

Norman Panzica

# Alcohol the greatest killer claims drug seminar speaker

By CATHY CARTER  
Alcohol is killing more teenagers than the three other major drugs combined, according to counsellor Norman Panzica.

Speaking to parents of students attending Orchard Park, Summitview and St. Mark's elementary schools, Mr. Panzica stressed the importance of keeping alcohol out of corner stores.

The more available alcohol is to the public, and especially to teens, said Mr. Panzica, the more consumption will increase.

The counsellor's main focus related to ways pa-

rents can raise their children to avoid alcohol and drugs.

During seminars earlier Monday, Mr. Panzica told children if drugs are given to them by their mothers, dads, doctors or guardians, it's okay. However, if they come from 'Mr. Cool' down the street, they're not, he warned.

According to Mr. Panzica, by practicing preventative discipline, parents can give their children a chance in a world where drugs and alcohol are everywhere. But, he noted, there are no guarantees in this business.

He believes drug problems often begin at an early age as children watch their parents "pop pills" when the slightest things go wrong.

"I dislike children's chewable vitamins," said the straight-from-the-shoulder speaker. "They taste good and children soon learn they're easy to take. They see mommy taking pills when she has a headache. The TV says you have to take pills to feel better when you're tense, or when you can't sleep, and the cycle continues."

It's important to teach your children that it's

alright to feel bad at times. We're a society obsessed with the idea of always feeling good, he stated. Mr. Panzica stressed children who have low self-images and can't deal with the imperfections of life have higher risks of turning to drugs and alcohol.

"Substance abuse counselling deals with bad feelings," he said, "a person gets out of his head on drugs because he doesn't like the company."

Mr. Panzica's tips for parents included: Present a united front when disciplining your children; set guidelines like curfews and

enforce them to allow your children to feel responsible for their actions. If you feel like hugging your child, do it and if you feel your child deserves a spank give it to him.

"Parents who don't hug their children, don't have the right to spank them," he said.

Norman Panzica is a senior consultant to the Council on Drug Abuse, a consultant to the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police and several other organizations. He is the author of "Your Teen and Drugs, A Parent Handbook On Drug Abuse."

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