

Share Your Family Dinner Memories in Our Story Contest!

Do you eat dinner? If you do, you qualify for our Story Contest.

Have you ever eaten dinner? If you do, you qualify for our Story Contest.

Now just about everybody and anybody should qualify for the Story Contest through Communities That Care of Lorain County, a countywide coalitions working to prevent and reduce underage substance abuse. We want your best, most memorable stories about your family dinners, family meals or most creative way to get your family together. (And we know that last one is not an easy task these days).

Our Story Contest is a spinoff from the national campaign from the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University; the grassroots effort has become a nationwide celebration. For more information on the national campaign, check out the website: www.casafamilyday.org

Last Monday, September 27, local agencies supported the national campaign by celebrating “Family Day: A Day to Eat Dinner with Your Children.”

More than 300 parents, caregivers and youth gathered for Amherst Youth Football’s annual Meet and Greet last Monday; the guest of honor was tables filled with Potluck galore crock pots bulging, delicious desserts, hot dogs, hamburgers and pizza.

That same evening, over at the Salvation Army in Elyria, they served up pasta with meatballs, breadsticks, salad, lemonade and desserts. Delish! Several dozen families including Salvation Army clients and those involved with the Lorain County Juvenile Court system gathered for food, family and fellowship (not to mention some darn good eats.)

Eating dinner together is one of the simplest most effective ways to protect your kids from risky behaviors. Research shows that youth who eat dinner with their parents/caregivers are less likely to drink, smoke or do drugs. Dale Jones, program director for the Salvation Army, calls dinner a “lost art” that needs to be revived. Donna Rivera, Juvenile Court spokesman, said eating dinners together can help youth avoid jail.

How can a simple dinner do all that? Think about family dinners – they are time to check in, talk, converse, laugh, cry about the daily adventures of our lives. That connection builds community around the dinner table, provides more connections between youth and parents and gives parents a simple way to open up the door for ongoing conversations of all sorts.

The coalition wants to support those efforts and we’re looking for lots of entries. Send us the good, the bad, the ugly, the bittersweet. Winning entries will receive Stouffer’s coupons for Family Size Meals or Easy Express Skillet Meals. Stouffer’s a Cleveland-based company partnered with the national campaign and generously donated coupons to our coalition.

Keep your entries short – maximum of 250 words. You can send them to Catherine Gabe, CTC coordinator, 4950 Oberlin Ave., Lorain, OH 44053 or via e-mail at cgabe@lorainadas.org

Deadline is Oct. 22. So eat dinner as often as you can with your family – whatever your family looks like these days. Jot down your memories of that dinner or other memorable ones and send them our way.

We’re looking forward to some delicious reading.