

PRESS KIT



A youth-centered public health campaign, based in Chicago. A generation that knows more, questions more, and protects possibility.

A YOUTH-CENTERED PUBLIC HEALTH CAMPAIGN, BASED IN CHICAGO.

Smoke & Mirrors is a youth-centered public health campaign committed to protecting the potential, promise, and developing brains of young people.

Smoke & Mirrors brings honest, science-based conversations about cannabis and the developing brain to young people, families, schools, and communities, without judgment or shame.

OUR MISSION

Smoke & Mirrors exists to protect possibility.

Our mission is to reduce cannabis and other harmful substance use during the critical brain-development years of ages 12 through 30. Through credible science, honest conversations, compelling stories, and community engagement, we equip young people and the adults who care about them with the knowledge to make informed choices. We challenge misinformation without judgment or shame, because every young person deserves the opportunity to discover their talents, pursue their dreams, and reach their full potential.

OUR VISION

We envision a generation of young people who are informed, curious, and critical thinkers, equipped to question the myriad substances and products marketed for consumption and understand addiction, recognize its warning signs, and can critically examine industries that profit from the sale and repeated consumption of potentially addictive products.

Ultimately, we envision young people empowered to see beyond the smoke and mirrors: to ask better questions, seek credible information, make informed choices, protect their minds, discover their potential, and pursue their dreams.

GUIDANCE

RESILIENCE

PERSONAL GROWTH

NAVIGATION

OUR STORY

"In 2019, as Illinois moved toward legalizing cannabis, I believed what so many people still believe today: It's just weed. Then one phone call changed everything."

DR. PATRICIA JONES BLESSMAN, PHD, FOUNDER

DR. PATRICIA JONES BLESSMAN, PHD



Portrait available in high resolution on request.

Straight answers from a psychologist who's been listening for decades.

Dr. Patricia Jones Blessman is a clinical psychologist with a doctorate in Clinical and Developmental Psychology from the University of Illinois at Chicago. She brings honest, science-based conversations about cannabis, the developing brain, and mental health to young people and families.

Founder of Smoke & Mirrors. Clinical psychologist. Philanthropist. Investor. Art collector. Chicago South Sider. Mom. I move between philanthropy, culture & community. I read the research, follow the money & ask the question everyone else was hoping I wouldn't. Sometimes Dr. Pat enters the chat.

SPEAKING TOPICS

- The developing brain: the brain keeps developing into the mid-twenties, and what that means for cannabis use.
- Today's THC: today's products are far stronger than the cannabis most adults remember.
- Talking with your teen: how to start an honest conversation without a lecture, and keep it going.

Full bio: smokeandmirrorsyouth.org/dr-pats-bio

THE TEAM

THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE CAMPAIGN

DR. PATRICIA JONES BLESSMAN, PHD

Founder of Smoke & Mirrors. Clinical psychologist. Philanthropist. Investor. Art collector. Chicago South Sider. Mom.

ADAM "BRUZA" WRIGHT

Chicago entrepreneur, Grammy winner, cultural influencer & community advocate. Connecting culture, community and opportunity while using his platform to empower the next generation.

JACOB WILLIS

HS Senior out of Roseland, Chicago. Politics | Photo | Video | Social Media. "I'm not just talking about America's future, I plan to help shape it."

DOMETI PONGO

Dometi Pongo is an award-winning journalist and Chicago native known for hosting MTV's True Life Crime and The Exhibit. His storytelling connects art, culture, and social justice while amplifying underrepresented voices.

EBONY LUCAS, JD

Ebony Lucas, JD, is a Chicago real estate attorney, investor, and industry advocate. Through The Closing Firm, LLC, she helps clients navigate real estate transactions, estate planning, and wealth protection.

MICHELE D. MILLER, MSHLP

Social justice advocate. Equity strategist. Truth teller. Champion for healthier communities, human dignity & dismantling systemic barriers.

VEE HARRISON

Vee L. Harrison is a journalist, author, and publicist shaped by Chicago's West Side. She has traveled and worked internationally, connecting people, uncovering the stories others miss, and turning overlooked voices into impossible-to-ignore narratives.

J. ALGEE

Founder, Algee Media. Brand & social strategist, dancer, global traveler. Red carpet regular. Awards season is my favorite season. Los Angeles.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

IT TAKES A VILLAGE



A Boy and His Dream
FISCAL SPONSOR



The Blessman Family Foundation
COMMUNITY PARTNER

**Father Michael
Pfleger**

Father Michael Pfleger
COMMUNITY PARTNER

COVERAGE AND CONVERSATIONS

WBEZ CHICAGO

Not your parents' pot: Experts, advocates push against teen use of highly concentrated THC products

SEPTEMBER 12, 2026

Coverage of the It's Not Just Weed forum at Kenwood Academy, with Dr. Patricia Jones Blessman on the panel.

wbez.org/2026/09/12/not-your-parents-pot-experts-advocates-push-against-teen-use-of-highly-concentrated-thc-products

MS. MAGAZINE

The Long Way Home: Mental Health, Substance Use, and Adolescents

SEPTEMBER 29, 2025 · PODCAST

Michele Goodwin talks with Dr. Patricia Jones Blessman about mental health, substance use, and adolescents.

msmagazine.com/podcast/the-long-way-home-mental-health-substance-use-and-adolescents-with-dr-patricia-jones-blessman/

WGN RADIO

Outside the Loop: Cannabis and the Teen Brain

RADIO

Mike Stephen talks with Dr. Patricia Jones Blessman about cannabis and the developing brain.

wgnradio.com/outside-the-loop-radio/otl-1040-cannabis-and-the-teen-brain-new-music-from-paige-kizer-restorative-justice-with-purple-path/

FILM

Smoke & Mirrors shares the trailer for THC Inc. (Wayfarer Studios) with permission. Full documentary: youtube.com/watch?v=uyD02y6D9e0

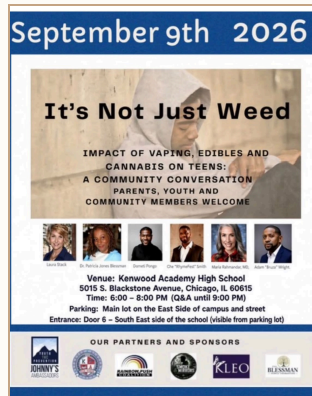
WHERE WE'VE BEEN

South Side · West Side · West Suburbs · South Suburbs · Carbondale

CONVERSATIONS WE'VE BROUGHT TO CHICAGO



OCT 9, 2026
The Impact of Hip-Hop on Addiction and Mental Health, Blue Door Neighborhood Center



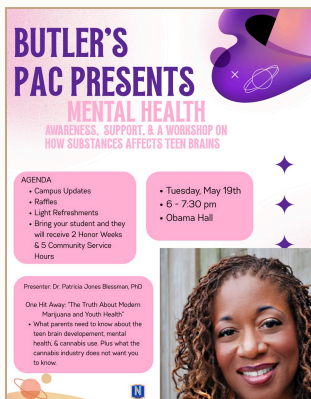
SEPT 9, 2026
It's Not Just Weed, Kenwood Academy High School



SEPT 9, 2026
It's Not Just Weed Community Forum, Kenwood Academy: speakers



JUNE 20, 2026
Juneteenth Block Party Celebration, Oak Park



MAY 19
Butler's PAC: Mental Health Awareness, Obama Hall



APRIL 23
Is Marijuana Impacting Your Teen's Brain? Johnson College Prep



MARCH 30, 2025
It's Not Just Weed, online, with Rep. Kim DuBuclet



JAN 25, 2025
It's Not Just Weed, Nitro Nostalgia Cafe, with Ebony Lucas, JD

Smoke & Mirrors brings the conversation to schools, congregations, youth programs, parent groups, and community spaces across Chicago. To host a conversation, visit smokeandmirrorsyouth.org/invite-us.

LOGOS AND CAMPAIGN ARTWORK



Wordmark on light background



Wordmark on dark background



Campaign artwork, 3:2



Campaign artwork, 16:9

USAGE

- Please do not alter, recolor, stretch, or crop the logo or artwork.
- Keep clear space around the wordmark at least the height of the word "SMOKE".
- The illustrated figures are brand artwork, not program participants.
- Brand colors: Forest green #183F35, Warm cream #FDFBF7, Logo green #01F33B, Rich burgundy #A90B2F, Warm camel #C4A484.
- High-resolution files are available from the media liaison, Vee L. Harrison.

INTERVIEWS, SPEAKING, AND COVERAGE

VEE L. HARRISON

MEDIA LIAISON

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FAST FACTS

- Youth-centered public health campaign based in Chicago.
- Focus: cannabis and other harmful substance use during the brain-development years, ages 12 through 30.
- Founded by Dr. Patricia Jones Blessman, PhD, clinical psychologist.
- Fiscally sponsored by A Boy and His Dream, a 501(c)(3) organization.
- Where we've been: South Side, West Side, West Suburbs, South Suburbs, Carbondale.

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