

## THE RECIPE FOR RAISING SUBSTANCE-FREE KIDS: FREQUENT FAMILY DINNERS

August 31, 2007

*Family Day – A Day to Eat Dinner with Your Children™* is a national movement to encourage parents to frequently eat dinner with their kids and be involved in their children's lives. *Family Day*, which is celebrated on the fourth Monday in September – the 24<sup>th</sup> in 2007 – is gaining significant momentum. Last year, CASA (Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse) once again held a national pledge drive to encourage Americans to have dinner with their loved ones on *Family Day*, which resulted in a two year total of more than 1.7 million people pledging to sit down as a family on *Family Day*

This year, with your help, CASA's *Family Day* 2007, will be an even bigger success! Posters and flyers will be arriving at your school the week of Labor Day. Please help us to promote this observance of Family Day by promoting our second annual cartoon contest. The winner will celebrate with special guests, Superintendent Paul Dugan and Jennifer Bushman; Jennifer will prepare a unique dinner prepared especially for the family. In addition, a grand prize valued at \$200 will be awarded

CASA research consistently shows that frequent family dinners make a difference in teens' lives. Compared to teens who have five to seven family dinners in a typical week, teens who dine with their families fewer than three nights in a typical week are two times likelier to have tried marijuana, more than twice as likely to have tried cigarettes and one and a half times likelier to have tried alcohol, according to CASA's report *The Importance of Family Dinners III*. The report also found that frequent family dinners are associated with higher academic performance. Teens who have dinner with their families five to seven times in a typical week are likelier to get mostly A's and B's in school compared to teens who dine with their families fewer than three times per week. Academic performance is associated with substance abuse risk; Teens who report receiving grades of C or lower are at twice the risk of substance abuse as those who report receiving all A's or A's and B's.

“America's drug problem is not going to be solved in courtrooms or legislative hearing rooms by judges and politicians. It will be solved in living rooms and dining rooms and across kitchen tables – by parents and families,” says Joseph A. Califano, Jr., CASA's chairman and president and the former U.S. Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare.

Tune In To Kids encourages all families in the Washoe County School District to celebrate *Family Day* by eating dinner together on September 24<sup>th</sup> and every day. More importantly, it's important that parents talk with their kids. During dinner, it's important for parents to turn off the TV and let the answering machine record incoming calls. Involving the entire family in planning and cooking meals can also help to make meal time a family event. If schedules make it impossible for families to eat dinner together, suggest that they have breakfast together.

For more information about *Family Day*, please visit [www.TuneInToKids.org](http://www.TuneInToKids.org) or [www.CASAFamilyDay.org](http://www.CASAFamilyDay.org). There is also very helpful information on substance abuse prevention on the Safe and Drug Free School section of the Washoe County School District's website and resources for parent involvement under the Parents section.

Thanks in advance for your support of Family Day, Sept. 24, 2007!

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