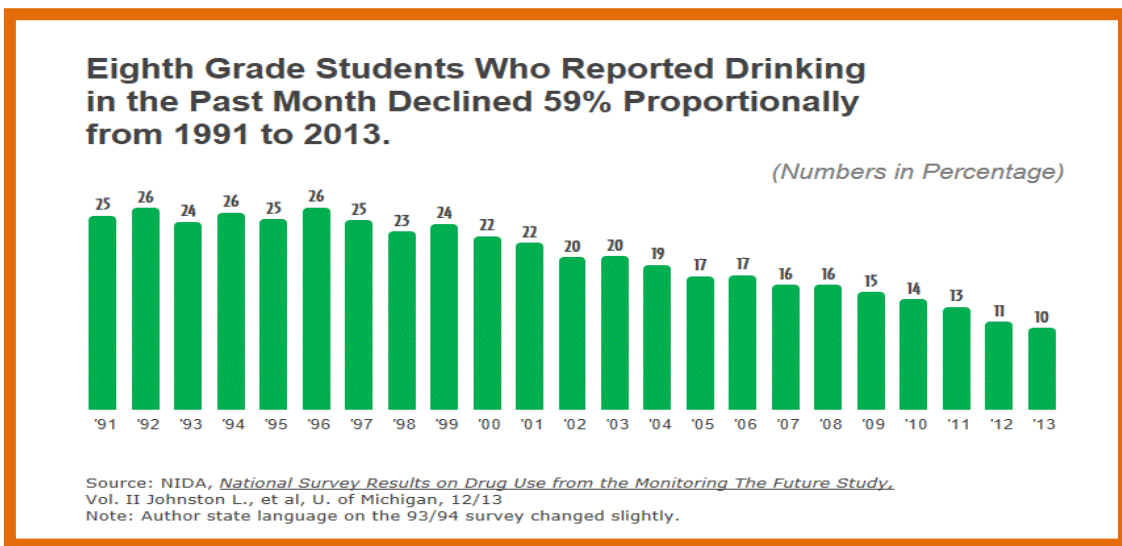




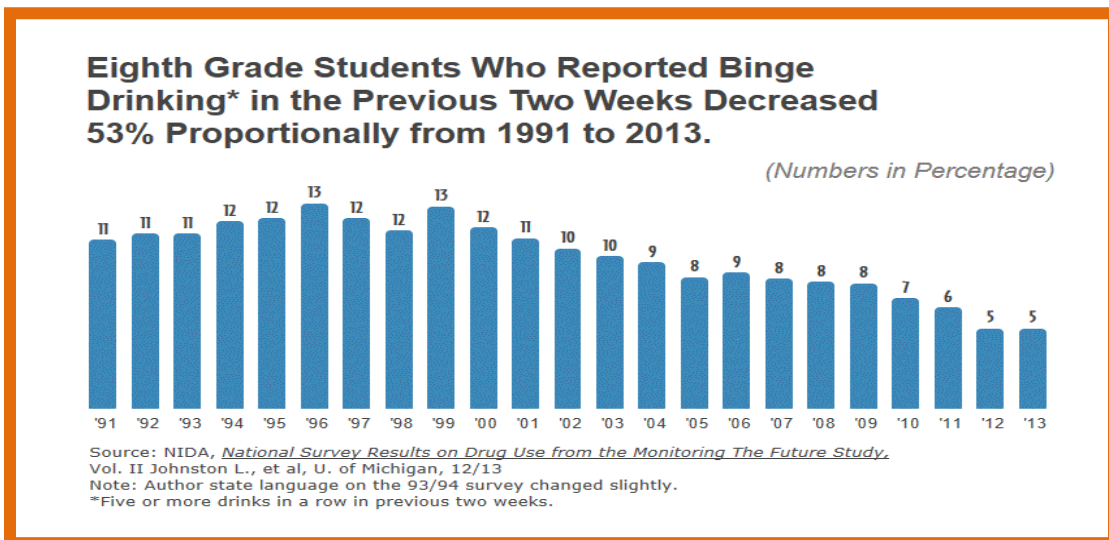
# DECEMBER 2014 NEWSLETTER

## Major Reductions in Youth Risky Behaviors are a Cause for Celebration by Pamela Erickson

During this holiday season, celebrate your success! Thanks to the work in all our communities and the efforts of youth, risky behaviors among youth are all at historic low rates. The exception is marijuana. More about that later...but look at all this good news starting with eighth-grade underage drinking rates:

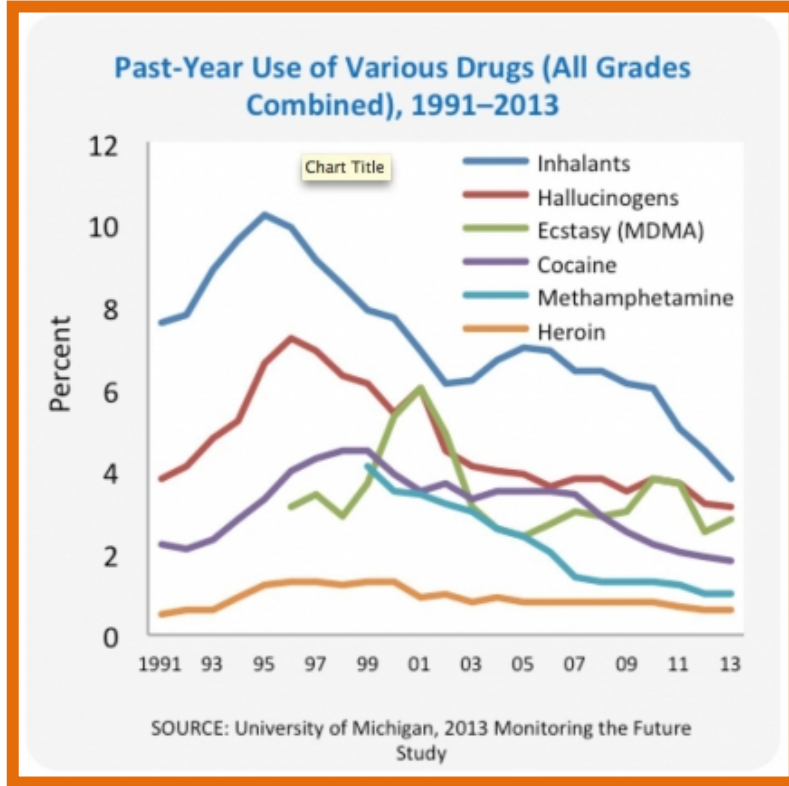


**Binge drinking rates are very low.**

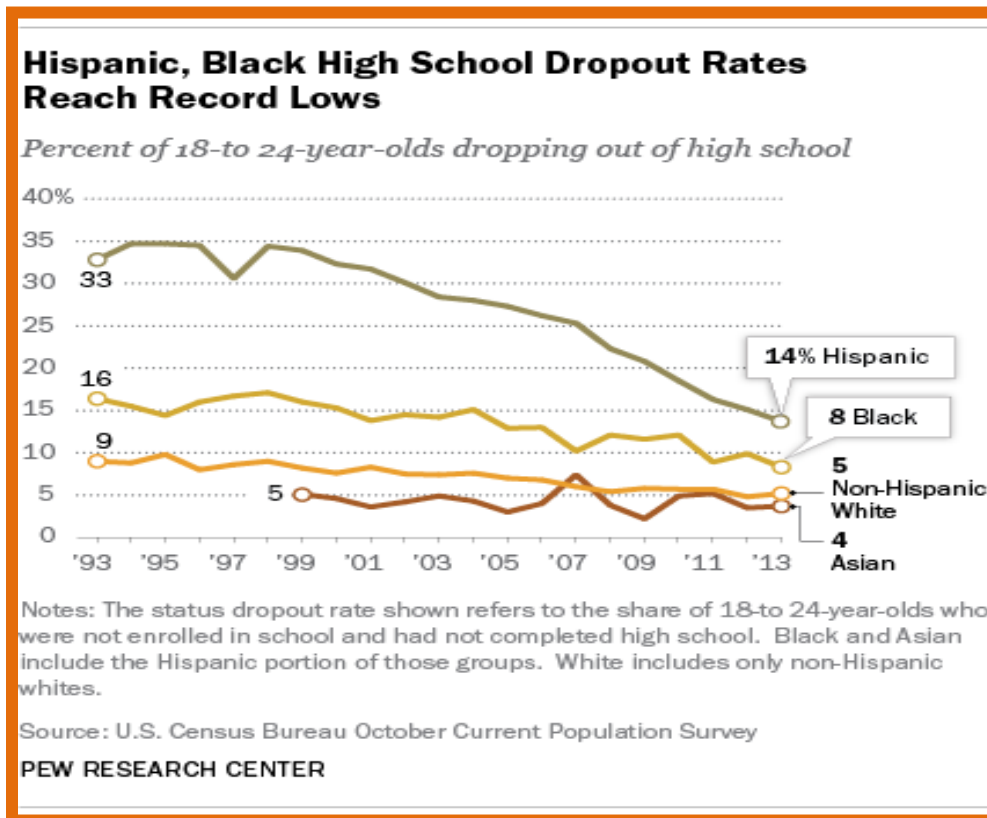


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Contact Pam Erickson at [pam@pamaction.com](mailto:pam@pamaction.com)

**Use of drugs by youth in all grades has declined.**

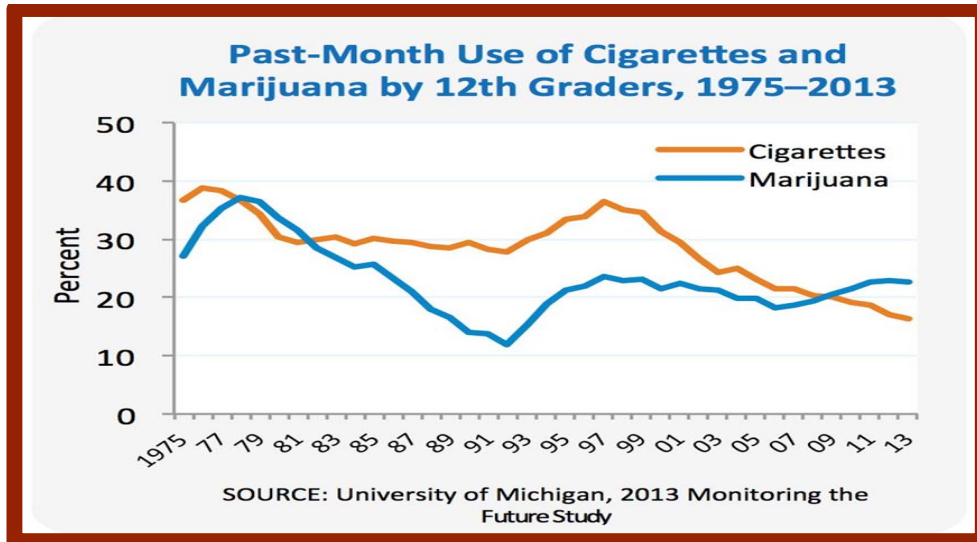


**Look at the decrease in high school drop-out rates!**



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Although marijuana use has now surpassed cigarette use for youth, it appears to be leveling off. Let's push it down!



So please offer a major thank-you to all those in your community who have worked so hard and have achieved so much. These groups deserve special recognition:

1. **Youth** are often portrayed badly in the media. Anyone who has worked with kids these days knows that most of our youth are just awesome! The data now confirms it!
2. **Parents'** influence over teens' decision to drink has grown from 51% in 1993-1994 to 73% in 2013, according to the GfK Roper Youth Report. Active parenting works for many risky behaviors, not just for alcohol. Parenting is very hard work and deserves a lot of thanks.
3. **Alcohol regulators and law enforcement** have worked hard to make alcohol to maintain a strong regulatory system which makes alcohol harder for youth to obtain.
4. **Community coalitions** excel in fostering effective local partnerships involving a broad spectrum of stakeholders: media representatives, school officials, law enforcement, industry representatives, business leaders, public officials and many more. All these deserve credit.

**Prevention is a highly cost-effective means of dealing with alcohol abuse.** According to the Centers for Disease Control, alcohol kills an average of 88,000 people per year and cost the public \$223.5 billion. That's \$746 for each of us. Preventing problems from occurring saves lives and dollars!

**A final note: Alcohol deregulation or loss of focus on comprehensive prevention efforts could easily erase all these good results.**

We know a lot about what works to influence youth behavior and we have local coalitions in place. We can use these tools to reduce youth marijuana use. But, we must continue our efforts to reduce underage drinking and related risky behavior or these excellent trends could be reversed.

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