

# Sledophiles Never Die

**An informative, helpful profile**

By: Spencer Easton

How can we help teens that are faced with drugs unsafe sex and a life of crime? How can we be an influence to help them choose activities more whole than these and get an education before becoming a teen parent? The answer to that was found by a group known as the Sledophiles. They are a teen based group that helps keep young teens stay out of trouble by choosing activities more wholesome than drugs or alcohol. In the following I will profile and examine the Sledophiles and show how this along with many other teen based groups are the answer in today's society to the questions above.

Every Parent's worst night mare is to wake up one day and their child is known as inmate 04337-85-96 getting gang raped and beaten senseless. I can only imagine what a parent goes through awaking in a cold sweat and running down the hall to see if it really was a dream, checking to make sure that there is still time left that they can still help them make the right decisions. Hopefully I can bring some information to light as to how teens have been helped in the past; and how we as parents and concerned citizens can help our teens stay out of trouble.

The Sledophiles are a group of young adults from Riverton Utah who go late night extreme sledding. Made up primarily of Alex Johnson, Jonathan Cluff, Rick Whiteford, Spencer Easton, and Trevor Mower which are referred to as "The original five or like the Godhead of the Sledophiles" said Alex Johnson during an interview I held with

him. He went on saying that "It started because we wanted to hang out more but it just.... became so much more".

They focus on using late night sledding (which usually consists of icy hills and high winds). With the combination of snowboarding, wrestling, tobogganing and magic they came up with a sport of their own to form a mutual bonding

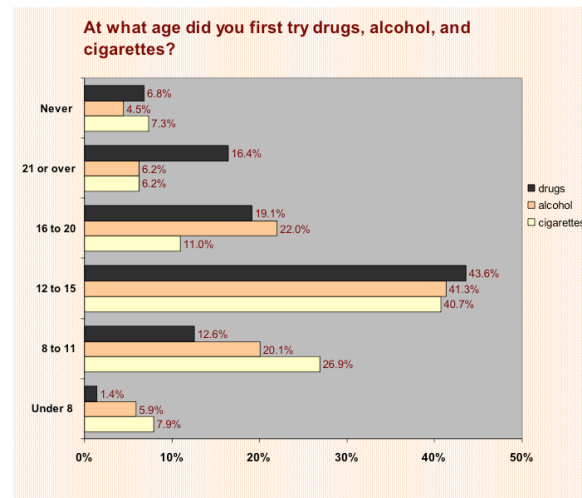


experience. These combined with the music of Tiger Army, Saves the Day, and Thrice helped them form "all sorts of brotherhood and friendship that has grown into helping each others lives even spiritually". As a sledophile they have a motto which is that a sledophile never dies. They all yell this as they are taking off from the top of a hill "We needed our fix of adrenalin" said Cluff about why they started using this as their permanent motto.

As I continued my interview with Johnson he recited by memory the experience of sledding, "As Spencer got on bottom and Jon pushed off and jumped on Spencer's back. I than ran as fast as I could to jump and sit on them while Rick and Trevor were also going down but toward us. As we sped up and prepared for impact we all knew what was to come. BOOM and crash it happens and no one knows who will still be standing after the collision. Trevor jumps, Rick swerves, Alex pushes, while Spencer groans, this is where the magic comes into play. We all end up off the sled and rolling down the hill at

top speeds". It sounds like kids trying to get hurt I told him. He replied to that statement saying "we have made an art form out of it". This group of friends got together one night "was looking for a night to remember" and found something more than just fun, they

found a way to have the rush of a life time and keep their morels.



It's not hard to see that we are in a time of confusion and immorality, everyday you hear about kids getting mixed up in drugs. Teens in self induced comas from drunk driving accidents. On the TV and you

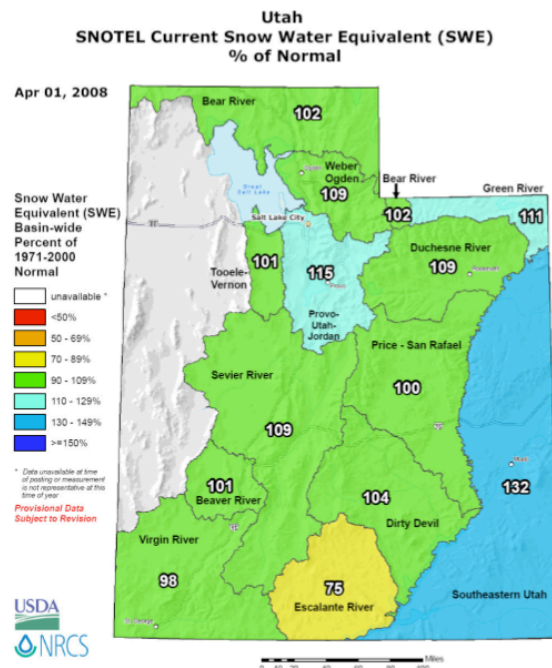
can hear it on the news, it is in our children's schools and in their music. What can we do then to help our young kids and teen not get addicted to such substances? The answer lies in our community and our culture. There is so much we can do for our children to keep them away from these things, but most tax cuts in this current economic state we are in are cutting funding to community sports and giving well needed money to business who are stealing and committing crimes. There is a need for more focus on teen and child based groups. A study done by the Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice during 2004 survey showed that 60% of woman inmates started hard drugs {like Meth, Acid, and Marijuana} from the ages 12-18. (A Survey of Women Inmates in Utah). These are the crucial year of development where a young person forms all their beliefs and convictions. It is up to us to provide them with wholesome activities or they will find somewhere to obtain their motives.

Research has shown that if teenagers are going to find trouble, it will be in the hours after school, when they're idle and alone and have little to do except stare at the television. (Ferrendelli)

If we can help kids participate in good wholesome activities they will most likely stay out of trouble. Teen help groups are usually outdoor & physically based. I personally work at a correctional facility for young teen boys; our boys have clubs and sport activities they are involved in as part of their therapy. This helps them focus their energy on sports and not on drugs or promiscuous behaviors. There are more teen based help-groups around the world than fish in the Great Salt Lake. One such group of young adults who started a teen based organization to help each other stay out of trouble is known as the Sledophiles.

The sledophiles chose sledding as it was a great choice because of the "best snow on earth" as seen on all Utah license plates. This was personal to them.

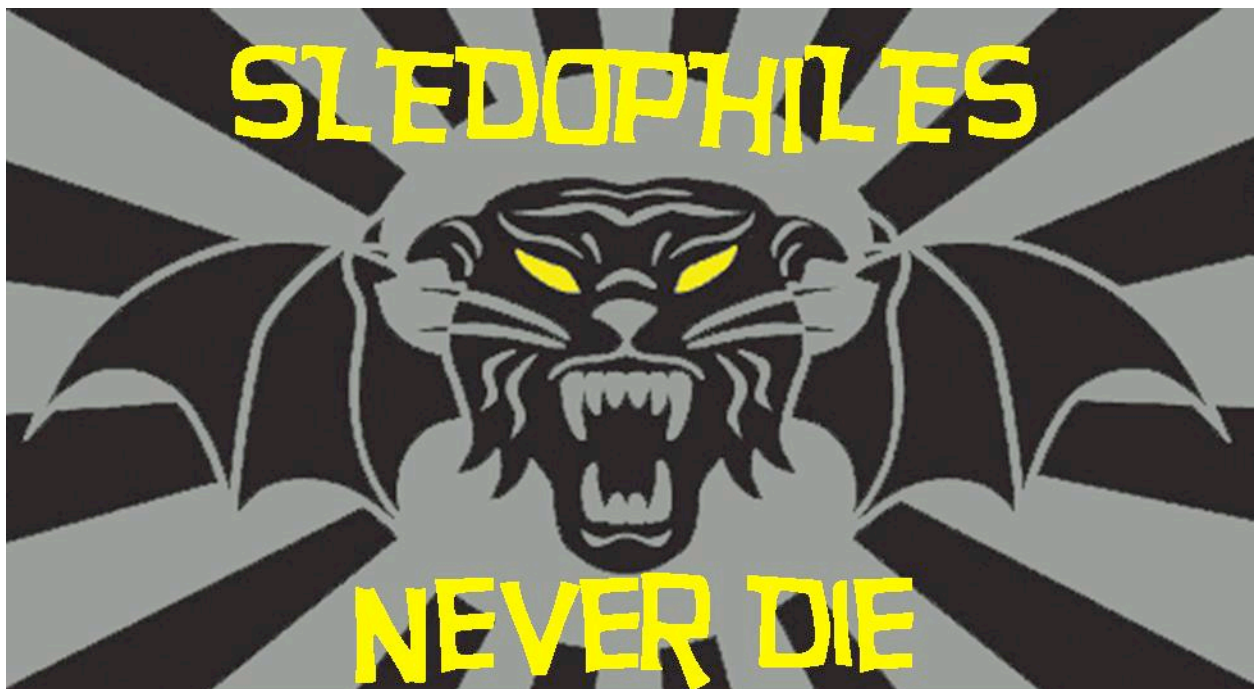
Utah has a high Snow Water Equivalent {S.W.E.} which makes their snow season last longer and have more high quality snow year around. April 1, 2008 The North American Interstate Weather Modification Council showed that the S.W.E. was at 115% in the Salt Lake Valley area. (Utah Summary Report for NAIWMC April 2008). This makes sense for them to be doing these types of activities because they are surrounded by it. This means maybe this kind of an organization would fail in Texas. Perhaps the teens in Texas



need to catch a possum or go to a rodeo. The point is the group needs to be based on something that the teen's culture is surrounded or accepted by.

Just talking to a few of these young gentlemen known as the Sledophiles was interesting to me. I am very impressed by their friendship and camaraderie that they feel one towards another. This program has helped over twenty different teens and young adults by having a physical activity to put all their energy into so they can stay clean and stay focused. According to them they have a success rate of about eighty percent, which is substantial for a youth group such as this.

I do believe that we can help our teens and youth in our communities by finding activities for they're interests and not using a universal program for every child. We have to take the initiative and reach out to our children and teens and make sure that Sledophiles all over never die, or bluntly put never get gang raped in prison.



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Word Count-1390

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