



A community's efforts in Drug Prevention for its youth.

Program Description

The Drug Store Project is a comprehensive middle school drug prevention program designed to educate youth about the dangers of substance use and abuse. Here in South Lake Tahoe, **The Drug Store Project** has been provided annually since 2003 and continues to be the single largest collaborative prevention activity that is conducted in our area.

Our program is now a fund under [The El Dorado Community Foundation](#) and we actively seek funding from grant writing and donations. YOU can donate directly to future Drug Store Project events [here](#).

While our community did not "invent" the concept of this program, we certainly made it our own. Early on, the team of like-minded in our community collaborated with the idea that each of us could bring our talents and know-how together for a common good: providing our youth with an impressive opportunity to learn that they themselves will be the individuals making the final decisions when it comes to drug experimentation and use. Over the years we have altered some of the message delivery to our youth as it became apparent that many of these kids return home to parents and other loved ones who are using. We want our youth to know the dangers of ALL drugs and the negative impact it can have on their minds, bodies, home life and future aspirations knowing that drugs are bad, not the people.

Annually, this program impacts all sixth-grade youth from Lake Tahoe Unified School District and lake schools for Douglas County Unified School District in addition to home-schooled youth.

The following entities make this program a reality:

Barton Health, California Conservation Corps, California Highway Patrol, CA National Guard Joint Task Force, CALSTAR, Cal Tahoe JPA, Camelot Party Rentals, Douglas County Search & Rescue, El Dorado Community Foundation, EDC District Attorney, EDC Mental Health, EDC Probation Department, EDC Public Defender, EDC Search & Rescue - Tahoe Team, EDC Superior Court, El Dorado Sheriff's Office, Harrah's Foundation, Harrah's HEROS, Kindred Hospice, Kiwanis Club of Lake Tahoe, Kiwanis Club of Tahoe Sierra, Lake Tahoe Community College, Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel, Lake Valley Firefighter's Association, Lake Valley Fire Protection District, Live Violence Free, McFarlane Mortuary, Naval Air Station-Fallon, Optimist Club of South Lake Tahoe, Partnership Douglas County, Rotary Club of Tahoe-Douglas, Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe, Soroptimist International of Tahoe Sierra, SLT Fire Department, SLT Police Department, SLT Police Officer's Association, STHS-Friday Night Live, South Tahoe Middle School, STMS-Club Live, Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District, Tahoe Youth & Family Services, Women of Moose Chapter 408, Zephyr Cove Elementary, and Community Volunteers.

It is the involvement by these organizations which sends a clear message that our community values and cares for our youth and will do whatever is necessary to keep students healthy and drug free. In addition, we work to assist other interested communities with the technical assistance needed to provide this special programming for their own youth. Each year we welcome "visitors" to our program who observe the event with the anticipation of holding their own. They take back with them the belief that if the program helps just one child to make a better choice, then the program is a success.

The Drug Store Project is a series of vignettes which students experience first-hand. Each vignette is approximately 11 minutes in length. Systematically students move in groups of 35 through the “story-line” for the day. The location chosen, Lake Tahoe Community College, is a deliberate one. We want students to focus on the future and all the possibilities ahead of them. The college location brings to many their first experience of being on our college campus.

Station One: Gateway Drugs (Led by EDC Behavioral Health and Partnership Douglas County)
Students are provided with an overview of the drugs identified as “Gateway Drugs” (tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana). The emphasis of this vignette is to provide all students with a foundation of information needed to understand the physical, social, and psychological effects of drug experimentation and use.

Station Two: The Pharmacy (Led by South Lake Tahoe Police Dept.)
The scene begins with a presentation by officers focusing on illegal drugs in our community. After the initial presentation students are given the opportunity to walk by a drug display. While observing the different displays of drugs, a pre-selected student (student actor for the day) takes a bag of “drugs” and places it in their pocket. A local law enforcement officer witnesses the act and places the student under arrest for theft and possession of illegal drugs.

Station Three: Juvenile Hall (El Dorado County Probation)
Students learn the purpose of the Juvenile Treatment Center. Although the primary purpose is to provide secure detention, it is also intended to enhance rather than hinder the minor’s rehabilitation. While in Juvenile Hall, minors are exposed to activities and guidance that will contribute to their social and personal development and enhance their ability to function acceptably in the community. Juvenile Hall staff provide guidance and constructive attitudes toward the detained minors, assisting them to use the detention experience to understand themselves and their problems. Detention should begin the process of rehabilitation and lay the groundwork for later treatment.

Station Four: The Court Room (EDC Superior Court, Public Defender, and District Attorney)
The student appears in court with a public defender before a judge and a prosecutor. The judge explains how the legal system deals with the possession of drugs.

Station Five: Drug Counseling (Tahoe Youth & Family Services)
A Substance Abuse Prevention Counselor demonstrates an assessment with classmates observing. The audience then receives a presentation with information on chemical addiction and the risks involved when individuals make a choice of using.

Station Six: The Party (SLTPD, STHS Friday Night Live students who attended the Drug Store Project when they were in 6th grade, and Fire Dept. Medical Personnel)
The student is faced with the choice of whether to stay clean or to use drugs again. The student chooses to continue to use drugs and attends a party. While at the party, the student collapses on the floor from an apparent drug overdose. Police Officers and medical teams arrive on the scene, perform CPR, and Medical Personnel transport the student by gurney to the ER Scene.

Station Seven: The Emergency Room (Barton Health, Lake Valley Fire Protection District, So. Lake Tahoe Fire Department, and acting “Grieving parents”)
Once the student enters the emergency room, actual physicians and nurses attempt to revive the individual without success and the child dies. Adult actors who play “grieving parents” are called into the emergency room where the doctor informs the parents that their son/daughter has just died. We want the youth to understand how the choices they make effect all of those who love and care about them.

Station Eight: The Funeral (Kindred Hospice and McFarlane Mortuary)

A mock funeral is conducted by pastor and mortuary personnel. The “grieving parents” are asked to share the memories they had of their deceased child. Students are then given the opportunity to observe their friend one last time. As they pass by and look inside the coffin, students expect to see their classmate, but instead they see themselves in a mirror. The pastor then seats all the children down and discusses the sobering reminder not let this happen to them or those they love.

Station Nine: “My Story” (Community Member)

This is a powerful, moving story told by individuals in our community who want to share their experiences to help youth understand how choices they make effect not only them, but the many who love and depend on them.

Station Ten: Debriefing (CHP)

Students are given the opportunity to share and discuss their experiences with a law enforcement officer and mental health professional.

Static Displays

The static display areas are another component to the program. Agencies being represented include the Tahoe Douglas Bomb Squad, a presentation on Vaping, CalStar, South Lake Tahoe Police Dept. K9, Tahoe Douglas / EDC Search & Rescue, and a presentation on Marijuana and The Adolescent Brain.

Notes:

1. CalStar and SLTPD’s K9 vignette’s highlight how heroine, meth, and opioids play a role in their jobs on a daily basis.
2. Throughout our 9 separate groups of students we disperse counselors in case any individual needs someone to talk to during the event.
3. At the conclusion of the event, each student goes home with a Community Bag complete with selected publications for both the youth and their parents. It also contains a review of the day’s activities and an invitation for the parents/guardian to complete the online survey about the discussion held at home.

The need for funding:

Securing annual funding is a reality. This program began and remains an event which is community supported. This “grass roots” effort is the reason it continues in lieu of agency budget cuts. Businesses that provide in-kind donations enable our program to be unlike others: Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel provides lodging for out of town military participants in the amount of \$1,400.00, Harrah’s Lake Tahoe in the amount of \$10,000.00 provides the major food costs for students and volunteers the day of the event, Lake Tahoe Community College in the amount of \$12,000.00 for facility space and personnel, and Camelot Party Rentals provides us with a discount of \$200.00 towards our rental needs. Individuals throughout the community and agency personnel all participate the day of the event as individual volunteers with agency support. Annually, **1,800 hours** of agency and volunteer hours are recorded on the event day alone.

The Need for this program and the commitment to the youth in our community.

Every other year, all schools are required to participate in a student self-reporting survey entitled “California Healthy Kids Survey”. This survey asks students a multitude of questions about their health and drug use / abuse views. The survey is very comprehensive and continues to provide us with information regarding drug information amongst our youth. We as a community need to be concerned with what the students are telling us. Current research and self-reporting surveys show that drug experimentation occurs at age 9. You can access past survey information at this location:

<http://chks.wested.org/reports/search>. In addition, the **Drug Store Project** conducts a **pre and post survey** on all students participating in the event. Our recent event's information can be located at www.drugstoreproject.org along with pictures, a video, and items that another community can use to create their own program. In addition, Barton Health Care conducts the **PRC Community Health Needs Assessment** every three years. The 2021 assessment has identified the top three concerns for our local community: Mental Health, Substance Abuse, and Access to Healthcare.

Program Budget

Our day-long event focuses on choices an individual can make when it comes to drug use and abuse. Our event also focuses on the positive aspects of remaining drug free and achieving goals. Students are rotated through all of the vignettes of the program, and they are provided lunch on the campus. Our projected budget is based on actual expenditures from previous years. Expenses cover the costs for 325 youth and 225 volunteers which make the program possible.

Drug Store Project Annual Budget	Expenses	In-kind Donations	In-kind Supporter
Food: snack, water, lunch for 525	\$1,500.00	\$10,000.00	Harrah's Lake Tahoe Caesar's Foundation
325 grocery totes-Community Bags which carry drug prevention information for parents.	\$1000.00		
CNG/NAS expenses (Dinner)	\$200.00		
Lodging	0	\$1,560.00	Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel
Facility @ LTCC	0	\$12,000.00	LTCC
Rental Equipment: Pipe & Drape	\$1000.00	\$265.00	Camelot Party Rentals, Reno
Staff-Program Coordinator	\$10,000.00		
* EDCF Admin fee	\$500.00		
Office & Program Supplies	\$350.00		
Postal Mailing/FedEx Shipping: Brochures from DC	\$425.00		
ConstantContact Subscription -email communication for project	\$325.00		
SurveyMonkey Subscription for survey use	\$350.00		
Event Insurance fee	\$150.00		
Drug Prevention Community Bag Materials	\$500.00		
Sponsor Appreciation packets (final report, collage photo, postage)	\$425.00		
Website Maintenance, Support, Domain Name	\$600.00		
Counselor replacement t-shirts (15)	\$200.00		
Unallocated	\$400.00		
Volunteers and agency personnel participation		Priceless!!!!	
	\$17,925.00	\$23,825.00	\$41,750.00

Not counting the in-kind donations provided by our businesses, the actual capital outlay for the program is \$17,925.00. The capital outlay cost per pupil is about \$55.00, a small amount of money to spend on something so priceless, our youth.

We hope to hear from you about our program.

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