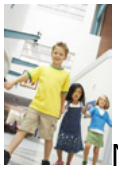
NCADD
NATIONAL COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG DEPENDENCE, INC.

SPOTLIGHT: NCADD Middlesex's Footprints for Life listed on NREPP

 NCADD's *Footprints for Life*™ program was recently approved for listing on The National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP). It is the first curriculum from New Jersey to receive this recognition and the only program designed specifically to promote social competencies in early elementary school students to be listed.

NREPP is a searchable online registry of mental health and substance abuse interventions which have been reviewed and rated by independent reviewers.

The purpose of this registry is to assist the public in identifying scientifically based approaches to preventing and treating mental and/or substance use disorders that can be readily disseminated to the field.

"This is a major accomplishment for NCADD," said Board President Steven Polinsky, Esq., "Normally, only universities and for-profit corporations are able to design programs that reach this level of results and recognition."

Footprints for Life is an intervention designed to help 2nd- and 3rd-grade students build a strong foundation of life skills rooted in key social competencies. The curriculum-based program focuses on planning and decision making, cultural competence, and interpersonal skills, such as handling peer pressure and resolving conflicts peacefully. Information on tobacco and alcohol is provided within the context of refusal skills, as are discussions about seeking help from caring and supportive adults when confronted with situations that make the child feel inadequate or fearful.

"Footprints is a great example of our continuing commitment to using innovation and evaluation to ensure the provision of only the most effective programming." NCADD CEO Steven G. Liga continued, "With today's limited resources, no one can afford to utilize programs that have

not been proven to produce results."

Footprints consists of six weekly lessons taught during a classroom session of approximately 40 minutes. A trained preventionist facilitates the program through the use of role-plays, focused exercises, and activities which include puppets and stories featuring real-life situations experienced by a children's soccer team. Homework to be done jointly with the child's parents reinforces language and techniques for communicating feelings and other skills taught in the classroom.

To complement the classroom curriculum, additional activities for students, as well as tools for parents and teachers, are provided through the Footprints website.

Educators who had *Footprints* delivered in their classroom have enthusiastically embraced the program. Teachers routinely cite specific examples of positive behavioral changes they see in individual students and the class itself as a result of Footprints.

A teacher from Old Bridge noted, "Excellent values are taught in an interesting way at the children's comprehension level. They are practicing skills they can use for life." *Footprints* was first implemented during the 2003-2004 school year in 21 classrooms from two school districts in Middlesex County, New Jersey. It has since been implemented in hundreds of classrooms in dozens of school districts throughout Illinois, Indiana, New Jersey, and New York. Over 30,000 students have completed the curriculum in the past eight years.

For more information contact:

Steve Liga, CEO & Executive Director
NCADD of Middlesex County, Inc.
152 Tices Lane
East Brunswick, NJ 08816
732-254-3344
steve@ncadd-middlesex.org
www.footprintsforlife.org
www.ncadd-middlesex.org