



The National Center on
Addiction and Substance Abuse
at Columbia University

633 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10017-6706

phone 212 841 5200
fax 212 956 8020
www.casacolumbia.org

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Contacts: Lauren R. Duran, 212-841-5260, lduran@casacolumbia.org
Nancy Gavilanes, 212-841-5308, ngavilanes@casacolumbia.org

CASA* LAUNCHES PARENTING FORUM TO DISCUSS CHALLENGES IN RAISING SUBSTANCE-FREE CHILDREN

NEW YORK, NY, February 28, 2008 – The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University has launched a parenting forum on its Web site www.casacolumbia.org to engage parents in conversation about how to raise drug- and alcohol-free children.

The purpose of this Web forum is to connect with parents in a dialogue that will be used in writing CASA's second book, *Parent Power*, a guide to raising healthy and substance-free children which will be published by Praeger Press in 2009. To participate in the forum, parents can log onto www.casacolumbia.org and click on the button marked "Parent Power" which will direct them to a micro-site containing questions designed to spark a conversation thread.

"We've been working on this book, tapping into our decade and a half of research, surveys, reports and demonstration programs and identifying all that we've learned about the situations and characteristics that increase or decrease the risk that teens will smoke, drink or use drugs. And we've discovered that in order to write the best book possible, we need the insight of parents," said Joseph A. Califano, Jr., CASA's Chairman and President and former U.S. Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare. "We need to learn about their experiences in talking and listening to their own children about alcohol, marijuana, prescription and illegal drugs. We need to know what parents think works--and what doesn't in raising drug-free, healthy teens".

"This forum will ensure that the CASA book addresses the questions that parents really want to know about," said Kathleen Ferrigno, CASA's Director of Marketing. "But in order for this book to appeal to American parents, we need their input. So we are calling on all parents, all across America, rich and poor, urban and rural, white, black, Hispanic and Asian, twenty-something's to fifty-something's, to help us."

*The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University is neither affiliated with, nor sponsored by, the National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association (also known as "CASA") or any of its member organizations, or any other organizations with the name of "CASA".



In order to create the best and most readable, practical, savvy, and realistic guide to help parents deal with real world situations they face, CASA will rely on science and evidence based research on teen substance use and abuse and the real world experiences of parents.

“Of course there are no silver bullets; teen substance abuse can strike any family. But from years of CASA research we know that parents have the greatest impact on their kids. We want *Parent Power* to help them use that power in the most effective way,” Califano said.

CASA is the only national organization that brings together under one roof all the professional disciplines needed to study and combat all types of substance abuse as they affect all aspects of society. CASA has issued 66 reports and white papers, published one book, conducted demonstration projects focused on children, families and schools at 212 sites in 84 cities and counties in 32 states plus Washington, DC and two Native American tribal reservations, and has been evaluating the effectiveness of drug and alcohol treatment in a variety of programs and drug courts. CASA is the creator of the nationwide initiative *Family Day – A Day to Eat Dinner with Your ChildrenTM* -- the fourth Monday in September – the 22nd in 2008 – that promotes parental engagement as a simple and effective way to reduce children’s risk of smoking, drinking and using illegal drugs. In May of 2007, CASA Chairman Joseph A. Califano, Jr., called for a fundamental shift in the nation’s attitude about substance abuse and addiction with the publication of his book, *HIGH SOCIETY: How Substance Abuse Ravages America and What to Do About It*. For more information: www.casacolumbia.org.

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