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Blacks still at risk of AIDS

By Hazel Trice Edney
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WASHINGTON — Zaibaa Mahbi, a 16-year-old senior at the Duke Ellington School of the Arts in Washington, D.C., is walking down the street on her cell phone when she gets some shocking news.

"I'm just having fun, first of all. I'm out walking down the street and all that," Mahbi recounts. "And I get a text message saying that my friend, one of my very close friends, went to a party and did something really stupid, got high and hooked up with some guy she hardly even knew and got the virus, HIV."

She continues, "When you find out that someone close to you has AIDS, there's anger somehow, anger at yourself and anger at that person, and you are so distraught because that one action led to that consequence and there's no turning back."

Fortunately, the street scene that Mahbi describes in an interview is not real, but a role she plays in a 60-second public service announcement that will begin airing across the country today, World AIDS Day 2005, an annual international day of action on HIV and AIDS.

"Basically what it's trying to do is raise awareness and to help people to think before they act because people just follow their desires. They say, I want to do it right now," but they don't think about what could happen," says Mahbi.

What is very real is the fact that black teenage girls, the main target of the new PSA, are contracting HIV at alarming rates — in part — because of irresponsible sexual behavior after the use of drugs and alcohol, according to a report released this week from the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the sponsor of the PSA.

"Although African-Americans ages 13-19 represent only 15 percent of U. S. teenagers, they accounted for 66 percent of new AIDS cases reported among teens in 2003," states the report. That's 19 times the rate for White females and five times the rate for Hispanic females.

The report continues, particular HIV risk behaviors of this group, including sexual experimentation and drug abuse, are often influenced by strong peer group relationships and diminished parental involvement that can occur during adolescence.

The research report recommends drug addiction treatment, school and community-based outreach and testing and counseling for HIV as among the most effective ways to reduce the risky behavior for teens and adults.

It also recommends:

- Research to understand the factors leading to disparities in HIV infection and survival rates among racial and ethnic minorities, particularly among African-Americans, taking into account age, gender, education, sexual identity, geographic region, and socioeconomic status.

- Studies to recommend culturally sensitive protective factors and culturally sensitive prevention interventions.

- Scientific studies on how an individual's peers, relationships, social networks, and environment influence both drug abuse and sexual risk-taking.

"Three key findings inform our approach, linking the interactions of drug abuse and HIV/AIDS in ways that extend far beyond injection drug use," the report states. "First, drug abuse impairs judgment and

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Season built for dreams

For first time, a Bob Mackie gown adorns black Barbie



PHOTO/MATTEL

This year's Holiday Barbie is the first African American doll that Bob Mackie has designed a gown for.

By Cheris F. Hodges
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Every year girls and women wait with anticipation for Holiday Barbie. This year legendary designer Bob Mackie has finally put one of his dresses on a black Barbie.

The first of Barbie's black friends, "Colored Francie," debuted in 1967, but racial tensions quickly forced the doll to be discontinued. The first African-American Barbie,

"Black Barbie," appeared in 1980.

For over a decade, the holiday season has been eagerly anticipated because of the appearance of a holiday-themed Barbie. This doll has become an annual tradition for collectors, commemorating the year and reflecting the love and joy of the season. In many families, a holiday-themed Barbie is a very special gift that is shared by generations as a keep-

sake that will long be cherished.

The 2005 Holiday Barbie is unique since, for the first time ever, Mackie is the designer. Shimmering and sparkling with glitter, this doll exhibits the extravagance and glamour for which Mackie is famous. The gown is crafted of glitter-printed jacquard, mushroom pleated tulle, fuchsia sparkle organza, and pink satin. The burgundy flock sash features

a silvery edge. A glitter printed starburst design embellishes the shoulder. Brooch, necklace, earrings, and crown are accessories.

The Holiday Barbie dressed in a burgundy and silver gown is available at retailers now. Additionally, a second Holiday Barbie doll, wearing a green version of the gown, is available exclusively at Sears. Another difference between the

Please see BLACK/2B

Stay-at-home dads overcome stigma

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PRESCOTT, Ariz. — Eleven-year-old Hannah Kellerman is proud of her father's popularity with her classmates.

Hannah said her friends like to visit her house after school or on weekends because they enjoy hanging out with Edd while their own parents are absent.

Edd, 40, also volunteers to be a chaperone during

school field trips, Hannah said.

"That's what made my friends love my dad," said Hannah, a sixth-grader at Prescott Mile High Middle School.

"My friends always had to stay at home because they can't do stuff with their family because their parents work full-time," she said. "I think I am a lot better off this way."

Edd, a part-time grant-and copywriter with the Stepping Stones Agencies in Prescott Valley, stays at home with Hannah while his wife, Mardi, holds a demanding job as a senior scrub technician at Yavapai Regional Medical Center.

"I don't think it is extraordinary that I am staying at home with her (Hannah)," Edd said.

The Kellerman family's lifestyle may be rare but not unheard of in the Prescott area.

"That's modern times now," said Prescott Valley resident Julie Schifferli, who pursues her profession as a chiropractor while husband, Thomas, raises their adopted 4-month-old daughter, Annika Rose.

Modern times, with Please see STAY-2B

Joltin' joe: Energy coffee drinks puts the spark in java

By Cheris F. Hodges
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Ever need an extra jolt to start your day? Instead of grabbing a Red Bull, try an energy coffee drink.

What? An energy coffee drink called Shock Coffee is available in most convenience stores and drinks like two cups of Java.

Jeff Rosen, president of Shock Coffee, said he works with a company that sells items to convenience stores and he noticed that coffee was one of the top three sellers.

"I wondered why weren't we selling coffee," he said. Rosen, who was develop-

ing an energy drink, wanted to do something different with coffee.

"I did a Google search of energy drinks and coffee," he said. "And I found a company that specialized in that, so we bought them out."

That buyout took the coffee from 200 stores to 4,000 across the country.

The hyper caffeinated coffee is an all-natural blend of dark and light roast coffee beans, selected for the balance between taste and caffeine content. It's designed for any method of brewing and comes in whole bean, ground fractional packs.

There are also blended canned drinks like

Latte/Mocha/TRIPLE Latte/TRIPLE Mocha that are pretty easy to slam down. They come in cool eight-ounce cans with a big coffee or mocha taste and big attitude. They're rich tasting, smooth and creamy with milk, but not too thick or sweet. These are loaded into tidy 24-can cases and delivered to your door.

And then there are the Shock-A-Lots, candy-coated, chocolate-covered, hyper-caffeinated, Shock Coffee beans.

They're coated with extra chocolate and finished off

with a hard yellow candy shell. They're perfect for situations where brewing a cup of Shock isn't so convenient. Each 1-ounce bag equals about two cups of coffee.

"Originally our target market was 18 to 30 year olds, but all walks of life drink our coffee," said Rosen.

Not everyone thinks Shock Coffee is the best new thing in energy drinks, though.

"As you increase your amount of caffeine, there is restlessness, irritability, insomnia, increased heart



Expecting medicine benefits helps

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Your medicine really could work better if your doctor talks it up before handing over the prescription.

Research is showing the power of expectations, that they have physical — not just psychological — effects on your health. Scientists can measure the resulting changes in the brain, from the release of natural painkilling chemicals to alterations in how neurons fire.

Among the most provocative findings: New research suggests that once Alzheimer's disease robs someone of the ability to expect that a proven painkiller will help them, it doesn't work nearly as well.

It's a new spin on the so-called placebo effect — and it begs the question of how to harness this power and thus enhance treatment benefits for patients.

"Your expectations can have profound impacts on your brain and your health," says Columbia University neuroscientist Tor Wager.

"There is not a single placebo effect, but many placebo effects," that differ by illness, adds Dr. Fabrizio Benedetti of Italy's University of Torino Medical School, who is studying those effects in patients with Alzheimer's, Parkinson's disease and pain.

The placebo effect is infamous from studies of new medications: Scientists often given either an experimental drug or a dummy pill to patients and see how they fare. Frequently, those taking the fake feel better, too, for a while, making it more difficult to tease out the medication's true effects.

Doctors have long thought the placebo effect was psychological.

Now scientists are amassing the first direct evidence that the placebo effect actually is physical, and that expecting benefit can trigger the same neurological pathways of healing as real medication does. Among them:

University of Michigan scientists injected the jaws of healthy young men with salt water to cause painful pressure, while PET scans measured the impact in their brains. During one scan, the men were told they were getting a pain reliever, actually a placebo.

Their brains immediately released more endorphins — chemicals that act as natural painkillers by blocking the transmission of pain signals between

Please see EXPECTING/2B

