



Parents Are Heroes

Preventing Underage Use of Alcohol

A Drug-Free Communities Project. TOGETHER! is grateful to Nancy Harper and ALERT Labs for sharing their information and expertise with Thurston County. *Parents Are Heroes* is part of the Kent County, Michigan, Making Sobriety Attractive (MSA) project.

June Edition 2009

TOGETHER!

Youth Violence, Alcohol, Tobacco, Drug Prevention

In this issue:

- What does "drink responsibly" mean to you? Your kids? Email us at info@alertlabs.org
- Who's Right? Who's Wrong? Do you provide or allow alcohol at teen parties? 95% of parents with children aged 13-20 don't. (Click here: [Data Development Worldwide](#))
- Did You Know?
- Quick Facts
- What's Going On?

Questions, Suggestions, Comments? click on

info@alertlabs.org OR

dhuning@thurstontogether.org

Quick Facts:

Children who start drinking before age 15 are:

- 4 times more likely to become addicted,
- 50% will have major alcohol problems as adults .
- 7 times more likely to be in a car accident.
- 11 times more likely to experience alcohol-related violence.

Click here: [David H. Jernigan](#)

Those who begin binge drinking at age 13 and continue throughout their teen years are nearly

- 4 times more likely to be overweight or obese and
- almost 3 ½ times more likely to have high blood pressure by the time they are 24 years old

Click here: [Journal on Studies for Alcohol](#)

According to Thurston County Healthy Youth Survey 2008 data, 160 teens in Grades 10 and 12 reported binge drinking 3-5 times over a two week period. 282 teens reported their regular drinking use (once or twice a month) began at the ages of 14-15 years.

If you need help:

Crisis Clinic of Thurston-Mason County, **586-2800**

Teen Crisis Line, **586-2777**

Parent Resource Guide of Thurston County published by TOGETHER! [click here for English](#), and [click here for Spanish version](#).



"Drink Responsibly." Tell Us What It Means to YOU



The alcohol industry claims that when it runs an ad featuring beautiful, half-dressed people playing volleyball on the beach with cans of beer and ice chests full of more beer, with the tiny words, *drink responsibly*, at the end, that they are being "responsible" corporate citizens.

What does the phrase mean? College freshmen, between 18 and 20, say it means, "Drink, but don't get caught!" A few parents say it means, "Drink if you must, but don't drive." *Teens say it means "nothing"*. Alcohol and other drugs prevention experts say it means, "Drink!" It's a command. And the meaning of "Drink!" is clear. The meaning of "responsibly" is not clear.

What do you think it means? What do your kids think it means? Tell us! Email info@alertlabs.org. A panel of Preventionists will judge the entries, and for helping with the research, a Thurston County winner will receive a \$30.00 gift certificate to the Capital Mall in West Olympia. Be sure to include your name, LOCATION, and contact information on your entry ☺!!! A winner from Michigan will also be chosen.

It's OK Not To Drink

Close to half of American adults drank no alcohol last year, not even one drink –

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov

Family arguments are going on in Thurston County. Planning is nearly complete for GRADUATION OPEN HOUSES for high school seniors. One parent is saying, "Of course we won't serve alcohol. It's illegal for high school seniors to drink. And besides, it is illegal for us to serve drinks to anyone else's children under 21. There's a fine and possible prison sentence for doing it. (WA-imprisonment for up to one year and/or up to a \$5,000 fine.) Remember that slogan: [Social Hosts Lose the Most!](#)

The 18-year old daughter says, "But everybody serves beer at these things – lots of people have kegs! Besides, we're on our way to college and everybody there drinks. It's just beer, not the hard stuff! And we promise not to drive." And still another family member is saying, "If we don't serve drinks, nobody is going to come and if they do come, they'll leave right away. That would be embarrassing!"

Who's right? Who's wrong?

Fact: it is illegal in the U.S. to serve alcohol to anyone under 21 unless you are their parent or guardian in many states--anywhere, anytime (including WA as noted above – *click to WA: Furnishing Liquor to Minors.*) In many other states, it's illegal--period, no matter who you are. 18 is too young to drink. Remember the brain damage? College is hard enough without adding a learning disability. And also lack of judgment – kids drink and just plain “forget” that they shouldn't drive or ride with a driver who has been using alcohol and/or other drugs.

Compromise: Buy a root beer keg and serve it with ice cream, after the parents vs. kids volleyball match or a round of Karaoke!



DID YOU KNOW?

What's normal drinking for adults?

- 25% of adults abstain – never drink
- +33% are light drinkers (1 – 3 drinks per week at most)
- +15–17% drink moderately (fewer than 1 drink per day for women; fewer than 2 drinks per day for men, and never daily drinking.)

Total = **73-75% drink moderately or not at all.** www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/alcohol.htm

Teens Who Don't Drink Also Don't Use Marijuana or Other Drugs

Healthy Youth Survey results for Thurston County:

	Have not used alcohol in past month	Did not drink AND have not used marijuana in past month	Did not drink AND have not used other drugs in last month
2006	73%	97%	96%
2008	72%	96%	95%

Know your teens' friends: Being offered marijuana is the 2nd major predictor (after smoking cigarettes and/or drinking alcohol) of early use and of eventual major drug problems and addiction. (Yes, marijuana IS addictive, as is any other drug.)

Support your friends: If you see their teen drink or use marijuana, tell the parents. **AND** ask them to tell you if the situation is reversed. **THEN** get help for the teen(s):

Students Who Drink Alcohol are at HIGH RISK for Traffic Crash Injuries/Death.

Fifty-two Grade 12 students who reported drinking on only 1-2 occasions in 30 days, also said “yes” to “Have you ever ridden in a car or other vehicle driven by someone who had been using alcohol?”

If you think (or know) your teen is using alcohol or other drugs – Ask for help...please. Call the crisis lines or 211 for referral agencies.



The ALERT Labs Group: *Project Director, Nancy L. Harper, Ph.D., Dean of Social Sciences and Professor Communication(ret.), Director, ALERT Labs Consulting; Project Coordinator, Shannon D. Welsh, M.Ed., Welsh Advertising; Project Evaluator, Donald (Tex) Bryant, M.S. & M.Ed., Director of Bryant Statistical Consulting, STARR Facilitator for screening and intervention, Geoffrey L. Stevens, LMSW, Alternative Behavioral Health Services; Project Theatre Coordinator, Carla Jackson, Certified in Secondary Education and Peer Mentoring/Listening*

Links to web sites about talking to children:

- Children NOW
- Time to Talk
- Kid's Health: Kids and Alcohol
- Parents: The AntiDrug
- WA-RUaD: Start Talking Now

What's Going On?....

Latino teens say it's NOT about alcohol, so take it away! Find out what they're talking about *here*.
Hmmm...the 4th of July is coming up....

It may be a sign of the times, but the timing couldn't be worse! Perhaps this is a nudge to put a new spin on “Neighborhood Watch”.
Click here ☺

How much does WA spend, cleaning up after alcohol abuse? *Find out here.*

Isn't it nice when you have someone else to bounce things off of? Blog about what's working and your challenges with other parents here—
Teen Decoder

TOGETHER! is hard at work developing an Alcohol Retailer's Coalition that will tackle tough problems such as the one facing northeast Seattle, described *here*.

Find out what you might share with 65 family members of youth impacted by substance abuse addiction, from 34 states and tribes across the United States. *Click here.* We welcome your comments!

For more information on ALERT Labs Group (*Alcohol Laboratories for Education, Research, and Training*), please visit their website: www.alertlabs.org
And visit TOGETHER! at www.thurstontogether.org