

## **Is preventing youth marijuana use the city's responsibility?**

*Perhaps the better question is -- how could Oregon City youth's quality of life not be considered part of the city's mission? Youth marijuana use can decrease the usability of parks for all residents, increase the cost of police operations, increase the cost of park maintenance and create public safety issues. Drug-free youth are part of vital, livable communities. It is everyone's job to ensure youth are drug free and have the opportunity to live up to their full potential.*

### **Use taxes generated from legal marijuana to mitigate the negative impact of legal marijuana on Oregon City youth**

Oregon City Together is asking city leaders to connect the "benefits" of legal marijuana in the form of marijuana dispensary taxes to youth marijuana prevention. Please consider investing 10 percent of the city's marijuana dispensary tax dollars to mitigate the negative impacts of legal marijuana on the youth in our community.

This same concept is illustrated by the majority of Oregon 's tobacco taxes going to the Oregon Health Plan to fund health care, tobacco use prevention and cessation, all connected to the negative impact of tobacco use; Almost 20 percent of Oregon's liquor taxes go to mental health, alcoholism and drug services -- again, these services are connected to the negative impact of alcohol.

### **Well-represented coalition focuses on local solutions to local problems**

The only criteria for nonprofits that might receive marijuana dispensary tax funding should be the organization's connection to youth marijuana prevention.

The Oregon City Together (OCT) Coalition is the ONLY organization in Oregon City focusing solely on PREVENTING youth marijuana and alcohol use. The coalition's board reflects diverse sectors of the community, including:

- Law enforcement -- Oregon City Police Officer Spencer Rohde
- Education -- Larry Didway, Superintendent, Oregon City School District
- Civic organizations -- Brian Shaw
- Business -- Christine Moore, publisher, Pamplin Media Group

- Faith-based organizations -- Bryan Watt, youth minister and Oregon City High School swim coach
- Parents -- Lane Dillman and Jodi Shafer
- Youth -- Emma Shafer
- Youth-serving organizations -- Sarah Fitts, councilor, Northwest Family Services
- Health care -- Kathleen Agee, RN

Board members at large include Paige Hirt, Doug Neeley, Laura Poore and Angela Wright. Additionally, we have a database of more than 900 constituents. What we all have in common is that we are committed to the well being of Oregon City's youth.

### **Coalition could serve as foundation for task force**

Because OCT's Board already represents the community, with just a few additional participants, the coalition can easily serve as a city task force to gather input and determine where youth marijuana prevention tax dollars are best used. **Oregon City Together is not asking that city marijuana dispensary tax dollars go directly to the coalition but that funds be allocated for evidence-based youth marijuana PREVENTION strategies in Oregon City.**

For example, because data shows an alarming increase in the percentage of middle students who think marijuana is not harmful, OCT recommends investing city marijuana dispensary tax dollars to build middle-schoolers' resilience to using marijuana. **Our coalition supports student-led, adult-guided after-school clubs at Oregon City's two middle schools.** To carry out this prevention strategy, city marijuana dispensary tax dollars could be dedicated to OCT or to individual OCT members such as the police department, school district, or Gardiner and Ogden Middle Schools.

Down the road, as results are tracked and data collected, other strategies may be implemented. The task force could meet bi-annually to discuss varied options as part of the city's budget process.

**Drug-free youth are part of vital, livable communities. Using marijuana dispensary taxes from legal marijuana to mitigate the impact of legal marijuana on our youth is an excellent investment in Oregon City's future.**

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