

50 Recovering Houston Teens Visit Capitol Hill to Lobby Congresspeople

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Capitol Hill will have a teen presence that George W. Bush can be proud of. 50 teenagers from the Houston, Tex., area will make their way to Capitol Hill during the National Association for Addiction Professional's (NAADAC) Public Policy Conference 2002, February 24-26, 2002 at the Capitol Hilton in Washington, DC.

What makes these teens so special is they are recovering from alcoholism and drug abuse. During the Public Policy Conference they will go to the offices of their respective Texas Representatives and personally talk to them about their experiences, and policies they want to see enacted on behalf of recovering teens everywhere, and their families.

According to the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, as reported by the Office of National Drug Control Policy, of youths ages 12-17:

- 9.7 percent reported current use of illicit drugs in 2000.
- Marijuana was the major illicit drug used for this age group: 7.2 % of youths being current users.
- Young cigarette smokers are more likely to use illicit drugs, alcohol, or other tobacco products than nonsmoking youth.

This "Texas Teen" delegation is a tradition at the Public Policy Conference. They are invited to many of the other events that are associated with the Conference.

"We adults who go every year with the teens see something different each time. The stories the teens tell the Congressmen and women will break their hearts, and sometimes even make you smile," said Robert Miles, chaperone for the teens. "Some of the teens return the next year and tell the officials of their success stories, and thank them for the support they have made possible. The rewards never stop, and these teens see to it that it doesn't. They are very passionate." He said "and it does my heart good to see them so passionate about something positive."

The press will be allowed (and are encouraged) to follow the teens on their mission to open the ears and minds of their elected officials. Releases have been given to the teens and their

legal guardians approving media coverage. Please contact Rhonda A. Davis for more information and a schedule.