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Scientology-How We Help: What One Mother Can Do to Help Keep Kids Drug-Free

Scientologist Paula Cacossa discovered the Truth About Drugs program through the Church of Scientology. It gave her the drug prevention tools she needed to take aim at teen drug abuse.

Paola Cacossa dropped in to a local police department this week. But it wasn't to report a crime—it was to prevent one.

Drug abuse is a serious problem in Cook and DuPage counties, Illinois—one that crosses all socioeconomic lines. The deaths of two recent high school graduates in an affluent Chicago suburb—one by heroin overdose and the other by a drive-by shooting—brought this home to Cacossa.

A 2012 report by the Illinois Consortium on Drug Policy found Chicago suffers the highest number of heroin overdoses nationally. According to the study, Chicago

also recorded more than 24,000 heroin-related hospital admissions in 2010, nearly twice that of the second-place city, New York.

To Cacossa, this situation was urgent, and she wanted to make the most impact with the greatest possible speed. She knew of the Truth About Drugs, the drug education and prevention program supported by the Church of Scientology, and began visiting police stations to offer them the program.

“Because of budget cuts, police departments that used to be active in drug prevention have had to cut back on their programs,” she says, “and The Truth About Drugs fills that void.”

The Truth About Drugs educational program includes 13 educational booklets, public service announcements and a 100-minute documentary offering an in-depth look at individual drugs, told by those who survived addiction. The educator’s guide, activities manual and educator’s classroom kit provide teachers, law enforcement and community groups with effective tools to educate youth, enabling them to make informed decisions about drugs.

“I have provided a dozen police departments with The Truth About Drugs booklets and DVDs,” says Cacossa. “One department liked the curriculum so much, they are using it to train their police force. Another uses the Truth About Drugs in their ‘diversionary program,’ where first offenders 18 and younger can clear their record through community service. They have the kids read The Truth About Drugs booklets and watch the video to help address the reason they got into trouble in the first place.”

The mother of two boys, 10 and 15, Cacossa understands what parents face when it comes to talking to their kids about drugs—adolescents and teens don't always listen to their views on this kind of hot topic.

"I am working on a Truth About Drugs presentation for a local Parent Teacher Organization that is hosting a discussion on drugs next month," says Cacossa, who keeps copies of the booklets and DVDs in her car to hand out whenever the opportunity arises. "I gave the booklets to a woman who was very worried about her son—he had been caught shoplifting and she suspected he was experimenting with drugs. She took the booklets and left them around the house. She was very relieved when her son picked up one of the booklets and started reading."

Eager to reach as many young people as possible, Cacossa arranged for a team of volunteers to distribute copies of *The Truth About Drugs* at a Chicago Fires soccer game during National Red Ribbon Week, a nationwide drug awareness week in late October. They handed out 5,000 copies.

"Both my boys volunteer with me on the Truth About Drugs program. We do this as a family," says Cacossa. "I have been so fortunate, and I've gotten so much help from others, I decided I wanted to give back."

The Church of Scientology has published a brochure, *Scientology: How We Help—The Truth About Drugs, Creating a Drug-Free World*, to meet requests for more information about the drug education and prevention initiative it supports.

To learn more or to read a copy of the brochure, visit

www.Scientology.org/antidrug.

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Scientology Founder L. Ron Hubbard wrote, "The planet has hit a barrier which prevents any widespread social progress—drugs and other biochemical substances. These can put people into a condition which not only prohibits and destroys physical health but which can prevent any stable advancement in mental or spiritual well-being."

The Church of Scientology supports the Truth About Drugs, one of the world's largest nongovernmental drug education and prevention campaigns, and Scientologists on five continents volunteer year-round to make this program broadly available. It has been conclusively proven that when young people are provided with the truth about drugs—factual information on what drugs are and what they do—usage rates drop commensurately.



Paula Cacossa sets up Truth About Drugs booths at local conferences and symposia to make the educational materials broadly available to others working on drug prevention.



Paula Cacossa introducing a police officer to the Truth About Drugs education and prevention program.