

# Survey says Council ponders best way to get optimum results

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Members of the Resource and Collaboration Council met



**Claremont**

Monday to discuss how to best distribute and get the word out about their upcoming community prevention survey oriented for the whole community, but created primarily for middle and high school parents.

"In other surveys, children said their parents were the most influential people when it comes to making choices," said Harry Wolhandler, Communities United for Substance Abuse Prevention evaluator.

Wolhandler has prepared a model survey that questions parents and community members on their own beliefs about drinking, their thinking toward

risks and whether they have seen information on substance abuse prevention and whether it has changed their mind, or opinion.

"We would love to hear people say they are having a little less tolerance for substance abuse," he said.

Wolhandler said he was concerned about sending the survey home with students from school, as generally only the "model parents" would send them back.

"How do we get them to the whole community?" he asked.

RACC members discussed creating field teams to distribute surveys at community events and the possibility of sending surveys home with school progress reports.

Linda Davies, Family School Connections executive director, suggested also asking parents

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of fifth-grade students to participate in the survey.

"Fifth-grade parents are getting nervous about what is coming up next," Davies said.

The group consensus was to hope to begin survey distribution at community and school events beginning this month.

Samantha Clough, Big Brothers Big Sisters recruiter, shared her concern that many Claremont residents might not participate in the survey because of their low level of reading skills, and noted that an old statistic showed that 30 percent of city residents are "functionally illiterate."

Clough's comments lead to a

discussion on whether support services organizations in the community, such as Turning Points Network or the Claremont Soup Kitchen, would be able to verbally administer the surveys to those they serve.

Liz Hennig, CUFSAP coordinator, said she would begin approaching the groups to see if they would be interested.

"It is important to gauge how we come in," Hennig said.

Wolhandler said that he also hopes to conduct a readiness survey, results of which are determined from 30 in-person, one-hour interviews done with community leaders, using open-ended questions, this summer.

"They ask thought-provoking questions about where they

see things standing in the community," Wolhandler said of the survey. "It is more of a gauge of community systems, how they are able to and how are they addressing the need for intervention."

The results of a readiness survey conducted in the community last year showed a readiness factor of two, Wolhandler said, meaning that the community is "marginally aware of any prevention programs at all."

"If you propose an aggressive program in a community that is not at the point of readiness, you are not going to get it to work," he said. "We are fighting at the lower stages but I think we're making progress."

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