenile Assessment Center of Lee County ... assisting youth and their families to seek the treatment and programs they need to lead productive, crime free lives.*

Free drug testing kits are available at the JAC 24 hours a day for parents to use with their youth.

**Law enforcement should call ahead to**

**258-3461  
or 258-3471**

**when bringing an arrested youth to the JAC or to confirm that a youth is eligible for a civil citation.**



The JAC of Lee County is operated by the Lee County Sheriff's Office in partnership with the Lee County Board of County Commissioners and the Department of Juvenile Justice.

## Talk to Youth About Violence Prevention

High profile school shootings can elicit fears of violence in some youth, even if the event happened miles away and their schools are not directly affected by the event. Although there is no guarantee that something bad will never happen within a school, most schools are very safe places. Less than one percent of violent deaths in the nation are school related. Most schools, in partnership with the community and local law enforcement, work very hard to prevent school violence and to prepare for emergencies. Parents and other adults working with youth can help to allay student fears about school violence by reassuring them that there is an extremely low likelihood of a very violent event occurring at their school and emphasizing the efforts of the school



and community to prevent school violence. Of course, any discussion about school violence should be tailored to the student's level of concern and developmental level. Common violence prevention measures in schools that adults can point out to youth include schools limiting access to buildings and school property, monitoring of school parking lots and hallways, presence of a School Resource Officer at the school, monitoring of school guests, and school emergency preparedness drills, etc. Parents and others working with youth can help to prevent school violence by reinforcing schools' efforts to teach students alternatives to violence including peaceful conflict resolution skills and positive interrelationship skills. Discussions  
*(Continued page 2)*

## Family Time Makes a Difference

"Family Day" will be celebrated on Monday, September 28<sup>th</sup> this year. The designation of "Family Day" once each year serves as a reminder to parents to be involved and stay involved with their youth. It makes a difference. Simple acts of parental engagement are key ways to help prevent youth from engaging in risky behaviors. Frequent family dinners, for example, provide routine opportunities to check in with youth and to keep the lines of communication open. Both are keys to raising teens who make healthy choices. This means making time for dinner with youth with no distractions – no texting, no using a cell phone, no play-



ing a video game, and no watching of TV during dinner. Research has found that teens who have frequent family dinners (five or more a week) compared to teens who have infrequent family dinners (three or fewer a week) are:

- more likely to get A's and B's in school;
- more likely to say that their parents are very good at listening to them;

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## Talk to Youth About Violence Prevention (cont.)

about school violence reported in the media can be an opportunity for adults to remind students of their role in promoting school safety by following the school's rules and procedures, respecting others, resisting peer pressure to act irresponsibly, and reporting any unusual individuals or behaviors to an adult. Remind students to take all school emergency drills seriously and learn what they should do in an emergency. Encourage youth to seek help from an adult if they or a peer is struggling with anger, depression, or other feelings that they can't control. Be aware that access to guns is one of the leading risk factors for deadly violence in schools (and in communities).

Encourage youth to stay away from guns and other weapons. Keep any guns in your home locked up and away from children of all ages. Encourage youth to tell an adult if they know someone at their school has a gun or weapon.

Among Lee County households that have firearms around the house, depending upon the area of the county where they reside, between 21.2% and 40.5% have at least one firearm that is kept unlocked and loaded.\*



*Congratulations to Carol Reisner who has been appointed as the Juvenile Probation Officer Supervisor for the Department of Juvenile Justice at the JAC .*

## Kudos to LCSO SRO's

Congratulations to the Lee County Sheriff's Office Youth Services Division which recently received the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) 2015 Model Agency Award. This national award is presented to agencies that demonstrate creative and innovative approaches to school-based policing and exemplify the NASRO "triad concept" through their training, policies, and standards. The "triad concept" divides the School Resource Officer's (SRO's) responsibilities into three areas: teacher, counselor, and law enforcement officer. These are considered to be fundamental to the success of school-based policing programs. According to NASRO, by training law enforcement to educate, counsel, and protect school communities, SRO's lead by example and promote a positive image of law enforcement to youth.

## Family Time Makes a Difference (cont.)

- more likely to say their parents know a great deal or a fair amount about what's really going on in their lives;
- more likely to say their parents are very or fairly proud of them; and
- more likely to say that they can go to one or both parents with a serious problem.

Teens who have infrequent family dinners compared to teens who have frequent family dinners are:

- more likely to know how to get alcohol, prescription drugs, or marijuana in an hour or less;
- almost four times more likely to have used marijuana;
- twice as likely to have used alcohol; and

- twice as likely to report that more than half of their friends currently drink alcohol.

Parents who aren't able to schedule frequent family dinners can use other opportunities for conversation, as long as they make it a routine to talk to their teen about what is going on in his or her life.

There are resources for parents and for community organizations to help support and promote parental engagement and ideas for celebrating "Family Day" at <http://casafamilyday.org/familyday/>.