Rollin' & Dustin':

Pathways to Urban Life Styles

CREDITS

PROJECT TEAM

JEAN J. SCHENGUL, PH.D.
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

RAUL PINO, M.D.
PROJECT DIRECTOR

REGINA BLAKE
COMMUNITY RESEARCHER

REY BERMUDEZ A.A.
COMMUNITY RESEARCHER
PHOTOGRAPHY

ORLANDO VELAZCO, B.A.
COMMUNITY RESEARCHER

SARAH DIAMOND, PH.D.
QUALITATIVE ANALYST

WILLIAM B. DISCH, PH.D.
QUANTITATIVE ANALYST

COLLEEN L. COLEMAN
ARTISTIC DESIGN

KYLE YOUNG
ILLUSTRATION

RASHIDA COPES
RESEARCHER INTERN

ALLAN WAGNER
RESEARCHER INTERN
PHOTOGRAPHY

BILDADE AUGUSTIN
RESEARCHER INTERN

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The Institute for Community Research

The Institute for Community Research (ICR) was named in 1987. Its mission is to use the tools of research in collaborative community-based partnerships to solve complex social problems, and promote just, equitable and robust democratic institutions in a diverse, multiethnic globe. ICR's staff of multiethnic international researchers, health educators and artists carries out research and intervention programs on health, education and cultural conservation in the United States, Latin America, India and China.

The Hartford Animation Institute is a nationally known Hartford based company that works with youth in training and production of animated films, and comic productions. Joe Young, HAI founder is nationally recognized for his public cartooning projects, and his animated film on urban youth culture, "It's Christmas, Dr. Joe" based on the Scruples cartoon character. HAI houses an incubator for urban youth who want to develop small businesses using communications technology and website design.

Pathways to Hard Drug Use among Urban Youth

This study (1997-2002) was concerned with the transition to hard drug and injected drug use among urban youth ages 16 – 24 who are exposed to high levels of HIV among injection drug users. Through interviews with 401 Hartford youth, the study explored pathways to different types of drug use and in the process discovered and documented the introduction of Ecstasy (MDMA) into urban party settings. Over the course of the study, Pathways researchers monitored the marketing, distribution, and use of MDMA and the experiences of youth who used it. The study also documented the use of high potency marijuana, and Dust, a substance containing a mixture of leaves, formaldehyde or other binding fluid, and, frequently, PCP. The study was funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA Grant # 1 R01 DA11421) the NIDA Office of Special Populations, and the Office of AIDS Research.

Urban Lifestyles (Club Drugs, Resource Inequities and Social Health).

The purpose of this five-year study (2201-2006) is to understand the factors that account for how and why new drugs such as ecstasy, dust and other pills and sniffed products enter urban youth markets, why and how youth use them and the economic, social and sexual consequences of their use. The study has collected survey data from 548 Hartford area youth about their life situation, economic status, community engagement, drug use and social and health consequences. Each summer a group of highschool and college youth have worked with this project to assist with the research, explore media influences on drug use, and analyze data for the Rollin' and Dustin' dissemination project. The study and its minority supplements have been funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA Grant #1 R01 DA 01 010) and the NIDA Office of Special Population.

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