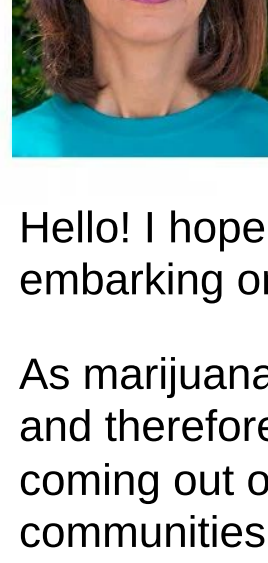




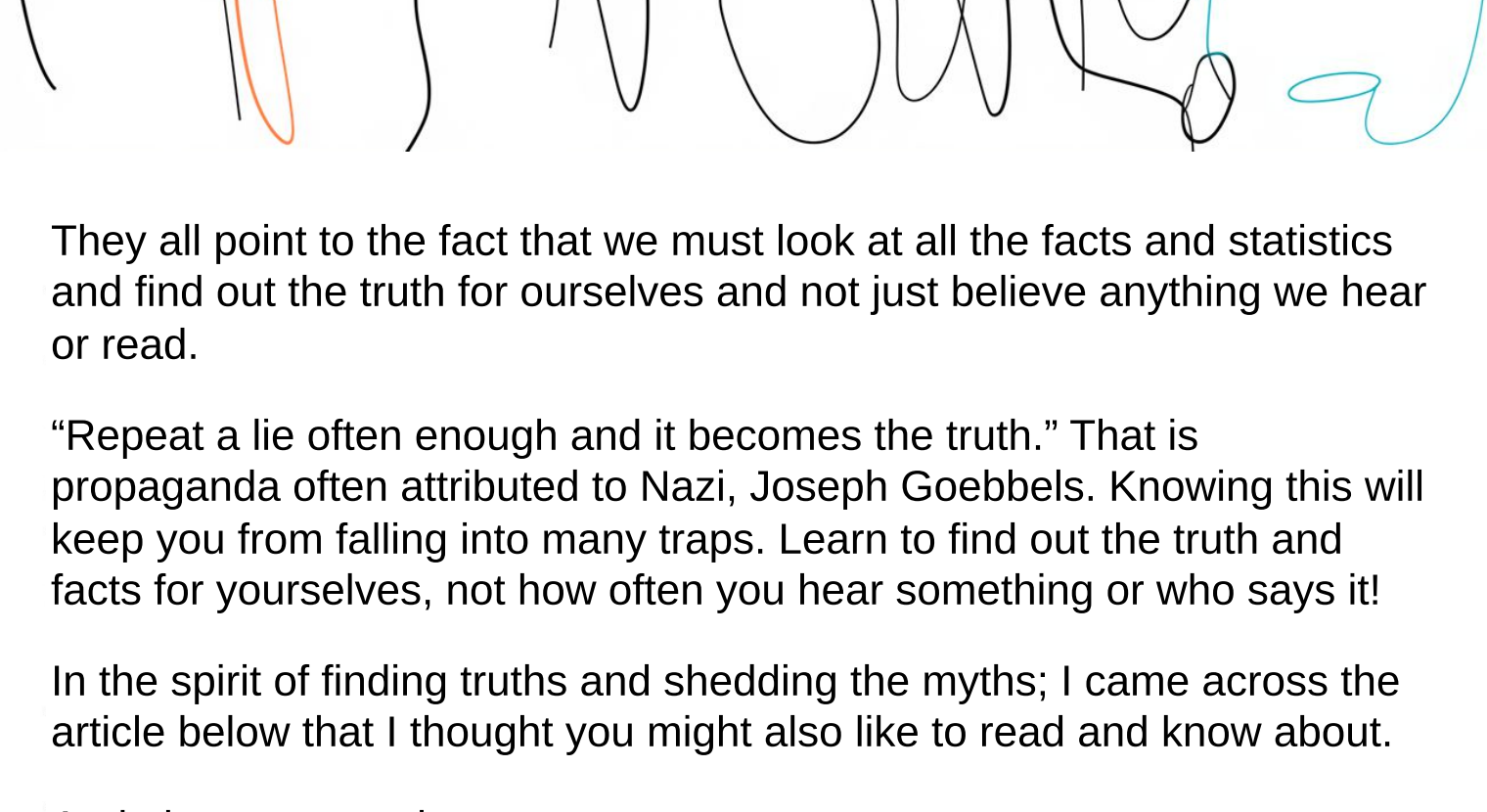
December



Koko Tabibzadeh
President, Drug-Free World
Los Angeles Chapter

Hello! I hope you had a great Thanksgiving. It is incredible that we are embarking on the last month of 2024!

As marijuana has gotten the reputation of being natural and harmless and therefore trapping more and more of our youth, more studies are coming out of the opposite: revealing it's devastating effects in our communities.



They all point to the fact that we must look at all the facts and statistics and find out the truth for ourselves and not just believe anything we hear or read.

"Repeat a lie often enough and it becomes the truth." That is propaganda often attributed to Nazi, Joseph Goebbels. Knowing this will keep you from falling into many traps. Learn to find out the truth and facts for yourselves, not how often you hear something or who says it!

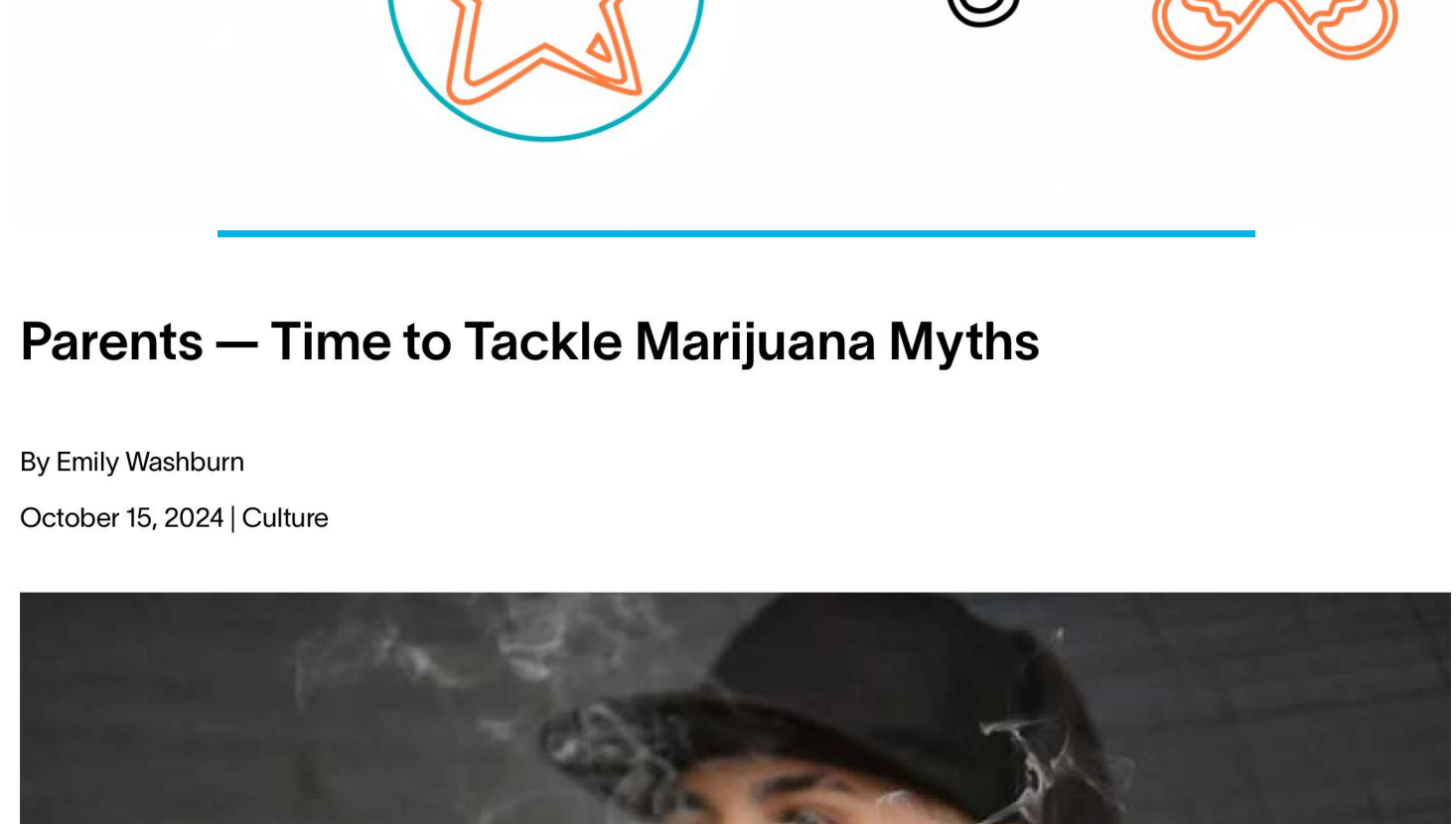
In the spirit of finding truths and shedding the myths; I came across the article below that I thought you might also like to read and know about.

And always remember:

"In the long run, the most unpleasant truth is a safer companion than a pleasant falsehood."

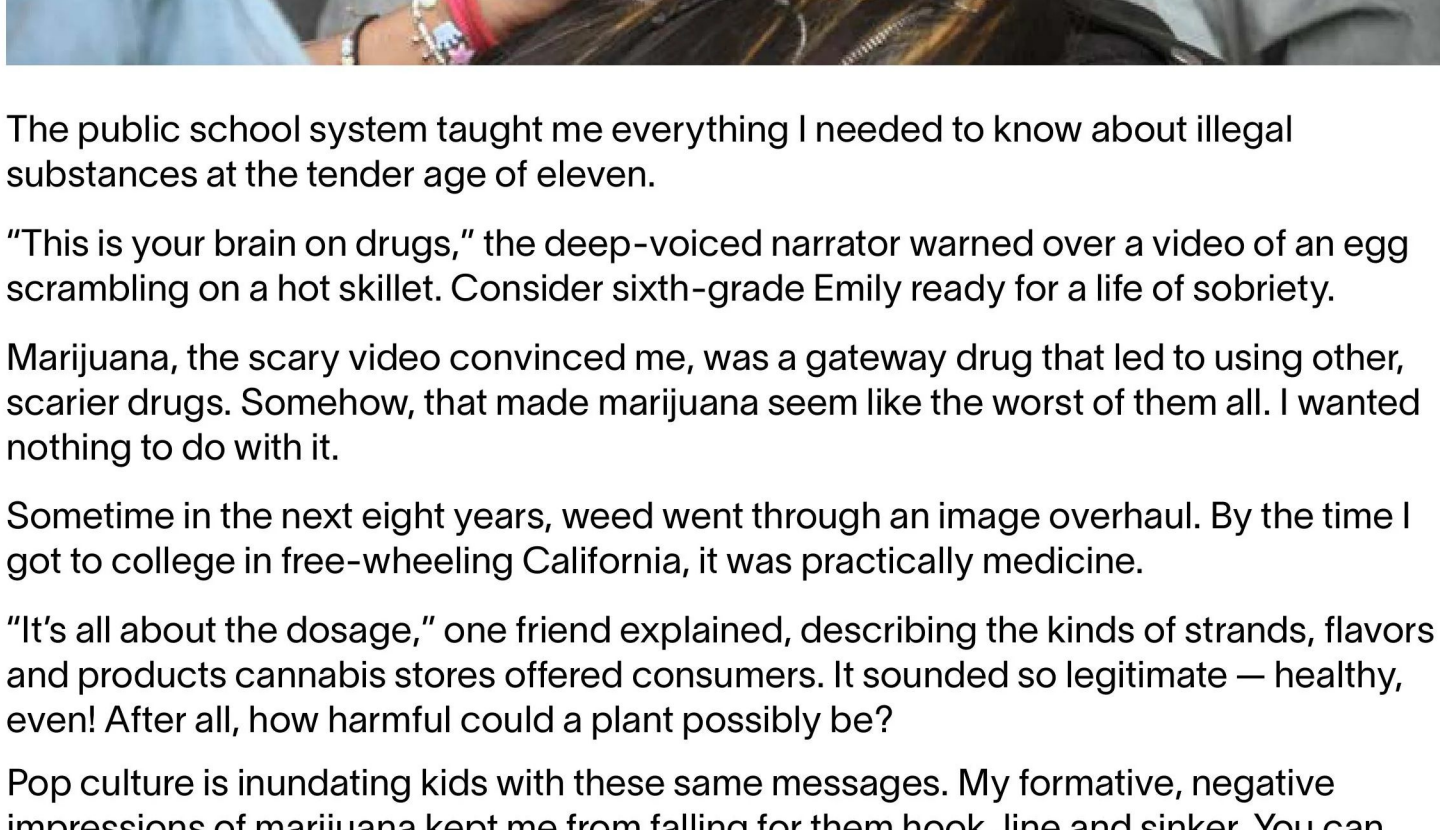
- Theodore Roosevelt

Happy Holidays and Happy New Year!



Parents – Time to Tackle Marijuana Myths

By Emily Washburn
October 15, 2024 | Culture



The public school system taught me everything I needed to know about illegal substances at the tender age of eleven. "This is your brain on drugs," the deep-voiced narrator warned over a video of an egg scrambling on a hot skillet. Consider sixth-grade Emily ready for a life of sobriety. Marijuana, the scary video convinced me, was a gateway drug that led to using other, scarier drugs. Somehow, that made marijuana seem like the worst of them all. I wanted nothing to do with it.

Sometime in the next eight years, weed went through an image overhaul. By the time I got to college in free-wheeling California, it was practically medicine.

"It's all about the dosage," one friend explained, describing the kinds of strands, flavors and products cannabis stores offered consumers. It sounded so legitimate – healthy, even! After all, how harmful could a plant possibly be?

Pop culture is inundating kids with these same messages. My formative, negative impressions of marijuana kept me from falling for them hook, line and sinker. You can give your kids the same protection by busting these modern marijuana myths.

Myth: Marijuana is safe.
Truth: Marijuana can wreak havoc on your mind.

Experts freely acknowledge the association between marijuana and psychosis. A recent meta-analysis of 162 studies documenting cases of cannabis-associated psychotic symptoms (CAPS) found:

One in 200 individuals experienced a severe episode of psychosis when exposed to cannabis/THC.

The same analysis found incidents of CAPS reported across observational, experimental and medical research studies, suggesting the ingestion of THC alone causes risk of psychosis.

Cannabis can also trigger the development of life-long psychotic disorders like schizophrenia. In 2019, The Lancet found people who smoked high-THC marijuana daily were five-times as likely to develop a psychotic disorder than people who didn't smoke.

Laura Stacks' 19-year-old son Johnny committed suicide in 2019 after prolonged-marijuana usage caused him to develop a schizoaffective disorder. She writes of her "beautiful boy,"

Continued use of dabs and vapes made him so paranoid, he wrote in his journal the mob was after him, the university was an FBI base, and the whole world knew everything about him. He wasn't depressed, neglected, drugged or unloved. He was psychotic, paranoid, and delusional and he jumped from a 6-story building in his pain.

The internet is littered with heart-wrenching stories just like Laura and Johnny's.

Myth: Marijuana is safe because it is natural.
Truth: Modern cannabis products are almost entirely synthesized, which makes them more dangerous.

In 1995, marijuana products contained an average of 5% tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) – the chemical that gets people high. The legal marijuana industry has since released a bevy of powerful, synthesized THC products to give consumers faster, more potent highs.

Modern marijuana products contain an average of 15 – 20% THC concentration. Some offer THC concentrations as high as 99%, according to a *New York Times* report released last week.

Products with high concentrations of THC increase people's risk of experiencing CAPS.

Myth: Marijuana isn't addictive.
Truth: Marijuana is addictive, and the legal marijuana industry wants to keep it that way.

Cannabis use disorder (CUD) encompasses a spectrum of people who can't stop using marijuana when they want to. The *Times* puts it this way, "[People with CUD] continue to use the drug despite significant negative effects on their lives.

A *Times*' analysis of the 2022 U.S. Survey on Drug Use and Health found 18 million marijuana users demonstrated symptoms of CUD – about a third of all users over 18-years-old. By the paper's count, approximately 3 million of these users are addicted to marijuana.

The same survey further revealed 16.6% of 18- to 25-year-olds use cannabis daily or almost daily. Of those 4.5 million young people, 81% met the threshold for cannabis use disorder (CUD).

The marijuana industry has incentive to make their products as addictive as possible. That's why they advertise to underage users. In a 2021 interview with the *Daily Citizen*, Dr. Kevin Sabet, the founder of Smart Approaches to Marijuana (SAM), explained:

For young people under the age of 25, their brain is essentially a dollar sign for [the marijuana] industry. Addiction doesn't start when you're 50, it starts when you're a teen or young adult. The industry knows that and they're targeting young people on social media with cartoon ads, edibles, candies and cookies

Less than two months ago, California officials discovered more than two million packages of illegal cannabis in Los Angeles disguised as candy. Nicole Elliot, the director of California's Department of Cannabis Control, commented, "Illegal packaging is dangerous to consumers, especially when it is ripping off well-known brands that are attractive to children."

Myth: Marijuana is good for you.
Truth: Repeated, sustained use of THC products can make people severely ill.

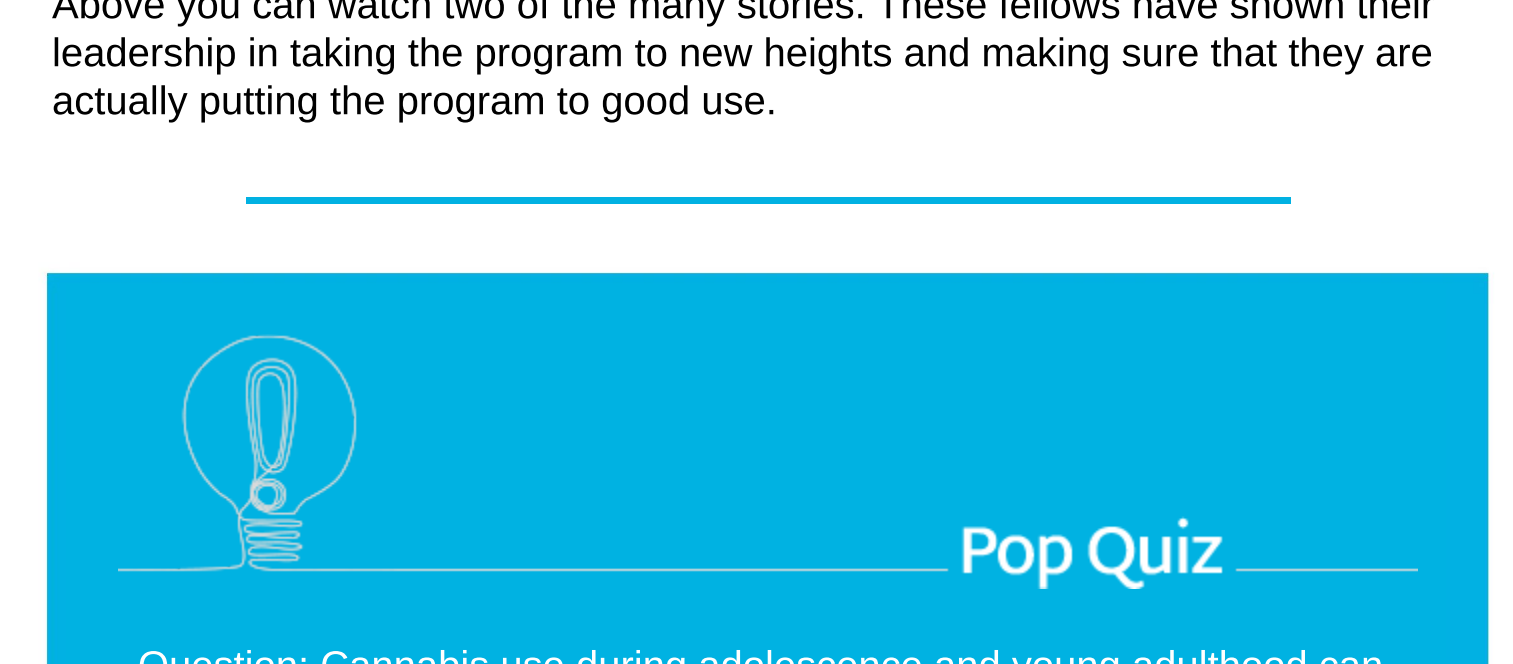
Cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome (CHS) affects frequent, debilitating nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain. The disease causes long-term marijuana users, and cases are rising across the U.S., according to the *Times*.

Left untreated, CHS can lead to dehydration, seizures, kidney failure and cardiac arrest.

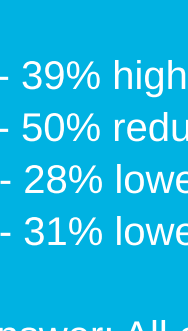
CHS receives relatively little attention compared to (largely false) claims that marijuana helps with anxiety, sleep, pain and a plethora of other disorders. That's why it's so important for parents to keep their kids apprised of the facts.

You don't need a scary video to keep your kids on the straight and narrow – just be honest about what marijuana does to developing bodies and brains.

Throughout the Drug-Free World network there are thousands of individuals with unique stories of partnership and how they made the program their own.



Above you can watch two of the many stories. These fellows have shown their leadership in taking the program to new heights and making sure that they are actually putting the program to good use.



Pop Quiz

Question: Cannabis use during adolescence and young adulthood can bring on which of the following?

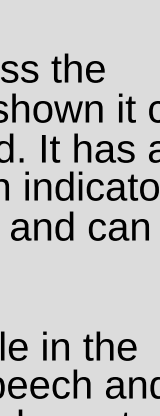
- A- 39% higher likelihood of earning lower school grades
- B- 50% reduced likelihood of earning a high school diploma
- C- 28% lower likelihood of attending college or university
- D- 31% lower likelihood of earning a college degree

Answer: All of the above.

A study, published in *JAMA Pediatrics* on October 7, entitled, "Cannabis Use During Adolescence and Young Adulthood and Academic Achievement," found that marijuana use is associated with the above and:

- More than twice the likelihood of dropping out of high school
- More than twice the likelihood of school absenteeism

Myth Buster



Myth: Smoking marijuana can't affect an unborn child.

Fact: Yes, it does!

A 2019 study found that a gene linked to autism, DLGAP2, can change in the sperm of men who use cannabis. This change in the gene's DNA could be passed down to future children, potentially raising their autism risk.

In pregnant women, the THC inhaled or ingested does cross the placenta and reaches the developing fetus. Studies have shown it can cause neurological impairments that will last into adulthood. It has also been connected to lower birth weights (an important health indicator for newborn babies), lower muscle tone, tremors in newborns and can impact the baby's brain development.

Additionally: children, who were exposed to marijuana while in the womb, generally have shown higher rates of difficulty in speech and cognition, lower math scores, lower spelling scores and higher rates of problems with focus and attention.

best,
koko

