

Study: Most American kids hearing anti-drug message

NEW YORK (AP) — America's teen-agers are listening to their parents' warnings about the dangers of drug use, but the older generation needs to invest more time in delivering their message, a new study has found.

"With parents, we can cut drug use dramatically," said chairman James E. Burke of the Partnership for a Drug Free America, which conducted the survey.

"Without them, we cannot." Teens who receive strong anti-drug messages at home were 42 percent less likely to use drugs than those whose parents ignore the issue, according to the study released Sunday by the group.

There was, however, a discrepancy between the beliefs of the parents and their kids. Although 98 percent of parents say they've spoken with their children about drugs, only 27 percent of

teens say they are learning a lot about drug risks at home, the survey found.

"What's truly complicated about this is that parents really believe they're doing their job in this area, but the data suggest otherwise," Burke said.

According to the study, there were significant differences in experimentation between teens who spoke regularly with their parents about drug

use and those who did not. — Among teens who learned a lot at home, marijuana use was 26 percent. Among those who said they learned nothing at home, 45 percent said they had used marijuana.

— For inhalants, the first group reported 14 percent; among the latter group, 28 percent had used inhalants. For LSD, the figures were 7 percent and 20 percent; for cocaine, 7 percent and 16

percent. One reason parents weren't speaking with children about drugs: They underestimate the availability. The survey found only 37 percent of parents believed their teen has been offered marijuana. But 53 percent of the teens said they were offered pot.

One other finding: It's best for parents to reach their children at an early age. Among fourth-graders, 74 percent said they want more details from their parents about drugs. Among eighth-

graders, the figure fell to 19 percent. The Partnership is a private, nonprofit coalition of communications industry professionals, known for its anti-drug advertising campaign. This is its 11th annual poll. The survey was conducted in 1998 among 2,258 pre-teens, 6,852 teens and 809 parents.

The margin of error for the pre-teen's data was plus or minus 2.8 percentage points; the teens, plus or minus 1.8; for the adults, plus or minus 3.9.

South Africa

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Americans, except that "when they open their mouths, they speak a little differently."

There are 11 official languages and everyone speaks more than one, she said.

"You hear the word Zulu and you get an image of somebody out in the bush, ... but they're just like everyone else," she said.

Banks brought back some rand.

"The rand is the equivalent of five to six U.S. dollars, depending on how the market fluctuates," said Banks.

And if you're planning on heading over there, Banks advised that you change your money at currency exchange stores rather than the banks or hotels. "You get a better value."

Banks said she got a fabulous deal on the journey. The trip cost \$2,599 and Banks got a bargain round-trip ticket from Las Vegas to Miami for \$180.

Banks, an educator, is offering educational workshops on South Africa.

Those interested in learning about South Africa with Banks can call (702) 649-1793.



The glaring poverty in Soweto doesn't stop South Africans from maintaining high hopes.



A memorial pays tribute to some of the more well-known prisoners who were locked up on Robben Island.



Photos special to Sentinel-Voice

Robben Island, the infamous prison that Nelson Mandela emerged from after over 2 decades, is now a museum in post-Apartheid South Africa.

Houston octuplet remains in hospital

HOUSTON (AP) — Only one of the seven surviving Houston octuplets remained in the hospital Monday after the release of his youngest sister.

Gorom Louis, the eighth-born baby to Nkem Chukwu last December, was released from Texas Children's Hospital on Friday, officials said Monday. She weighed 4 pounds, 10 ounces upon discharge.

The last of the octuplets still hospitalized is Ikem, the firstborn of two boys to Chukwu and her husband, Ikye Louis Udobi. He is listed in serious condition but continues to progress, the hospital said.

The weakest of the octuplets was Odera, born at 10.3 ounces, who died a week after birth. Gorom and Ikem have been the sickliest of the survivors, each needing surgery and other specialized care.

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