

Why I Support the Pill Testing Program (and why you should, too)

By Adam Wiggins

At the end of 2003, one of the most innovative and important harm-reduction programs ever implemented stopped running. Not for lack of interest, or lack of need; but for the lack of funds. It was a terrible shame that this program, which has educated millions and perhaps even saved lives, should end so abruptly when it was needed most.

Now it's about to happen all over again.

Sometime in 2005, the funds I provided to bring the pill testing program back online will run out; and I will not be able to replenish them myself. In order for this wonderful and important program to continue, we need your help.

For those of you not already familiar with it: this program allows people to send pills to a laboratory for testing, with the results posted anonymously to ecstasydata.org. Knowing what drug(s) their pill contains gives them an accurate picture of the risks they will face if they do choose to take it.

Why did I decide to step in and help the program one year ago? I'm not a wealthy philanthropist, as you might think. My income does not qualify me for anything better than middle-class. I chose to tap into some of my savings and my disposable income for the year; forgo a few luxuries and improvements to my home. Instead I did something good for the world, something I can be proud of forever.

If you're reading this, you probably take for granted the importance of the testing program. But perhaps in taking it for granted, you've forgotten just how important it really is.

To date, medical science has primarily focused on fixing things when they are broken. Infections, broken bones, specific infectious diseases—conventional medicine is astonishingly advanced in these areas. What has been neglected, however, is overall health and well-being. Any medical practitioner will tell you that, even in this advanced age of science, most of what they do is try to help our bodies heal themselves. And our bodies do this best when we are happy, health, and spiritually fulfilled.

MDMA has such an obvious general-purpose application to this realm that it is difficult to believe that it has been so overlooked by medical science and the general public. The problem, of course, is that research is difficult or impossible, and MDMA's black market status means that the effectiveness and safety of the pills that an individual can acquire are highly variable. This results in many bad experiences, injury, or even very occasionally, death.

The pill testing program gives people the knowledge they need to get real MDMA of reasonable quality. This not only saves lives, but allows people to experience the health benefits of this medicine properly. It provides a buffer against the uncertainty of the black market.

According to the DEA, over 100 million doses of MDMA are consumed in the US each year. The true number is probably much higher. In other words, the danger of the black market stops few, if any, people from using MDMA. The DanceSafe/MAPS/Erowid pill testing program arms millions of Americans, and many more worldwide, with the knowledge they need to keep themselves safe.

But now this program is about to disappear again. The amount of money it needs to keep going for another year is about \$18,000: a paltry sum compared to the immense good it will do in that time.

You're not a wealthy philanthropist, but neither was I. You don't have to be. Just 500 people contributing \$30 each will save this program!