



June 2018 Newsletter



Inform Yourself!

During the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (June 26) we were reminded that [28% of adolescents in Latin America are experimenting with drugs and alcohol during their school-age years](#). For a growing teenager, substance abuse plays an enormous role in physical and mental health development.

Our research shows that **it is possible to prevent or reduce drug abuse in teens when we focus on building their personal leadership**. When a teen learns how to set goals, reflect on their personal values, and define their life mission, they build a character of resilience and optimism that becomes more important than peer pressure.

Prevention of drug and alcohol abuse not only saves lives - it saves money. Researchers from the University of Washington recently studied TeenSmart's prevention strategy and found that while TeenSmart invests \$22 per teen to provide coaching, courses and information, the government of Costa Rica spends \$1,201 per person annually to treat alcohol and substance abusers.

This is one more reason why TeenSmart's main mission is to equip and empower teens through life-skills courses and dynamic virtual coaching so that they can be their own strongest advocate.

Know a teen battling drug abuse?
Find info and support on
JovenSalud.net



Take Action!

Invite any Spanish-speaking teen you know to visit www.JovenSalud.net and begin to choose a path of personal leadership and smart decision making. Thanks to donor support, any teen can use JovenSalud 24/7 from their phone, tablet or computer. They'll find health information, counseling (coaching), and life-skills and personal empowerment courses.

Celebrate with us!



Sixteen youth leaders from the economically-challenged area of Limon, Costa Rica were **trained to teach the Entrepreneurship and Healthy Habits course to 600 local youth**. We are so proud of this win-win-win project carried out by TeenSmart, Fundacion Omar Dengo and the US Embassy.



Thanks to the support of Marina Pez Vela, TeenSmart is in Quepos! This coastal town near the famous Manuel Antonio National Park in Costa Rica has high rates of school desertion and drug and alcohol abuse. But where others see challenges, we see opportunities – teens with tools to develop self-leadership and smart decision making. In just a few weeks, **over 250 students have already signed up on JovenSalud!**



We continue to collaborate with CLARO to share JovenSalud.net at their “Digital Village” events throughout Costa Rica. Ayme, our Health Promoter from the Brunca Region of Costa Rica, organizes volunteers in order to get as many teens registered and active on JovenSalud.net during each Digital Village. This June we had 100 teens register, half of whom went on to make over 80 requests for counseling.

The internal strife in Nicaragua over the past few months has made it difficult for many of our teens living there to go to school, which is often their only access to coaching and life-skills services on www.jovensalud.net. However, we continue to stay connected to our Nicaraguan youth as much as possible and our counselors are standing by prepared to support them as well. **Do you know a teen affected by the violence in Nicaragua? Refer them to JovenSalud.net today.**

Be Inspired!

This famous quote describes TeenSmart well – thoughtful, committed... and small! By using smart, virtual technology as our main tool for preventing risk behaviors in over 50,000 online users, we are able to stay intentionally small and focus our efforts on the mission at hand – empowering youth to make smart decisions.

That is why our staff of 15 is always pleasantly surprised when we find out that **we are finalists for huge international prizes like the 2018 VIVA Premios Schmidheiny. TeenSmart was recently chosen out of 568 applicants as one of the top 5 social ventures with the most impact and innovation in Latin America.** Thanks for celebrating this achievement with us!

