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Parents Matter News Letter XVII **April, 2012**

Parents Who Host, Lose The Most!

By: Larry Weiss, Chair
Parents Matter Coalition, CSD

Parents who host parties for teens consuming alcohol and try to be teen's "friend" instead of parenting are creating serious liability issues. In addition, the "image" created is that it is "ok to break the law"; it is not.

How would that parent feel if their son or daughter's friend got alcohol poisoning and became seriously ill or died? How would they feel if that son or daughter's friend got in a vehicle had an accident and killed themselves or others? Of the 13 teens killed by driving after drinking around graduation time in 2006 and those killed in subsequent years how many drank at a parent's or friends parent's house?

Some parents say "I would rather have them drinking at home than out on the street"; really? How about providing guidance that they should not be drinking at all until 21? Others say "I'd rather have them drinking than taking drugs"; isn't alcohol a drug, it is addictive? The teen driving 101 mph after drinking on I90 near Mitchell recently is fortunate "to have lived" to be fined and have her driver's license taken away! The person who was eluding police, ran a stop sign at a high rate of speed, hit a vehicle, killed a 9 year old girl and injured 5 others in Mitchell recently had an alcohol problem, addiction?

Research has shown that teens who drink regularly starting in mid-teens are 4—5 times as likely to be alcoholics in later years than those who do not start consuming alcohol until adults.

Eight states have Social Hosting Laws. Laws in sixteen other states hold parents responsible for underage drinking in some circumstances, such as if a teenager who drank in their home was in a car accident. And in other states, parents are allowed to serve alcohol to their own children in certain situations.

Social Hosting Laws provide penalties for parents/other adults who host parties for teens to consume alcohol. At a recent seminar, individuals from Ohio provided information on their state's law. The law is not necessarily to punish but more so to "educate" parents/other adults on "doing the right thing" through media messages, material distribution, corporate partnerships and, local efforts (youth). Other states laws will be pursued to determine applicability to SD. Youth need to be involved locally, they provide

REMEMBER—
Everyone is in charge of prevention. And prevention is not a program. Rather, it is an informed commitment

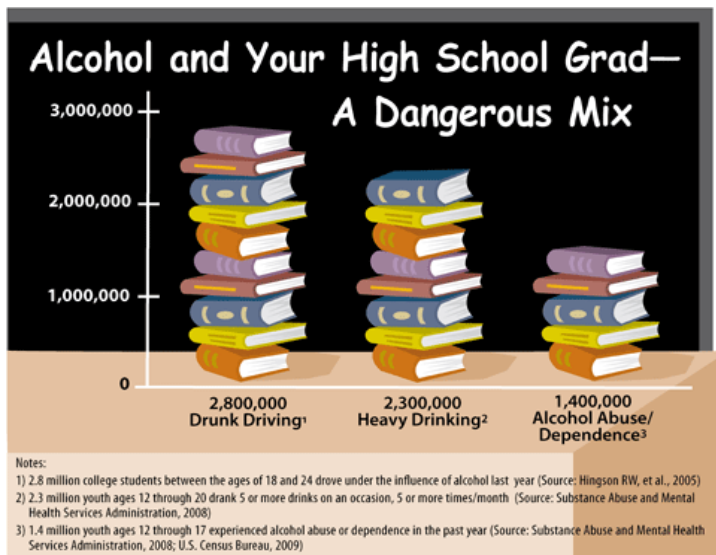
Thank You! to **Arby's** for providing lunch for the March 14 meeting.

Next Coalition Meeting
 Parents Matter Coalition of Pierre/Fort Pierre
 Wednesday, April 11, 2012
 Noon
 5th Floor Conference Room
 St. Mary's Healthcare Center
 Pierre, SD 57501
 Lunch provided.
parentsmatter@pie.midco.net
parentsmattercsd.com
 Everyone is WELCOME call for a reservation: Ruby or Elaine 224-3189 (necessary for Food Preparation)

"In the fight against underage drinking—we have to know 'when to say when.' When we've said enough. When we've done enough. When we've demanded enough. Frankly, we're not there yet. Not even close."
 Donna Shalala, Former Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Energy Drinks + Alcohol = Serious Health Risk "Energy drinks used in excess or in combination with alcohol or drugs can pose a serious health risk," said Pamela S. Hyde, J.D., Administrator in the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA), about a new report, **Emergency Department visits Involving Energy Drinks**. This report is based on data from SAMHSA's 2005-2009 Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) reports. In DAWN data analysis, 44% of the emergency department visits involving energy drinks were associated with the combined use of an energy drink with other substances such as alcohol, pharmaceuticals, or illicit drugs. The rate of combination use of energy drinks and other substances of abuse was greatest among young adults aged 18 to 25 (52%).

Read more at: <https://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov>



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the message “we need a *parent not another friend!*”

What does social hosting look like in our communities:

- Drinking at a friend’s parent’s house?
- Drinking in someone’s pasture (with permission), driving to and from?
- Graduation parties w/alcohol?
- Weddings where youth are allowed to consume alcohol?

7 Community Change Strategies?

1. Provide information
2. Enhance skills
3. Provide support
4. Change access and barriers
5. Change consequences or incentives
6. Change in physical design
7. Change policy

Parents: Help Your Teens Party Right at Graduation

April is alcohol awareness month and a lot of families are preparing for graduation parties. Graduation is a time to celebrate. But before your graduates party, take the time to talk with them about alcohol—it just may save a life. It’s about your teen...a teenager’s brain is still developing and it is very sensitive to alcohol’s effects on judgment and decision-making. Alcohol can be tricky...if your graduates drink, they may temporarily feel elated and happy, but they should not be fooled. Ask them to consider these risks: 1) Their inhibitions and memory soon become affected—so they may say and do things that they will regret and possibly will not remember doing at all. 2) Their decision-making skills are also affected. They may become restless and aggressive. They may be more at risk for having an alcohol-related traffic crash, getting into fights, trashing a house, or making unwise decisions about sex. Then there is what happens to their physical control—loss of balance, slurred speech, and blurred vision. Normal activities—even crossing a busy intersection—can become truly dangerous. **Too**

much alcohol becomes a deadly poison...If your graduates drink enough, they will eventually get sleepy and pass out. Reflexes like gagging and breathing can be suppressed. That means they could vomit and choke to death or just stop breathing. They may even be at risk for alcohol poisoning. **Think About It!** If graduates drink too much, it can mean trips to the emergency room, arrests, and sexual assaults. Ask them to consider this: Is that any way to celebrate? **Talk With Your Graduate...**Research shows that parents do make a difference. Talking with your graduate about alcohol now could prevent serious problems later. **A word about alcohol poisoning...**Before the celebrations begin, take a few minutes to talk with your graduate about the dangers of alcohol poisoning. **What is it?** Alcohol depresses nerves that control involuntary actions such as breathing and the gag reflex, which prevents choking. Someone who drinks a fatal dose of alcohol will eventually stop breathing. Even if someone survives an alcohol overdose, he or she can suffer irreversible brain damage. Rapid binge

drinking (which often happens on a bet or a dare) is especially dangerous because the victim can drink a fatal dose **before** losing consciousness. A person’s blood alcohol concentration can continue to rise even while he or she is passed out. Even after someone stops drinking, alcohol in the stomach and intestine continues to enter the blood-stream and circulate throughout the body. A person who appears to be sleeping it off may be in real danger. **What Should I Look For?** Critical signs of alcohol poisoning include mental confusion, stupor, coma, or the person cannot be roused; vomiting; seizures; slow (fewer than eight breaths per minute) or irregular (10 seconds or more between breaths) breathing; and hypothermia (low body temperature), bluish skin color, and paleness. **What Should I do?** Know the danger signals. If you suspect someone has alcohol poisoning, don’t wait for all the critical signs to be present. If you suspect an alcohol overdose, call 911 immediately for help.

Young Teens and Alcohol: The Risks

- Most problems related to alcohol use are not identified as such until they attain community visibility. Indicators of alcohol problems often go unnoticed until the problems become so severe that they can no longer be ignored.
- With so many drugs available to young people these days, you may wonder, "Why pay so much attention to helping kids avoid alcohol?"
- **Alcohol is a drug**, as surely as cocaine and marijuana are. It's illegal to drink under the age of 21. **And it's dangerous.** Kids who drink are more likely to:
 - Be victims of violent crime
 - Have serious problems in school
 - Be involved in drinking-related traffic crashes
- For young people, alcohol is the drug of choice. In fact, alcohol is used by more young people than tobacco or illicit drugs. Although most children under age 14 have not yet begun to drink, early adolescence is a time of special risk for beginning to experiment with alcohol. While some parents and guardians may feel relieved that their teen is "only" drinking, it is important to remember that alcohol is a powerful, mood-altering drug. Not only does alcohol affect the mind and body in often unpredictable ways, but teens lack the judgment and coping skills to handle alcohol wisely. As a result:
 - Alcohol-related traffic crashes are a major cause of death among young people. Alcohol use also is linked with teen deaths by drowning, suicide, and homicide.
 - Teens who use alcohol are more likely to be sexually active at earlier ages, to have sexual intercourse more often, and to have unprotected sex than teens who do not drink.
 - Young people who drink are more likely than others to be victims of violent crime, including rape, aggravated assault, and robbery.
 - Teens who drink are more likely to have problems with school work and school conduct.
 - The majority of boys and girls who drink tend to binge (5 or more drinks on an occasion for boys and 4 or more on an occasion for girls) when they drink.
 - A person who begins drinking as a young teen is four times more likely to develop alcohol dependence than someone who waits until adulthood to use alcohol.
- The message is clear: Alcohol use is very risky business for young people. And the longer children delay alcohol use, the less likely they are to develop any problems associated with it. That's why it is so important to help your child avoid any alcohol use.

TIPS FOR TALKING WITH YOUR TEEN

Developing open, trusting communication between you and your child is essential to helping him or her avoid alcohol use. If your child feels comfortable talking openly with you, you'll have a greater chance of guiding him or her toward healthy decision making. Some ways to begin;

- Encourage conversation. Encourage your child to talk about whatever interests him or her. Listen without interruption and give your child a chance to teach you something new. Your active listening to your child's enthusiasms paves the way for conversations about topics that concern you.
- Ask open-ended questions. Encourage your teen to tell you how he or she thinks and feels about the issue you're discussing. Avoid questions that have a simple "yes" or "no" answer.
- Control your emotions. If you hear something you don't like, try not to respond with anger. Instead, take a few deep breaths and acknowledge your feelings in a constructive way.
- Make every conversation a "win-win" experience. Don't lecture or try to "score points" on your teen by showing how he or she is wrong. If you show respect for your child's viewpoint, he or she will be more likely to listen to and respect yours.

Draw the Line. Set clear, realistic expectations for your child's behavior. Establish appropriate consequences for breaking rules and consistently enforce them.

Offer acceptance. Make sure your teen knows that you appreciate his or her efforts as well as accomplishments. Avoid hurtful teasing in criticism.

Understand that your child is growing up. This doesn't mean a hands-off attitude. But as you guide your child's behavior, also make an effort to respect his or her growing need for independence and privacy.

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