



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.

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TOGETHER!

Youth Violence, Alcohol, Tobacco, Drug Prevention

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- *More teens abstain from drinking and drug use when they know their parents disapprove*
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Questions, Suggestions, Comments? click on

info@alertlabs.org OR dhuning@thurstontogether.org

Quick Facts:

- Forty percent of children who begin drinking before the age of 15 will become alcoholics. SAMHSA Underage Drinking Prevention (p. 14).
- Boys are more likely to pursue unprotected sex under the influence of alcohol, and 50% of girls having intercourse before the age of 16 were intoxicated at the time. SAMHSA Underage Drinking Prevention (pp.18-19)

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

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](#).



High school teens who believe that their parents DISAPPROVE of underage alcohol and other drug use remain abstinent

Teens are reporting that their parents disapprove of underage drinking! Ninety-one percent of teens in 8th Grade, 84% of teens in 10th Grade, and 74% of teens in 12th Grade reported on the 2008 Healthy Youth Survey that their parents believe underage drinking is wrong or very wrong. Across Grades 8, 10, and 12 on the same survey, teens report an average of 92% of parents would disapprove of smoking cigarettes, and 89% of parents would disapprove of smoking marijuana. These figures are, in most cases, within two percentage points of state figures.

Thurston County Healthy Youth Survey figures for 2008 support the fact that MOST teens DO NOT:

- Use alcohol – average of 85% of Grades 8, 10, and 12
- Use marijuana – average of 82% of Grades 8, 10, and 12
- Use cigarettes – average of 85% of Grades 8, 10, and 12
- Use any illegal drugs, including marijuana – average of 81% of Grades 8, 10, and 12



Most teens are hearing a clear “Not Here!” message from their parents. Eighty-eight percent of 8th Grade, 80% of 10th Grade, and 77% of 12th Grade students report that their parents have established clear rules against alcohol and drug use. Moreover, don’t doubt that they carry that message with them. Responding to a hypothetical invitation to an alcoholic beverage while attending a party, an average of 57% of students across Grades 8, 10, and 12 would say “No thanks.” (Healthy Youth Survey, 2008).

We’re not there yet, though. Until we reach 100% of students talking with their parents and choosing not to use alcohol until they reach 21 or later, **increased diligence among parents is crucial**. The more teens and parents talk to each other, and the more parents model the behavior they would like to see in their children, the more likely it is that the percentage of students using alcohol and other drugs will continue to decrease. Parents, they ARE listening, and watching!

What's Going On?...

Extreme health alert on contaminated cocaine from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA)...click here.

Lewis County is suffering under the grim reminder of what happens when you think it's "safe". KiroTV.com

Fan Cans. They're the rage at some universities, and you'll see them around Thurston County. Given that 3/4 of college-age students are under 21, who might be the biggest consumer?

One mom's biggest concern as her teen returns to school, and some helpful suggestions from The Partnership For a Drug-Free America.

Nearly nine million 12- to 17-year olds can get prescription drugs to abuse in a day – nearly five million IN AN HOUR...CASA 2009 teen survey

Teens who think their father is OK with them drinking are 2-1/2 times more likely to get drunk in a given month. Are YOU driving your teen to alcohol?

She was "cool", and OUT COLD. Alcohol abuse is a slippery slope that leads to other, unwanted behaviors. For this UW freshman, her "gentleman" friend, well...wasn't.

Truth is, it's NOT a phase all teenagers go through... An astute college student speaks out...and asks adults to STOP.

Powerful reminders from teens that they ARE WATCHING us (adults), and just waiting for the right moment... Teen's Stories

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

What should parents and teens say to each other about alcohol and other drugs? When? Where? How often? How do parents know if teens are or are not using?

What seems to work best for parent-teen talk is private, "just between us" conversations during which parents listen as much as they talk. Good places for talks are while driving in the car, at dinner for two, at a special outing to shop, on a walk, etc. It is wise to promise no retaliation for what may be said, e.g., no punishment.

There are also some credible and very helpful places on the internet for suggestions on the What-Where-When-How-Why. The Washington Coalition to Reduce Underage Drinking (RUaD) website is one. Browse their suggestions by clicking [here](#).

Another is "Time To Act", mentioned in July's issue of *Parents Are Heroes*, under "What's Going On?", it has advice on helping parents identify signs and symptoms of drug abuse, preparing for those potentially uncomfortable Private Talks, and setting realistic limits. You can check out their resources [here](#). For Spanish, haga clic [aquí](#). **Mothers Against Drunk Driving** has resources, suggestions and facts on the topics of social hosting, tips and research.



DID YOU KNOW?

Kudos to Tumwater High School's principal, Scott Seaman, and ASB students.

The first Social Norms campaign to run in the high schools of Thurston County is under way! Social Norms effect change by addressing the perception of "everybody's doing it" with statistics that contradict this. For example, students believe "most" seniors drink frequently and drink a lot. However, 76% of seniors reported on the 2008 Thurston County Healthy Youth Survey that they do NOT binge drink.

It takes time to change beliefs and perceptions. A truly successful SN campaign runs for a minimum of 2 years. We applaud Tumwater High School staff for their commitment to keep our youth healthy, safe and valued.

There's a lot to learn about alcohol, other drugs and adolescents. Check out "Check Yourself", and suggest that your teen(s) do the same. Take a quiz, read some personal stories and more...

It is important to MODEL responsible, moderate drinking (IF you drink). Make clear that alcohol is dangerous for teens but can safely be used by healthy adults over age 21.* There is more and more research around the effects of what our children see and hear us doing. Read "Dad's drinking predicts teen imbibing", and "Study links teen drug use to parental behavior." Never doubt, our kids ARE watching us! One Seattle neighborhood and the Parent Heroes living there are waging their own war against [retailer complicity](#).

* Responsible drinking for a healthy adult is less than 7 drinks per week for women (never more than one drink per day) and less than 14 drinks per week for men (never more than two drinks per day).

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