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## Depot, Darien Police offer the ‘straight talk’ on town’s heroin use

By [Natalie Axton](#) on September 22, 2015 in [Lead News](#), [News](#) · [2 Comments](#)

### About author



[Natalie Axton](#)

The Depot wants Darien to be honest about its drug problem. That’s the reason for Wednesday night’s program titled, Lifting the Veil: Facing the Hidden Drug Epidemic in Darien: Part 1. The talk is part of the Straight Talk at the Depot series and is sponsored by the Depot and the Darien Police Department. Part 2 will be in November.

“We’re trying to get through to the community — heroin is prevalent in this town,” says Darien Depot program director, Janice Marzano.

Reached for comment, Darien Police Department’s Public Information Officer Sgt. Jeremiah Marron wrote, “Yes there is a worsening drug problem in Darien that involves the sale and use of heroin and prescription narcotics. We [the Darien Police Department] are assisting with the event [at the Depot] in order to make the community more aware. In my opinion, the current heroin and prescription pill abuse problem accounts for over 85% of crime in Darien.”

Lifting the Veil will include speakers Roody Joseph, M.Ed., LPC of the Counseling Center for Discovery and Change; Officer Michael Cummings and Sergeant TJ Whyte of the Darien Police Department; and Nick deSpoelberch.

Topics to be discussed include warning signs of drug addiction. Marzano wants parents to know the signs and be proactive. She says, “Parents think ‘it’s not my kid.’ We’ve got to get through to them. Once your kid goes to college, you don’t know what’s gonna happen.”

Marzano says she has learned of the deaths of six young people from Darien. All the deaths were heroin-related.

She sees the cycle of drug addiction starts in middle school. “It starts with Adderall, which is given out too freely,” says Marzano.

Used as a study aid, Adderall is often shared between students, Marzano explains. She says some who use Adderall, a stimulant, learn to take Xanax and Oxycontin to calm down. “What goes up has to come down,” says Marzano. She suggests that students are trading these pills and also getting prescription pain relievers from dealers. These pills, when acquired illegally, can cost up to \$40 a pill. Heroin can be had much cheaper.

Heroin use among young people is “a quickly evolving epidemic,” says Dr. Brandon Marshall, assistant professor and graduate program director of the department of epidemiology at Brown University. He says the epidemic is one that researchers and public health officials are just starting to get a handle on.

Marshall recently completed a study, published in the Journal of Pediatrics, showing a strong link between prescription painkillers and heroin among young people. “In particular, the younger someone starts using these prescription painkillers, the more likely they are to transition to heroin in their late teens and early twenties.” Marshall says that pattern is observable in places all over the country.

Through his research he found children as young as 12 trying prescription pain medication for non-medical uses.

The Depot cites the National Institute on Drug Abuse finding that abuse of



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prescription pain medication is linked to heroin use. According to their research, "one in 15 people who take non-medical prescription pain relievers will try heroin within ten years."

Marzano urges parents to count their child's Adderall and make sure their child is taking the medication, not selling or swapping it for other prescription pills.

The Depot cites the Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University: "A child who gets through age 21 without smoking, using illegal drugs or abusing alcohol is virtually certain never to do so."

**For more info:** dariendepot.com; drugabuse.gov

Tags: [Adderall](#), [darien depot](#), [Dr. Brandon Marshall](#), [Heroin](#), [Janice Marzano](#), [jeremiah marron](#), [narcotics](#), [prescription painkillers](#)

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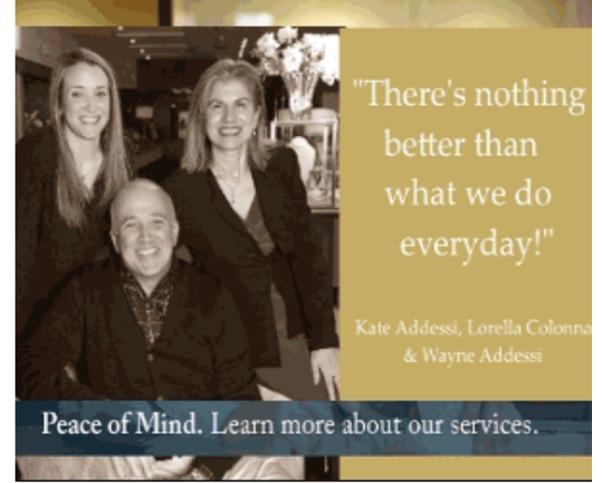
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