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## **Tennessee Scientologist Takes on Prescription Drug Abuse Crisis**

*With Tennessee's drug abuse problem at a crisis stage, Scientologist Julie Brinker is ramping up a grassroots movement to stem drug abuse before it begins*

Tennessee is facing a crisis—drug abuse.

Julie Brinker, Public Affairs Director of the [Church of Scientology and Celebrity Centre of Nashville](#) who coordinates the Church-supported [Truth About Drugs education and prevent program](#), was moved to action by last month's announcement of a 400 percent jump in the decade from 2000 to 2010 in the number of babies addicted when born coupled. That same decade also saw a 250 percent increase in prescription drug overdoses in Tennessee.

The situation with prescription opioids (synthetic drugs with [heroin](#)-like properties) is especially grave. In 2009, nearly 250,000 Tennesseans reported

taking these drugs recreationally—they are now more frequently abused than [marijuana](#) or [crack](#) / [cocaine](#).

Reacting to the problem, the Metropolitan Drug Commission in Knoxville and a Nashville task force of state health officials in November mobilized government resources to contend with these problems.

“With a program as effective and easy as the Truth About Drugs, we can make an impact on this issue and everyone can help. We can turn the Tennessee drug abuse problem around,” says Brinker. “And it’s really up to all of us to do so—every parent, every grandparent, everyone who knows a child or teenager—all of us.”

Brinker started her drug prevention activities as a child, helping her mother, who was coordinator of the drug education and prevention activities for the Church of Scientology of St. Louis, Missouri. By the time she was 16, Brinker had clocked enough volunteer hours in service to the community to be honored, along with her mother, with a Presidential Volunteer Service Award by former President George W. Bush.

Brinker’s team of drug prevention volunteers has introduced the police of greater Nashville to the program, and Truth About Drugs materials are used by Police Community Coordinators throughout the area. The volunteers hold events and have distributed some 67,000 [Truth About Drugs booklets](#) and conducted Truth About Drugs presentations in schools in more than 30 Tennessee counties.

“Each of us has to make one of the most important decisions of our lives while we are still young—whether or not to use drugs,” says Brinker. “By dispelling the myths and providing the facts, the Truth About Drugs program helps young people make the right choice. No one can watch the [Truth About Drugs—Real people, Real Stories](#) documentary, and hear former users describe how drugs destroyed their lives, without being moved. The program gets kids to think. And that could just save their lives.”

The Church of Scientology has published a new brochure, *Scientology: How We Help—The Truth About Drugs, Creating a Drug-Free World*, to meet requests for more information about the drug education and prevention initiative it supports. To learn more or read a copy of the brochure, visit the [Scientology website](#).

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*Scientology Founder L. Ron Hubbard wrote, “The planet has hit a barrier which prevents any widespread social progress—drugs and other biochemical substances. These can put people into a condition which not only prohibits and destroys physical health but which can prevent any stable advancement in mental or spiritual well-being.”*

*The Church of Scientology supports the Truth About Drugs, one of the world’s largest nongovernmental drug education and prevention campaigns. It has been conclusively proven that when young people are provided with the truth about drugs—factual information on what drugs are and what they do—usage rates drop commensurately.*



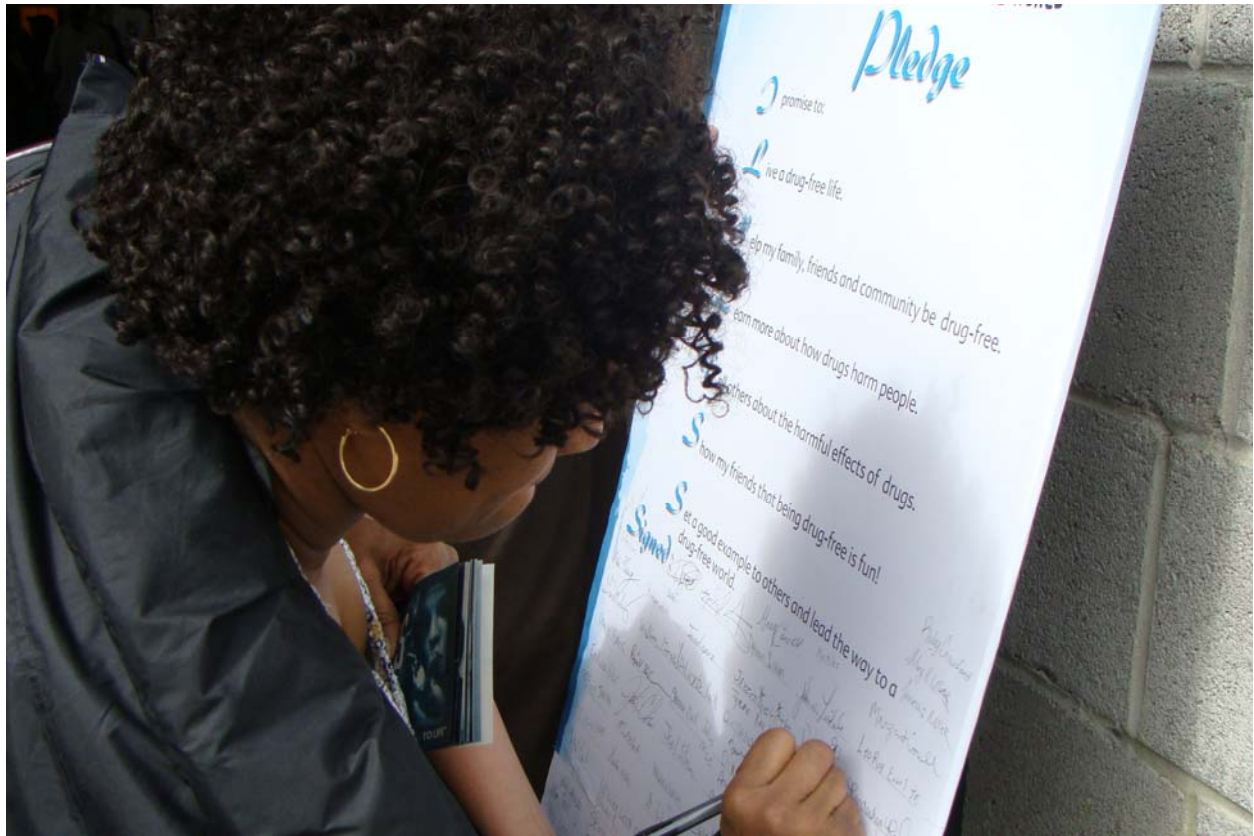
Julie Brinker and her mother Ellen Maher-Forney were honored with a Presidential Volunteer Service Award by former President George W. Bush for their drug education and prevention work and other volunteer service.



A volunteer at a Truth About Drugs booth in Nashville, Tennessee, helps a young boy makes the decision to live drug-free.



Volunteers from the Church of Scientology and Celebrity Centre Nashville set up booths at local events, including this one held just before Halloween during the National Red Ribbon Week drug awareness campaign.



People of all ages signed the drug-free pledge at a booth set up by volunteers of the Church of Scientology and Celebrity Centre of Nashville, Tennessee, at a local farmers' market.