



Parents Are Heroes

Preventing Underage Use of Alcohol

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) Drug Free Communities Project.



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In this issue:

- **Abstinence** increases for alcohol, tobacco, and some other drugs – **not so** for marijuana.
- **Did You Know?**
- **What's Going On?**

Questions, Suggestions, Comments? click on

info@alertlabs.org OR

dhuning@thurstontgether.org

For all previous issues of *Parents are Heroes*, click [HERE](#)

Quick Facts:

Relationships are everything!

Social Networks

- An average of 74% of teens in Thurston County have best friends committed to being drug free!

Community

- Of the Thurston County sophomores who eat five or more fruits and vegetables a day, 68% of them are also alcohol free.

Neighborhoods

- Adolescents who live within walking distance of an alcohol outlet are more likely to engage in binge drinking or to drive drunk. *American Journal of Public Health*, Jan 2009

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

Habla Con Tus Hijos

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 both the English and Spanish versions.



Perception of risk influences use

Three years ago, the **2006** Thurston County Healthy Youth Survey results indicated that **81%** of students in **Grade 12**, **85%** of students in **Grade 10**, and **95%** of students in **Grade 8** reported **not** using marijuana. In **2008**, the same survey results indicated **75%** of **Grade 12** students, **80%** of **Grade 10** students, and **92%** of **Grade 8** students reported **not** using marijuana. We are also seeing an **increase in the percent of students reporting that marijuana is "possibly not risky"** to people their age! (Put another way, between 2006 and 2008, there has been an increase in the number of teens who believe using alcohol or tobacco is risky; however, there has also been an increase in the number of teens who believe using marijuana is NOT risky, with an associated increase in that use.)

Substance	2006 "Possibly Not Risky" Range Grade 8, 10, 12	2008 "Possibly Not Risky" Range Grade 8, 10, 12	% Change
Alcohol	66%, 67%, 70%	65%, 63%, 64%	-1%, -4%, -6%
Marijuana	26%, 37%, 47%	35%, 48%, 58%	+9%, +11%, +11%
Tobacco	29%, 28%, 26%	25%, 26%, 26%	-4%, -2%, 0%

This **statistically significant** change strongly suggests there has been a **REAL attitude shift** that is **likely to result in increased use in the future if not directly addressed by parents, schools and peers**.

As adults, we need to be aware of the harm marijuana use does to our youth and talk to our kids about its dangers. The brain damage and resulting behaviors are, not surprisingly, similar to those resulting from alcohol use. Furthermore, both drugs are *especially addictive* to those with a family history of alcohol or other drug (AOD) problems and those with ADHD/ADD. Bear in mind, in the Grade 8, Grade 10 and Grade 12 populations for Thurston County, a combined average of 80% of those using marijuana **also use alcohol** (2008 Healthy Youth Survey). Alcohol is recognized as a "gateway" drug leading to the abuse of many other drugs.

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Harmful effects of marijuana and alcohol on brain development:

- problems with **thinking, learning, problem solving and remembering** leading to academic and social difficulties
- **altered perception** of light, sound and touch leading to sexual exploitation
- **increased appetite** for sweets, leading to obesity and/or malnutrition
- **increased heart rate** and heightened blood pressure leading to hypertension
- **substance use disorders**, including addiction for those genetically predisposed, leading to crime, injuries and other anti-social behavior

What's Going On?....

TOGETHER! has a brand new website! Please get comfortable and surf through our pages [here](#). We hope you find it user-friendly, helpful, and informative!

Parents, Teens, Educators, Professionals, and the Governor are talking about IT.....

The American Medical Association speaks out on underage drinking.

If it didn't work, why would they spend MILLIONS of dollars doing it? The relationship between viewing and using...

Suggest www.TheCoolSpot.gov to your middle and beginning high school students and meet some kids who know their stuff!

Does everybody in Europe think underage drinking is okay? Apparently, they've learned a lesson in Italy.

A little holiday reminder... What's half of an alcoholic beverage you ask? Find out here!

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.thurstontgether.org

- **paranoid thoughts and intense anxiety** resulting in fights and/or isolation
- 3-fold increase in **depression**, leading to increased suicidal thoughts
- 40% increase in risk for **adult mental illness**

For more information and helpful suggestions, go to TheAntiDrug.com, TeenAdvice and TimeToTalk.

Did You Know?

Why does the brain become addicted? Those who have inherited the genetic predisposition "activate" the disease the first time they use an addictive substance - certain medicines, over the counter drugs, alcohol, tobacco, etc.

"No one chooses to become addicted," says Nora Volkow, M.D., Director of the National Institute for Drug Abuse (NIDA). "They simply are cognitively unable to choose **not** to be addicted." Go to [Psychiatric News](#) for Dr. Volkow's fascinating report.



Parents of high school students in Thurston County can network with one another and support zero tolerance for underage drinking and drug use. How??? By supporting the Family Partnership Alliance - a network of parents pledging to host alcohol- and drug-free gatherings

whenever underage youth are present. These networks exist in communities across the nation, all endeavoring to mentor our youth in developing responsible behavior and informed attitudes around drug use and underage drinking. To join or for more information, go to TOGETHER!'s website [here](#), or call Devon Huning, at 493-2230, x22.

TOGETHER!'s Thurston County Sticker Shock Campaign went off without a hitch!

This campaign, also taking place around the country, is an effort to raise awareness around the issues of social hosting and the legal ramifications for adults when liquor is provided to underage youth. Six community-minded retailers participated. In Olympia and Lacey, they were Nisqually Automotive and Towing/Chevron, Thompson Place Market, Lacey Food Mart, Fourth Avenue Food Mart and the Restover Food Mart and Truck Stop.



In Tenino, Kwik Shop Too also participated. Please acknowledge the commitment these retailers have made to efforts in keeping our youth healthy and safe by supporting them with your business. Thanks also to three fabulous and committed Thurston County youth for helping with the actual stickering - Carlene Mealing, Caitee Borges, and Heidi DuPrey!

The WA Liquor Control Board needs to hear from you!

The LCB is currently in the final stages of rewriting rules that directly affect youth exposure to alcohol advertising. Your input and voice are critical and the deadline is November 18th. Please read this [Action Alert](#) from the [Washington Association for Substance Abuse and Violence Prevention](#) and then [email the LCB](#) to let them know how important reducing youth exposure to alcohol advertising is to our community.

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