

Legal SCENE

By Ron Hocevar
Scott County Attorney



Tee It Up provides drug prevention curriculum

The 12th Annual *Tee It Up For The Task Force* fundraiser took place at Stonebrooke Golf Club in Shakopee on Sept. 7. We had our most successful fundraiser yet, and I want to thank everyone involved in this event and to update the community as to how we intend to use the money we are raising. Thank you to all the golfers who, year after year, continue to support this event. For the fourth year in a row, we completely sold out tee times (144 golfers!) by March 1. I also want to thank the over 30 volunteers who took time to lend their support to make this event run smoothly.

Of course, this event could never be the success it is without all the sponsors that donate time, money, and merchandise. Please like us and share on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/choosenottouse.org/>) and visit our website (<http://choosenottouse.org/>) to see all the sponsors that make this event possible. Please support these businesses and let them know you appreciate their help in keeping our kids off drugs and making the right choices in their lives.

The County Attorney's Office Crime and Drug Prevention Coordinator, Kathy Welter, is the driving force behind ChooseNotToUse and I can't thank her enough for her dedication and effort she puts in to this program.

So what is ChooseNotToUse, and what are we doing? The mission of ChooseNotToUse is to educate our kids K-12 about the dangers of illegal drug use and to provide them with the tools they need to say no and to make healthy life decisions. In the past, we partnered with CLIMB Theatre and provided drug education in our schools. We still partner with CLIMB Theatre to provide education about drug and alcohol prevention at the Juvenile Alternative Facility in Jordan.

In 2017, we decided that we wanted an ongoing curriculum for our students, so we searched for an accredited program that we believed would benefit our students and community. We then formed a partnership with Courage to Speak (<http://couragetospeak.org/>) to provide drug prevention curricula to our schools at no cost to the school districts. The Courage to Speak curriculum provides eight to 15 ongoing lesson plans (depending on the age they are being provided to) and they are taught by a teacher from each school.

The Courage to Speak Foundation was founded by Ginger and Larry Katz after they lost their son to a drug overdose. Ginger made a promise to her son to do everything in her power to prevent a similar tragedy from happening to another family. The Foundation's mission is dedicated to "Saving lives by educating and empowering youth to be drug free and encouraging parents to talk to their children about the danger of drugs."

The organization, with a team of experts, developed a drug prevention education curricula evaluated and recommended by the Yale School of Medicine. The curricula provide education for 4th grade through 12th grade, and each curriculum starts with a book titled *Sunny's Story*. Sunny was the family beagle and was Ginger and Larry's son, Ian's, best friend. Ian became addicted to drugs and died of an overdose. The book is told through Sunny's viewpoint, and is quite engaging and powerful. Sunny sees the changes in Ian and tells us what it is like to live with someone who is addicted to drugs and the pain and sadness caused by this addiction.

The curriculum requires parental involvement and is socially and emotionally based. It concentrates on refusal skills, parent involvement, healthy passions, courage in relationships, and trusting adults.

If your child attends a Scott County school during their elementary, middle, and/or high school years, he/she could potentially receive this curriculum three times during their K-12 years. Each curriculum is age-appropriate, and will reiterate and build upon what they learned in prior years and then concentrate on the drugs most affecting their age groups.

Currently, Jordan High, Middle, and Elementary Schools, in addition to the Southwest Metro/Oasis Middle and High School, are implementing this new curriculum. On Oct. 1, ChooseNotToUse sponsored Ginger Katz and brought her in to speak to the students at the Jordan High School. We invited representatives from all of the school districts in Scott County to hear this incredible presentation and to then participate in an intimate question and answer session with Ginger. Our goal is to provide this curriculum to all 26 Scott County schools. This program costs approximately \$900 per class, per school, and we have 26 public schools in Scott County. But remember – thanks to the fundraiser and generosity of our community, ChooseNotToUse will provide the curriculum at no cost to the school districts.

We strongly believe in this program and in the need for it. If your child's school is not providing this curriculum, you should be asking them why not. Follow and like me on facebook at www.facebook.com/C.A.Hocevar/ and Twitter @rhocevar1.

SWCD accepting tree orders

If you're looking to increase wild-life habitat and slow down that winter wind, plan on planting trees! The Scott Soil and Water Conservation District's annual tree sale has begun, and the best time to order is now.

The tree sale is a great opportunity for residents to add high-quality, low-cost natural plantings to their yard or acreage. There are 29 varieties of trees and shrubs for sale, including Balsam Fir, Silver Maple, Staghorn Sumac, and Black Walnut (which are new to the sale this year)! Native seed mixes, rain barrels, and tree supplies (mats, spades, tree shelters, and marking flags) are also for sale.

All varieties for sale thrive in Minnesota's various soil types and climate. The sale began this month and continues through the beginning of spring. Orders will be available for pick up on Friday, April 26 at the Scott County Fairgrounds in Jordan. Put in your order early to insure the species you want are available!

Call the Scott SWCD office in Jordan at (952) 492-5425 or send an e-mail to scottswcdtrees@gmail.com for more information. You can order online at www.scottswcdtrees.com or send your order and payment to the Scott SWCD Office, 7151 190 St. W, Suite 125, Jordan.

Choose Not to Use would like to say THANK YOU!



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Coordinators: Ron Hocevar, Scott County Attorney; Luke Hennen, Scott County Sheriff; Dave Beer, Scott County Commissioner; Kathy Welter, Crime and Drug Prevention Coordinator

Keep leaves out of gutters for water quality

As everyone knows, when those orange leaves are falling to the ground, they land where they will: The deck, the street, the lake, the lawn. Many of these leaves land or blow into the street where they find their way to the gutter, and the rain carries them down the storm drain system, directly into our lakes and streams.

While it is natural for some leaves to fall into these waterbodies from surrounding trees, it is *not* natural for leaves to be piped in from throughout the city. This results in more leaves than the waterbodies can handle. The excess nutrients the decomposing leaves provide increase algal growth, which can lead to algae blooms. When the algae die and decompose, they use up much of the oxygen in the water, which is needed for fish and aquatic plants to survive. Much of the pollution in urban lakes can be attributed to an excess of leaves.

You can do your part for improving water quality by taking care of the leaves that fall in your yard, driveway,



or sidewalk right away before they have a chance to blow into the street. While raking and bagging them for pick-up is a good option, a great

alternative is mulching your lawn with the leaves. The easiest way to do this is to mow over the leaves while mowing the grass. This will break the leaves into small enough pieces that they will settle into the lawn. Some people worry that mulching with shredded leaves will build thatch, but that is not the case. The shredded leaf mulch acts as a fertilizer adding nutrients back to the soil, helping the lawn retain moisture, and reducing weeds. Mulching with shredded leaves gives your lawn multiple benefits while also reducing the amount of nutrients that enter local lakes and streams. It's a win/win!