

A Joyful Drug-Free Living Summer Program for Youth at Tarzana Treatment Centers

With the Medicated Assisted Treatment Youth Expansion program, TTC opened the door for at-risk youth to enjoy a no-cost summer in a safe environment in SoCal.

TARZANA, CALIFORNIA, USA, August 1, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Focusing on offering youth in the San Fernando Valley an alternative to the streets and getting into trouble, Tarzana Treatment Centers provided a no-cost summer option called the Joyful Drug-Free

Living (JDFL) Summer Program and Drop-in Center. The drop-in center opened in June and will close in August, with hours that range from 10:30 am to 4:00 pm at 18700 Oxnard St. In Tarzana, California. A successful venture, the program provided snacks, games, and movies with time slots designated for specialized programming and guest speakers.

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Mark Winkler



The Serenity of the the JDFL Program and Drop-In Center

JDFL was offered in conjunction with [Medicated Assisted Treatment Youth Expansion \(MAT-YE\)](#) in Southern California. The goal of the JDFL Summer Program was to help youth enrolled in SUD (substance use disorder) treatment and MAT-YE keep on course. All youth enrolled in SUD treatment and MAT-YE can access this program. The goal was to have a summer schedule that was fun and exciting while also helping to avoid the negative temptations of unstructured time.

From experience working with youth, both [TTC Youth and Family Services](#) and MAT-YE know that excessive unstructured time can trigger many to use drugs and alcohol. Helping bolster the treatment program, the JDFL program imparted education and prevention strategies to youth. Focusing on acquiring positive life skills, the hope is that youth learn to live productive lives without the temptation of drugs and alcohol. Hence, JDFL will educate youth on the dangers of

opioids and other substances and the benefits of medicated-assisted treatment (MAT).

However, this program was not all about treatment and education. Indeed, JDFL also focused on helping youth understand the value of pursuing a joyful life free of drugs and alcohol. Thus, the program delivered a slate of low/no-cost fun activities for youth. If teenagers can see that a life without drugs and alcohol can be awesome, they are much more likely to stick to a positive path moving forward.

Some of the positive sober activities from this year's program have included:

1) Working with Tree People, youth from the program took a tour of the Tree Peoples headquarters in Coldwater Canyon Park and participated in a local beach cleanup. They also learned how gardening and planting can be healthy and therapeutic interactions with nature.

2) Painted Brain worked with youth to learn how creative activities can help with mental health challenges. Art activities included painting, journal decoration, and music-making every Friday in July.

3) On four separate occasions, youth could spend the day at Balboa Park, where Wheel Fun Rentals provided free access to bikes and pedal boats. Many of the young people had never had access to such fun and exciting experiences.

4) John Rhone, an Apple computer coding expert, graciously volunteered to help the youth with a musical bent experience coding their music. The idea of such a venture on multiple days is to show how sobriety and creativity go together.



Fun Outings with the Joyful Drug-Free Living Summer Program



Safe Fun and Safe Activities with the Joyful Drug-Free Living Summer Program

5) At the end of July, an outing to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS). Devoted to the film industry's history and cultural impact, it is the first large-scale museum of its kind in the US. The outing showed youth what they can achieve if they stay sober and focus on being productive.

Finally, we should not forget the multiple outings to play miniature golf, take a shot at the baseball batting cages, and go bowling at some local lanes. Looking at this diverse array of fun activities, you understand why this first JDFL summer program was such a success. Also, free nutritional sack lunches were provided for each activity. After all, everyone knows the importance of keeping a young person well-fed and nourished.

Providing a safe, joyful, preventative, and educational environment full of engaging activities for all youth, the JDFL Program and Drop-In Center is a significant step in the right direction. The Drop-In Center is part of the [California Youth Opioid Response Project](#). A major aspect of the project is engaging youth through art/multimedia workshops and other somatic experiences to enhance whole-person wellness. By tapping into the creativity of young people, the belief is that prevention and educational efforts would be more effective.

Indeed, TTC/MAT-YE has been excited to turn this summer into a positive experience. Such a successful venture will lead to more such opportunities in the future. Activities like these positively impact a youth's recovery, exposing young people to new and positive pro-social activities that promote a healthy and active lifestyle.

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