LEGALIZATION ON THE HORIZON?
ONE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SYSTEM’S APPROACH

CIBHS Policy Forum

Patrick Zarate
Ventura County Alcohol & Drug Programs

February 2016
Ventura County

• A word about Ventura County...

• A word about Ventura County Behavioral Health...
“Anti-Marijuana Crusaders to Talk ‘Science’ of Cannabis in Phoenix”
Ventura County Adolescent Treatment Program / Primary Drug Problem

Primary Drug of Choice
FY 14/15 Ages 5-17

Marijuana 71%
Alcohol 12%
Other 17%

Marijuana
Alcohol
Other
### Ventura County Adolescent Treatment Program / Age of Onset

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL CANNABIS USING CLIENTS (n=129)</td>
<td>98 percent of Youth in Tx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL AVERAGE AGE OF ONSET</td>
<td>13 years of age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL CANNABIS FIRST DRUG (=63)</td>
<td>49 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL CANNABIS DAILY USERS (n=53)</td>
<td>41 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL ALCOHOL FIRST DRUG (n=23)</td>
<td>17 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL STARTED CANNABIS &amp; ALCOHOL (n=34)</td>
<td>26 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL STARTED W/ CANNABIS ALONE OR CANNABIS AND ALCOHOL (n=97)</td>
<td>75 percent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Between 2009 and 2014, 9% of POLD survey respondents used drugs (other than alcohol) on the day of their DUI arrest

- Respondents reporting other drug use rose from 7% to 11%
- Young adults (ages 18-24) reported drugs at a higher rate than any other age group
- The most commonly reported other drugs used were Rx drugs and marijuana
Ventura County Place of Last Drink (POLD) Survey

- Respondents ages 18-24 more likely to report marijuana use than other ages
- Older (55+) were more likely to report Rx drug use compared to other age groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug Used</th>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>Combined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Used Marijuana</td>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td><strong>65%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>55+</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used RX Drugs</td>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>354%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td><strong>71%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>55+</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td><strong>86%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Respondents who reported poly-drug use on day of arrest were more likely to report being involved in a crash.

### Percent Reporting Crash by Level of Drug/Alcohol Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug/Alcohol Use</th>
<th>Crash Reporting Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol and Multiple Other Drugs</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol and 1 Other Drug</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol Only</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ventura County Place of Last Drink (POLD) Survey

- Those indicating poly-drug use on the day of their DUI arrest & being involved in a crash, were **more likely to report both personal injury & property damage.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Injury</th>
<th>Property Damage &amp;</th>
<th>Property Damage Only</th>
<th>Personal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol and Multiple Other Drugs</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol and 1 Other Drug</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol Only</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Local data indicate **young adults were more than twice as likely to have been in cars when driver was under the influence of marijuana** (compared to other ages).
• **Alcohol:** The average BAC of those who indicated drinking was 0.14

• **Binge Drinking and Weed:** 75% of those drinking alcohol in addition to using marijuana were binge drinking on the day of DUI arrest (avg. 8+ drinks day of arrest)

• **Other Drugs:** 19% indicated using other drugs in addition to marijuana before their arrest including Rx drugs (13%), methamphetamine (4%), cocaine (4%), heroin (1%) and/or other drugs (2%)

• **Miles Driven:** Half (50%) drove four or more miles before being stopped

• **Passenger:** 38% report had one or more passenger at time of DUI
Ventura County Youth – last 30 day MJ use

CHKS, 2006-14

Grade 9
- 2006: 12%
- 2008: 14%
- 2010: 17%
- 2012: 17%
- 2014: 14%

Grade 11
- 2006: 20%
- 2008: 23%
- 2010: 24%
- 2012: 23%
- 2014: 23%
Teens Current Use (last 30 days) in Ventura County

- About 1/3 of 11th graders and 20% of 9th graders reported consuming alcohol in the past 30 days

- Just under one-quarter (23%) of 11th graders & 14% of 9th graders reported using marijuana in the past 30 days

Current (last 30 days) use of marijuana is already starting to rival the use of alcohol by our teens
California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS)
Ease of Access

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How difficult is it for students in your grade to get any of the following substances if they really want them?</th>
<th>9th graders</th>
<th>11th graders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage indicating “fairly easy” or “very easy” to get</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marijuana</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Marijuana is already perceived to be as easy to obtain as alcohol
Monitoring the Future – National Data
Perceptions of Harm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marijuana-Related Items</th>
<th>10\textsuperscript{th} graders</th>
<th>12\textsuperscript{th} graders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How much do you think people risk harming themselves (physically or in other ways), if they...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try marijuana once or twice</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoke marijuana occasionally</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoke marijuana regularly</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only one in every six HS juniors perceives occasional use as risky, and – here’s problem, Fewer than half view regular with “great risk”
Ventura County Resident Perceived Harm Concern for Teen Marijuana Use, 2014-2015

Percieved Harm of Frequent Marijuana Use  
Level of Concern on Teen Marijuana Use

VC Community Health Survey 2014  
(Random Digit Dial, scientific sample)
A Strong Inverse Relationship: Perceived Risk and Teen Marijuana Use

Marijuana Perceived Risk vs. Past Year Use by 12th Graders

- Past Year Use
- Perceived Risk

SOURCE: University of Michigan, 2013 Monitoring the Future Study
Preventing Teen Use

Why Do We Care?

What’s the Big Deal with youth exposure to marijuana?
Marijuana & Your Kid’s Brain
Key Studies and References


Tripling Risk of Heroin Addiction

Heroin use is part of a larger substance abuse problem.

Nearly all people who used heroin also used at least 1 other drug.

Most used at least 3 other drugs.

Heroin is a highly addictive opioid drug with a high risk of overdose and death for users.

People who are addicted to...

- Alcohol: 2x
- Marijuana: 3x
- Cocaine: 15x
- Prescription Opioid Painkillers: 40x

...more likely to be addicted to heroin.

Unprecedented Potency & Modes of Delivery

• **FAVORED FORMS: EXTRACTIONS & CONCENTRATES**
  
  (45% EDIBLE CONSUMPTION IN COLORADO)

• **Modes of administration:** harder to detect & intensified
  (i.e. vaping, dabbing and edibles)

• **Concentrated forms:** BHO, honey oil, wax, shatter, dabbing

• **Increased potency:** Locally, 40-80% THC levels
Ventura County Behavioral Health
Our Response...

marijuana
WHAT’S THE PROBLEM?
RISKS & REALITIES

Recovery Month Conference
September 19, 2012
Youth Services

VENTURA COUNTY ALCOHOL & DRUG PROGRAMS

youth services

Helping Teens.
Saving Lives.
Healing Communities.

VENTURA COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
If addiction is a river, then treatment is...
Integrated Prevention – Using a Public Health Approach

UNIVERSAL (COMMUNITY)
• Impact social norms, attitudes, & policies to delay the age of onset
• GOAL = decrease group risks by changing the sequence of behaviors
  “change the context that leads to earlier and heavier use”

INDICATED (INDIVIDUAL)
• Impact individual decision-making guided by education
• GOAL = alter individual risks, increase healthy options/choices
  “intervene early and help people choose health”
Community Education
Includes targeted or “narrowcasting” messages to target audiences

• Public events, community venues, online
• Colleges, schools, non-profit agencies
• Worksites with target ages (UPS, NBVC)
Text News for Parents Campaign

VCkidsFYI
Text news for parents

Free text message updates:
TEENS • DRUGS • ALCOHOL
Get the facts. Keep kids safe.

Text VCkidsFYI to 313131
to sign up.

Sign up now for a chance to win a $50 gift certificate to Cabo Seafood Grill!

Approximately 10 winners will be selected: 5 winners (18 years and older) will receive a $50 gift certificate to Cabo Seafood Grill and 5 winners (under 18 years of age) will receive a $50 gift certificate to Cabo Seafood Grill. No purchase necessary to enter. Must be present to receive prize. Void where prohibited. Must be legal resident of the U.S. to enter. One gift certificate per household. No cash buy or sell option. Learn more at vckidsFYI.org
WEED: Myths & Facts
School Resource Officers (SROs) county-wide were given tool kit, materials, and training on matching message to audience.
WEEDUI is Real – Drugged Driving Campaign

YOU can get a DUI for marijuana.

DUI = Arrested for:
- Marijuana
- Alcohol
- Prescription &
- Other drugs

More Info: venturacountylimits.org/WEEDUI
If you got the facts DOWN would you still let your kid get HIGH?
Parents can ‘test their wits on weed’
It may seem obvious...

Young people are highly-connected and use multiple forms of media to be informed and inform others

• Understand the current context
• Tailor message, medium and tone
• Make it INTERACTIVE and SHARABLE!
Purposeful, resonant, engaging, strategic…
Administering HighQ Quizzes

Driving Site Traffic Via QR Code!

Bringing Enthusiasm and High Energy “Weed-themed” Music to the main walkway outside the Hyatt Grand Ballroom!

Creating “beyond-booth” visibility at other high-traffic areas (bathrooms)!
Channels of Activation
Understand and utilize web base analytics & new social media platforms…

Generating 1,275 “Likes” and 210 “Shares” Via The ABC (TV) Los Angeles Facebook Page
### Media Impact By Channel

As of 12/12/14 – three weeks after launch

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media Channel</th>
<th>Media Impressions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Media Impressions (TV, Print, Radio)</td>
<td>1,171,686 impressions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website Traffic (Estimate via Google Stats and data triangulation)</td>
<td>60,000 site visitors <em>(estimated)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook Impressions (Paid + Owned) (84,510 unique VC visitors) -- over 10% of the County (demographic: 33-59 residents)</td>
<td>229,547 impressions; 84,510 unique VC visitors in target demo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook Impressions (Earned)</td>
<td>2,788,944 impressions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook Engagements (Comments, Likes, Shares) - (Paid + Owned)</td>
<td>174 engagements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook Engagements (Comments, Likes, Shares) - (Earned)</td>
<td>2,342 engagements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter Impressions (Earned)</td>
<td>388,184 impressions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube Views + Engagements (25% generated from paid, 75% generated from earned; 25% Spanish language)</td>
<td>24,604 engagements/Views</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube Ad Impressions English (Paid)</td>
<td>32,359 impressions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube Ad Impressions Spanish (Paid)</td>
<td>2,094 impressions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Q Questions Answered</td>
<td>6,540 answers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Q Quiz Completed</td>
<td>654 completed quizzes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email: School District to Parent/Guardian Dissemination (Simi Valley Unified) - Middle: 3,997, High: 6,796, Total Parents: 9,613</td>
<td>9,613 parent/guardian (S2P) communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Impressions</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,716,741</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How do we know our messaging works?

Just Two Examples

**Rx Drug Disposal** – resident survey and actual tonnage collected

**Social Host Ordinances** – Impact evaluation and trends over time
What are high school and middle school teachers saying about *How High Ventura County*

“I thought the presentation was one of the best we have had in a long time. Want to have you back next semester. “

"The students really enjoyed the presentation. They thought it was "Hip" and could relate. This session was more compelling because, it was presented at the students level. They weren't told "just say no".

“The students were presented the material and treated as intelligent kids who could process the information. “

"The presentation met California Health standards. Most memorable part of the talk, was the stats. The students retained the information."
Community Prevention Efforts

- Efforts should be **Data Informed**
- **Raise the Profile** of the Problem = Public Dialogue
- Coordinate **Key Change Agents and Resources**
- **PUSH OUT EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TO REDUCE PROBLEMS**
A COMMUNITY PLANNING COMPASS
FOR YOUTH HEALTH & SAFETY
WHY PLAN NOW?

LEGALIZED NON-MEDICAL MARIJUANA

WAIT AND SEE

UNKNOWN OUTCOME

PROACTIVE PLANNING

MANAGED OUTCOME
EXISTING FRAMEWORKS: ALCOHOL & TOBACCO

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION OF RISKS
• Public acceptance of regulations to mitigate harms
• National, state & local controls
• Regulated potency and dosage
• Advertising restrictions, particularly to youth
• Perceived harm by youth and their parents

LOCAL LEVEL CONTROLS
• Sales restrictions – age, permits, zoning, CUPs, etc.
• Responsible Beverage Sales & Service training
• Social Host laws – penalties for unruly parties with youth
BUSINESSES

RETAIL OUTLETS:
- Dispensaries
- Specialty stores
- Convenience stores
- Pharmacies
- Farmers markets
- Grocery stores (edibles, etc)
- "Weederies"
- Co-ops
- Delivery services

SECURITY RISKS
- Sales & resales to minors
- Illegal markets & illegal resale
- Large cash business due to banking restrictions
- Possible increase in crime (vandalism, theft, etc.)
- Impaired driving

MARKETING & MEDIA
- Signage & lighting
- Vehicle signage
- Billboards
- Packaging
- Corporate marketing

ADJACENT BUSINESSES
- Undesirable business next door
- Alienate customers
- Incompatible use (ex: youth-oriented shop)
- Develop/enforce THC policies for staff
- Deliveries
- Loitering/smoking
- Secondhand smoke & odor

LARGE-SCALE INDOOR CULTIVATION
- Lack of warehouse availability for other businesses
- Ventilation, odor management, waste disposal
- Utility overuse
NEIGHBORHOODS

Mainstream media (TV, news stories, etc.)
Social media
Packaging & use around kids
Online sales
Delivery services

Collector refrigerator magnets with BHO dabs

“...This could be a hit at summer backyard pot parties.”
Willamette Week, May 12, 2015
HEALTHCARE

URGENT CARE & HOSPITALS
• Child poisonings
• Unintentional overdoses
• DUI collisions
• Toxic drug interactions

DOCTORS & OTHER PRESCRIBERS
• Patients with unknown THC levels
• Drug interactions
• Addiction counseling

MEDICAL MARIJUANA
• Dispensaries
• Cooperatives
• Monitoring access

INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES
• Intrafamily drug abuse
• Mental health impacts
• Behavior & memory impacts
• Youth brain development

PUBLIC HEALTH
• Marijuana & pregnancy
• Medical marijuana ID cards
• Children & edibles

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
• Increased treatment services
• Mental health & substance use disorders
• DUI programs
• Prevention outreach & education

VETERINARY
• Pet overdoses

VICTORIA COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
ENVIRONMENT

BEACHES & PUBLIC SPACES
- Biking & hiking path safety
- Increased access for youth
- Campground security
- Other safety risks

WATER
- Pollution: trash, pesticides, herbicides, rodenticides
- Water diversion = less available

AGRICULTURE
- Water use
- Pesticides

OUTDOOR ILLEGAL CULTIVATION: NATIONAL FORESTS
- Soil degraded by chemicals
- Large-scale clearcut damage/erosion
- Loss of habitat
- Wildlife poisoning, trapping, death
- Fire danger

EVENTS: MUSIC, FAIRS, ETC.
- Sales, marketing & promotion
- Law enforcement, security
- Substance abuse overdoses at raves that may include marijuana in mix
Mapping Marijuana “Community Planning Compass” Targeting Municipal Leadership
Use Lessons from Tobacco & Alcohol Policy (you WILL be tested)

1. Limit Access –
   • Where, How, Who
   • Outlet placement and density, limit sales venues, etc.

2. Restrict Age
3. Use Local Controls – like Conditional Use Permits
4. Restrict Advertising
5. Retain Smoke-Free policies
6. Fund Prevention Efforts over the long term
“77 percent of teens now see smoking marijuana as ‘totally safe’ “

What that tells us is that social messages are important

Kids don't live in a bubble

As more states go toward or talk about having medical marijuana and having legalized marijuana, it creates a public perception — including among our impressionable youth — that it's safe
States with and w/o MMJ over time

Marijuana Use by Teenagers

8 States MMJ

23 States MMJ

Recreational use legalized in 2 states

How Will it Impact Our Public Behavioral Health System?

- Cognitive impairment
- Risk of psychosis
- Exacerbation of depression
- Increased risk to developing fetus
- Impaired driving
- Others?
### Impacts of Marijuana

- Mental Health
- Injury Risk
- Respiratory Health
- Reproductive Health
- Youth
- Substance Abuse, SUD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Indicator</th>
<th>Impact of Marijuana Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychosis/Psychotic symptoms</td>
<td>WORSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>WORSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schizophrenia</td>
<td>WORSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>WORSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brain function</td>
<td>WORSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychosocial functioning</td>
<td>WORSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor vehicle accidents</td>
<td>WORSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child poisoning</td>
<td>WORSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skiing/snowboarding safety</td>
<td>NO STUDIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-term airflow</td>
<td>BETTER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term airflow</td>
<td>WORSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancer</td>
<td>UNCLEAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic bronchitis</td>
<td>WORSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancer (non-lung)</td>
<td>UNCLEAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stroke/heart attack</td>
<td>WORSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnancy</td>
<td>WORSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future dependence</td>
<td>WORSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic performance</td>
<td>WORSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual use</td>
<td>WORSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>UNCLEAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future use</td>
<td>UNCLEAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependence on marijuana</td>
<td>WORSE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

1. In Behavioral Health, we don’t just need MONEY, we need SCIENCE and TIME to get programs & policies RIGHT

2. When we set up funding, we must do so with the full spectrum of need in view - this includes prevention, early intervention, and treatment; and reality-based figures

3. The challenge, and the opportunity, is to learn from alcohol and tobacco that came before this, and set the highest standards for protecting youth
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Ventura County Behavioral Health  
Phone (805) 981-2114  
Patrick.Zarate@ventura.org  

http://howhighventuracounty.org/

http://venturacountylimits.org/en/prevention/marijuana
Selected Sources

EvalCorp, Inc. Research and Consulting

Ventura County Office of Education

Linda Gertson, PhD, Ventura County Alcohol & Drug Programs

Ventura County DUI Program

JAMS Productions, IDEA Engineering

CalOMS data set, SAMHSA, CDC
“I hate pot. I hate it even more than hard drugs. I’ve taught high school for 25 years and I hate what marijuana does to my students. It goes beyond missing homework assignments. My students become less curious when they start smoking pot. I’ve seen it time and time again.

People say pot makes you more creative, but from what I’ve seen, it narrows my students’ minds until they only reference the world in relation to the drug. They start choosing their friends based on the drug. I hate when people say that it’s just experimenting. Because from what I’ve seen, it’s when my students stop experimenting.”

*Humans of New York, September 21, 2015*