

STAR Quarterly

This time around - We're bringing the *good stuff* to you!

Check out our newest pics!

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Family & Community: hand in hand

We have rounded the corner into our second year of STAR at Prevention Links! Family and community are 2 factors that never evolve without the other, making our partnerships in Elizabeth, Plainfield, and Roselle so vital and successful.

Prevention Links is a private, not-for-profit organization, which takes a leadership role in the prevention of drugs, alcohol, tobacco and related issues. With community being defined as any environment where people live, work, or learn, the goal of Prevention Links is to pull together all available resources to eliminate the deleterious effects of drugs, alcohol, violence, and inadequate educational and health institutions in our communities.

Prevention Links mission is to foster, healthy, sustainable communities by empowering people through education, collaboration and linkages to resources.

Family Circle

Strengthening Families

We pledged to (re)vitalize families in Elizabeth, Plainfield, and Roselle. We are having a great time getting to know the families in our current Strengthening Family round at Stillman School. Being a primarily Spanish-speaking round, we have another great opportunity to broaden our understanding and sharing of multiple cultures. One of our greatest goals is to ensure each family feels welcome and celebrated – by the smiles and laughter each week, I think we are accomplishing that goal well.

Communication Empowered

I was in a parent session recently with a mom who also participates in other programs in order to strengthen her family. Her story is very similar to others I have heard, but with the unique twists that could only happen to her. I have a lot of respect for her and the journey she has travelled thus far. Her family is at a crossroad that many other families face at one point or other in their family life cycle. For the sake of confidentiality I will not go into details. However, the common thread in her situation that links us all is communication. Never underestimate the power of communication in our families. It has the power to create or prevent chaos, the power to build children with unbreakable self-confidence, and the power to push your family through your crossroad(s).

common barriers to positive and productive communication can come in several forms. Have you experienced or done any of the following?

Blaming: Saying that a problem is the other persons fault.

Changing the Subject: Talking about something that is not related to the original topic.

Sounding Hopeless: "What's the point, it won't work anyway."

Defensiveness: Occurs when 1 person feels he/she is being blamed or misunderstood.

Sarcasm: Humor that puts the other person down.

Talking for Others: "She won't like that idea anyway."

Assuming: Saying or implying that you know that other person's thoughts.

Denial: Denying there is a problem so you don't have to talk about it.

I have been the culprit many times in my own marriage using any or all of the previous communication road blocks. It almost always led to further arguing, the other person getting hurt, or no positive solution making. It has taken some practice, but I can happily say that with time and intention I have been able to affect our communication in a positive way. To this day, I have personally felt the benefits of healthy communication.

For healthy communication, try to use "I" messages that express your feelings about a situation and why; this allows the other person to empathize with your position and not feel attacked. For example, "I feel confronted when you speak to me while you are angry" as opposed to something like, "You're attacking me!" Also, try to keep it short by saying one thing at a time and pause for reply or questions. This becomes easier to do when you remember to be specific and say what you want. Don't forget to check to see if the other person is listening, that's an important (if not necessary) part of communication. Always be as positive as you can, and aim for solutions depending on the situation! Communication may seem like such a basic tool, but in reality, many families forget to practice healthy communication, which can make all the difference.

Do you have stories of how you have practiced healthy communication in your family?

We always want to hear your success stories!

You can share your stories on

www.facebook.com/preventionlinks



Community (PRO) Action

The Dangers of Bath Salts

As many of you have heard by now, a 22-year old woman was found dead in a Cranford home on Sunday morning. Her boyfriend, a 22-year old Cranford resident, has been charged with first degree homicide in the case. At the center of this tragic incident is the controversy of the dangerously growing trend towards the use of the drug referred to as *Bath Salts*, also known as 'Synthetic Cocaine'. The young man charged in the homicide has a history of drug use including a recent problem with *Bath Salts*.

Bath Salts are known to cause extreme agitation, paranoia, and sometimes vivid hallucinations. Currently, this product is legal to sell in New Jersey. It can be found at convenience stores and smoke shops across the state. However, as of Wednesday morning, March 16, two NJ legislators, including Assemblywoman Linda Stender from Union County, plan on introducing a bill to ban the sale of *Bath Salts* throughout the state. So many times, we hear of trends throughout the country and think 'this will never happen here'. Unfortunately, it has now hit closer to home than ever before. A similar story occurred in Louisiana, with a man committing suicide after hallucinating on bath salts. Thanks to the man's father, who stepped up and took action against this dangerous substance, *Bath Salts* are now illegal to sell in the state of Louisiana. It is important for us to take the same action now before another tragedy occurs by supporting Assemblywoman [Linda Stender](#).

Locally, Prevention Links understands the need to keep parents, teachers and community members educated on this and other dangerous drug trends. Learning about their availability, their effects and the most effective ways to prevent the widespread use of *Bath Salts* and other alternative substances is the most effective strategy we can take as a community. Prevention Links currently offers presentations on the topic of alternative drugs which include *Bath Salts*. If you are interested in having a presentation done for your group or organization please contact Michael Litterer at 732-381-4100 or mlitterer@preventionlinks.org.

Prevention Links has set up a "Report a Store" link on our website and we ask you to please let us know where *Bath Salts* are being sold so we can educate the store owners on this dangerous substance www.preventionlinks.org You will be able to read more about *Bath Salts*. Also, please take a moment to read the article on a proposed bill that would ban *Bath Salts* in New Jersey: [Link to Article](#)

Family Movie Review: RANGO



One principle Strengthening Families teaches is the importance of quality family time and communication. One easy way to spend a couple hours together as a family and talk on the way home in the car is by going to the movies! Read below for a parent-friendly review of the new movie **Rango**.

When Rango (voice of Johnny Depp) is accidentally abandoned in the Mojave Desert, the already insecure chameleon finds he may have to do more than just change his color in order to fit in with the locals. Much like the furry critters in this movie that spend their time wading through sand in the quest for water, the script seems to be on an endless search for solid footing. With too much content and peril for many young children and not enough substantial storyline for adults, *Rango* will leave many audience members thirstin' for a more engaging entertainment option.

Overall Rating: B-

DISCUSSION TOPICS What consequences does Rango face for his lies? Were there any parts that made you feel scared? Why? What was your favorite part of the movie?

Information found on www.parentpreviews.com



We want to hear from you!

We love to chat, email, break bread, laugh, and just plain have fun – so please do not hesitate to contact us!

"TO ACCOMPLISH GREAT THINGS,
WE MUST NOT ONLY ACT,
BUT ALSO **DREAM**;
NOT ONLY PLAN,
BUT ALSO **BELIEVE**"

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