

In a world with 24/7 connectivity to phones, social media and the internet, school-aged children are at an all-time high for stress. I'm honored to announce that Homes for Good AZ will be partnering with Mothers Awareness on School-aged Children (MASK) for the month of August.

Drugs, alcohol, eating disorders, bullying, these are the types of issues our youth now face around the clock. Before the internet age, kids were exposed to issues while at school but it doesn't stop now, there is no break; no safe place.

The numbers are staggering when it comes to what children are exposed to.

- 7,540 kids aged 12-17 drink alcohol for the first time every day
- 4 out of 5 high school teens have witnessed the sale of illegal drugs at school
- 6 out of 10 teens witness bullying at least once a day

That's why a group of dedicated mothers created MASK in 2007. Their goal was (and still is) to tackle the variety of issues plaguing today's youth. MASK's mission is based in their E3 program; Engage, Educate and Empower. The E3 Institute is a comprehensive yearlong multi-year approach to building and strengthening life skills for children. The Institute has different levels: Storytime (Pre-K), MASK Academy (Kindergarten to 6th grade), MASK Prep (middle and high school), MASK Leadership (college) and Parent University.

MASK believes in educating the whole family and fully supports opening up the lines of communication. They give parents and kids, from kindergarten through college, information to deal with these issues head on. The growing problems of lowered self-esteem and stress are taking over children's lives and the family can play a huge role in helping combat these issues.

In addition to the MASK Institute, MASK has a very informative website and MASK The Magazine. The Magazine is a parenting manual that offers solutions to modern-day challenges families face.

As an ASU alum, MASK is near and dear to my heart since the programs are by ASU students.

During the month of August, Homes for Good AZ will specifically be raising funds and awareness for MASK's back to school prep. It's our goal to raise \$3,200, which would give a local school in Anthem access to the program for 1 whole year.

For more information or to get involved please visit MaskMatters.org.

