

Lashawna R. Wagner

“How can society control the use of drugs that are being abused by young people”?

Illegal drug use among teenagers is declining; however, the abuse of prescription drugs, especially pain relievers, is increasing. Many young people assume that prescription drugs are safe, when in fact they are highly addictive and can cause severe side effects.

The following are some statistics regarding teenage drug and alcohol abuse:

- Underage drinking costs the United States more than \$158 billion every year
- 40% of those who started drinking at age 13 or younger developed alcohol dependence later in life
- 10% of teens who began drinking after the age of 17 developed dependence
- Young people that drink are 50 times more likely to use cocaine than teens who never consume alcohol
- 63% of the youth who drink alcohol say that they initially got the alcohol from their home or a friend's
- Alcohol kills 6 ½ times more teenagers than all other illicit drugs combined
- More than 60% of teens said that drugs were sold, used, or kept at their school
- 20% of 8th graders report that they have tried marijuana

There is no doubt that young people find it easy to obtain all types of drugs and the abuse seems to start with younger kids now more than ever. So how can society help control the use of drugs that are being abused by young people?

Thank you for your time and consideration in the scholarship application process.

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Our nation should focus its efforts on fact-based education as well as programs to dissuade young people from the use of alcohol, tobacco, pain killers and illicit drugs. One recommendation would be that the current budget used for drug control should be increased. At least 1/3 of the budget ought to be focused on reducing youth drug use. The budget is being used to finance simple anti-drug campaigns, but should be invested in the youth/youth programs, which provide positive and enriching activities, "To offset the attraction to or otherwise meet the needs usually filled by alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs".

Another suggestion is when young people are being educated on drug abuse, use facts-not scare-tactics. Education is a key component of any plan to change self-destructive behavior. The risks and information that could be lifesaving ought to be taught more thoroughly in middle schools as well as elementary schools.

There is one last thing that society can do to control drug abuse. Sometimes society is judgmental towards young people who abuse drugs or drink alcohol illegally. If a young person does abuse drugs, in order to get them to stop and save their lives from complete ruin, society and those around him/her should be understanding. He/she ought to be given help and they need to know someone cares. There is no denying that our nation has a problem with drug abuse and an issue with preventing the abuse of drugs from increasing, but those young people (doesn't matter if they are old or young, drugs are still addicting) abusing drugs can be helped. Society often labels these people as hopeless or a worthless cause. Everyone in society just needs to take the time to care.

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