



NEWSLETTER

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Delinquency Prevention Council
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Parents Who Host, Lose The Most: Don't be a party to teenage drinking

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Did you know that in Wisconsin, parents who host an underage drinking party can end up serving nine months in jail and paying fines as high as \$10,000.00? Throughout the fall of 2008, parents from Jefferson County united to let their voices be heard. In partnership with the Center for Democracy in Action, a non-profit organization committed to working together to build healthy, viable, proactive communities; six adult focus groups were held throughout Jefferson County to talk about underage drinking.

Armed with the information gathered at these focus groups, the Delinquency Prevention Council will align with the messages set forth in the "Parents Who Host, Lose The Most Campaign: Don't be a party to teenage drinking" and begin a county wide adult social norms campaign. Although the underlying message of the campaign focuses on legal consequences, the hope is to also open the door to community dialogue that will prevent underage access to alcohol. Underage drinking is a more complex issue than just a liability to parents. Our goal for the focus groups was to get the community talking about the perception of underage drinking within the community, underage access to alcohol, teen's reasons for use, and any ideas or programs that work to combat this issue.

Drug-Free Action Alliance developed the "Parents Who Host, Lost The Most: Don't be a party to teenage drinking" public awareness campaign in 2000 to provide parents with accurate information about the health risks of underage drinking and the legal consequences of providing alcohol to youth. The campaign encourages parents and the community to send a unified message at prom or graduation time that teen alcohol consumption is not acceptable. It is illegal, unsafe, and unhealthy for anyone under age 21 to drink alcohol. "Scientific research shows the serious and damaging effects of alcohol on the developing brain of youth under the age of 21," says Patricia Harmon, Executive Director of Drug-Free Action Alliance. Campaign information has been requested for replication in more than 40 states and Canada. In 2001, the campaign received a national award as a promising prevention program.

Parents play a major role in their children's choices about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. In a recent national survey of parents and teens by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbus University, one-third of teen partygoers have been to parties where teens were drinking alcohol, smoking pot, or using cocaine, Ecstasy or prescription drugs while a parent was present. By age 17, nearly half (46 percent) of teen have been at such parties where parents were present.

Underage use of alcohol is a serious problem that too often leads to harmful consequences for youth and their families. Parents can protect themselves and their teens by following these guidelines when hosting parties for their children:

- Host safe, alcohol-free activities and events for youth during prom and graduation season
- Refuse to supply alcohol to children or allow drinking in your home or on your property
- Be at home when your teenager has a party
- Make sure your teenager's friends do not bring alcohol into your home
- Talk to other parents about not providing alcohol at youth events
- Report underage drinking

For more information, about this campaign, please contact Jessica Breezer, Restorative Justice Specialist at 920-675-4625 or jbreezer@oppinc.com

More information about "Parents Who Host, Lost The Most: Don't be a party to underage drinking" is available at www.DrugFreeActionAlliance.org