

Teens Breaking Barriers



City of New Haven Commission on Substance Abuse Policy & Prevention 2007 Summer Youth Initiative

The Commission on Substance Abuse Policy and Prevention (CSAPP) was created in 2002 to increase the quality of life in New Haven by reducing substance abuse and related harms. Our mission is to engage institutions, groups, and individuals to take action in preventing substance abuse and ensuring multiple supports for recovery. CSAPP is housed within Community Services Administration and works to establish the Mayor's agenda on substance abuse policy and prevention.


CSAPP is dedicated to life-long leadership and works to empower

youth to take a stand on important issues in their community such as the prevention of underage drinking.

This summer was filled with opportunities for learning, growth, and fun. As a part of the 2007 Summer Youth Leaders experience, we have designed this newsletter to address an issue that is relevant to our community: **UNDERAGE DRINKING**. This newsletter is intended to help educate the youth of our community on the dangers of underage drinking and how they too can become leaders working to promote positive change.

Alcohol use is a leading cause of injury and death among youth in our community.

If you're an educator, teach; if you're a parent, counsel; if you're underage, don't drink.



The Commission on Substance Abuse Policy and Prevention
 John DeStefano, Jr., Mayor Sergio Rodriguez, Chair Esther Armand, Director
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A Simple Solution to the Problem of Underage Drinking

By Johanna Rios Roldan

Underage drinking is a problem of major importance because of the consequences it has on the individual and the New Haven community as a whole. Not only is drinking before the age of 21 illegal, but it also contributes to “risky behavior.”

Alcohol impairs one’s judgment. For example, people may do stupid things such as having unprotected sex, which may result in pregnancy or a sexually transmitted disease (STD). Alcohol consumption may also cause other long-term health complications such as loss of memory, cancer, and liver problems. Most importantly, underage drinking may result in injury and even death!

In my opinion, there is a simple solution to this problem. Statistics from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) show that participating in after school activities is associated with lower levels of substance use. If students are doing something productive after school they will not have time to

engage in underage drinking. **Students involved in at least one after school activity are 3.8% less likely to participate in underage drinking¹.** Moreover, the number of teenagers drinking is almost cut in half when students are involved in seven or more after school activities². Youth (ages 12-17) who do not participate in any activities have higher rates of substance use than those who participate in four or more activities³. If schools had more funding for after school activities maybe underage drinking would not be the growing problem that it is today.

Underage drinking is a problem in our communities; however, it is a problem that can be addressed. Young people need positive outlets. If there are programs available that youth are interested in then the problem of underage drinking can be drastically reduced.

1,2,3 National Survey on Drug Use and Health

I Remain

By Genesis Harris

Through the heartache
Through the pain
Through all the suffering and
tears

I remain

I remain the same
I try to stand strong and hold
out for so long
I feel like I can’t take the
pain anymore

But I still remain

I try to remain sane
But I can’t think, I can’t
breathe
I feel like I’m suffocating
Like everything and
everybody’s closing in on me

But yet I still remain

Dear Reader,

As a team, each member of CSAPP’s 2007 Summer Youth Initiative contributed to constructing this section of the newsletter. Together we chose different quotes that define leadership and teamwork. We each shared inspiring quotes written by famous, well known leaders before our time. We also discussed each quote as a team in order to gain a better understanding of our weekly discussion topics. You will find these quotes throughout the newsletter.

Sincerely,
CSAPP’s 2007 Summer Leadership Group

Are minimum purchasing laws and zero tolerance laws effective in reducing drinking among teenagers?

By Shayna Smith

The National Minimum Age Drinking Act, in my opinion, has little effect on reducing drinking among teenagers. Yes, the law does restrict UNDERAGE teenagers from the purchase and public possession of alcohol¹; however, teens have alternative ways of getting their hands on alcohol. Family members, such as older siblings, can easily provide teens with drinks. Some teens have even admitted to paying strangers to buy alcohol for them. Even store owners disregard the legal purchasing age. For example, according to The Department of Consumer Protection, fifteen New Haven liquor establishments received violation citations for selling alcohol to minors in 2005.

Zero tolerance, on the other hand, is more effective because it is a policy of having no tolerance for transgressions (i.e., breaking rules or laws). In high schools, students who are discovered intoxicated have their privileges removed (e.g. graduation ceremonies, school functions, prom, etc.). Fear of reprimand from parents and other persons of authority may also drive teens away from drinking.

Not only have schools and parents developed rules and regulations to help protect youth against the perils of underage drinking, legislation is also working to protect teens. Research showed an increase in the number of drivers younger than 21 involved in DWIs when minimum alcohol purchasing age laws were lowered in many states during the 1960s and early 1970s². Research conducted in 1981 revealed that after

some states restored higher purchasing age laws, nighttime fatal crashes among young drivers were reduced by 28%⁴. A later study of the 26 states that raised minimum purchasing ages during 1975-84 estimated a 13% reduction in nighttime driver fatal crash involvement³. While some people may think that the legal drinking age of 21 is too high, the research mentioned above demonstrates the opposite. Fatalities can be reduced drastically by keeping the minimum purchasing and drinking age at 21.

While minimum purchasing laws have proven to reduce drinking among teenagers, laws need to become stricter in order to crack down on teenagers who believe they are above the law. Teens need to become aware that although underage drinking may be considered cool it is illegal and often deadly.

1 What About the Drinking Age?, David J. Hanson, Ph.D.

2 National Institute for Highway Losses

3 National Institute for Highway Losses

Leadership Quotes

Men make history, and not the other way around. In periods where there is no leadership, society stands still. Progress occurs when courageous, skillful leaders seize the opportunity to change things for the better.

-Harry S. Truman

Leadership is not the private reserve of a few charismatic men and women. It is a process ordinary people use when they are bringing forth the best from themselves and others.

-Unknown

Untitled

By: Taneisha Granger

Have you ever wanted something so much that you were willing to crawl over bodies to get it? I mean craved for it so bad it didn't matter who you hurt, or how low you had to go, it was gonna be yours? That's the influence addiction and violence have. It is the fundamental behind your rise and the perpetrator of your fall. There's never a dime's worth of fear in your pocket, just a speck of blood in your eyes. The gyration of the bullet seducing your opponent stimulates your mind, But how do you compete for a race someone else put you in? If you were never given the rules, then how would you ever win? "

Know the facts, They're sobering.

The image of drinking is parties, good times, and being cool. But, the reality is car crashes, missed classes, broken promises, and gripping addiction.

What Audiences are Alcohol Advertisers Targeting?

By Sharay Salters

Have you ever taken a minute to think about who alcohol advertisements are targeting and what these ads are trying to say? While surfing the Internet, I was shocked to find out that the advertisements produced by alcohol companies were reaching more youth than adults¹. There must be a reason why these advertisers are targeting youth.

Alcohol companies are a business and like any business the bottom line is MONEY. According to research conducted by the RAND Corporation middle school children who are exposed to high levels of alcohol advertising and marketing are 50 percent more likely to drink. Not only are advertisers targeting an underage audience, teens are being influenced by these ads. A USA Today survey found that teens say alcohol ads have greater influence on the desire to drink in general than the desire to buy a particular brand.

In 1999, The Federal Trade Commission called on alcohol companies to raise their standards regarding advertising to minors in an effort to make alcohol companies more accountable. However, no legislation has passed restricting alcohol advertisement in magazines and television shows with underage audiences.

Research has demonstrated:

- There are similarities among soda and alcohol ads in using themes of humor, relaxation, and outdoor adventure to sell products.
- Underage youth saw 3 alcohol ads on TV for every 5 ads seen by adults.

No matter who alcohol advertisers decide to target as their audience the law is clear: the legal age to drink is 21. Deciding to drink is a choice that we all have, but it is also important to remember there are always consequences for the decisions we make. Some of the consequences of drinking include: unintentional death or injury associated with driving or engaging in other risky activity, homicide and violence, suicide attempts, alcohol addiction, sexual assault, risky sexual behavior, vandalism and property damage, and brain damage. The choices you make in your youth have consequences throughout your life so make sure you are able to live with your choices.

¹ The Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth at Georgetown



Friends!

They told me they loved me, they told me they cared So I thought, "Why not? A little alcohol never hurt anyone." Yeah maybe I was a little dizzy and my mom said I was acting strange. But so what I had friends

I'm beginning to get in over my head!!! My teachers are threatening to hold me back. How could this be? I was at the top of the class! Yeah I missed a few assignments here and there. But my friends said it would be fine.

I can't believe this! My world is crumbling around me and friends are disappearing. The same friends who claimed they loved me and claimed they cared.
Friends?

WHY?

By Haley Vincent

Why is it that when you look at me I'm just an African-American girl that has nothing going for myself? Why is it that when you look at me I'm an unattractive girl with make-up on. Is it because I have low self-esteem? Is make-up the only thing that makes me look and feel beautiful? Why is it that I have to have a small voice when they take away my pride and everything I love from me? That small voice is no longer small. It goes to show "you shouldn't judge a book by its cover." I'm a proud African-American girl with dreams; with dreams of one day to be on television or to change the community. Who is going to let those that thought negative about me feel remorse for others and I, who want to make our dreams a reality. To show them that make-up isn't always to cover an ugly face, but to enforce my natural beauty. From this point on nothing I love will be taken from me but shared with others who are in need. From this point on I will strive for my dreams.



Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless.

-Mother Theresa

Great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events; small minds discuss people.

- Eleanor Roosevelt

Statistics indicate that alcohol is the leading drug of choice among adolescents.

DON'T BE A STATISTIC!

Research has found that drinking often begins at very young ages. The national average age of first drink is 13. Even more alarming is that in Connecticut that age lowers to 11.

THINK: Why are kids drinking at such an early age? What is happening in our community?

The prevalence of alcohol dependence among adolescents and young adults is much higher than for other age groups.

THINK: What are the consequences of alcohol use? Is addiction a chance you are willing to take?

While African-American youth on average drink less than their non-Hispanic white counterparts, rates of heavy and problem drinking in the adult African-American population are higher than those for non-Hispanic white adults.

THINK: What happens from adolescence to adulthood that leads more African-Americans to drink? How can we reach children while they are young?

Alcohol is the leading contributor to injury death, the main cause of death for people under age 21. About 5,000 youth a year die from injuries related to underage drinking.

THINK: Is drinking worth the price of your life?

A 2000 study of sixth and ninth graders found that those who considered alcohol ads and logo products appealing were more likely to already be engaging in drinking behaviors.

THINK: What do alcohol advertisers want you to see? Who is influencing you?

Statistics taken from Using Science to Combat Underage Drinking

Welcome To A Better World...

Population: Increasing

As a whole, we need to **OVERCOME ADVERSITY.**

God gave us all the same basics. So what if we're a little different. Build **TRUST** within one another making it much easier to **RESPECT** each other and want to believe in one another.

Why not **BAND TOGETHER** and succeed, not as separate groups but as one?

Why not walk this **ROAD OF CHANGE** together? **WHY NOT?**

By Shayna Smith



Underage drinking makes our highways less safe, our schools less effective, and our future less certain. Alcohol and teenagers don't mix. Share the message with those you love.

Alcohol use is a leading cause of death among teenagers in our community. Keep 'em alive. Enforce 21. Know the facts, They're sobering.

I T I S N C T E O T G L A O O
D T O D R I O I S N K I L K U
N D E R A G E M C U T A C N W
U N D E R A G E M K B J O I I
B S T L N V P N U I E A H R U
X A Z W M X X I P B S T O D D
Z Y C T A F I K O E S I L S T
R E Z I L E H T A E R B O Q W
E S U B S T A N C E G L R N E
C I W D K Y I I N A A G L V N
I S K H C Z G H L G N T S E T
L A A I P R E V E N T I O N Y
O J L P J C W L G D M A W G O
P O Y K P O L A A L P W I W N
P J V Z N I A J L B O J H V E

WORD SEARCH

ALCOHOL

BAC

BREATHELIZER

CSAPP

DRINK

DUI

DWI

ILLEGAL

JAIL

LEGAL

POLICE

POLICY

PREVENTION

SUBSTANCE

TEST

TICKET

TWENTY-

ONE

UNDERAGE

If you or someone you know needs help:

Alateen Family Groups of Connecticut

Address: 93 Edwards St.,
New Haven, CT

Number: 1-888-4AL-ANON

Service: See website for more info on meeting locations and times (www.al-anon.org)

Description: Helps families and friends of alcoholics recover from the effects of living with the problem drinking of a relative or friend. Alateen is a recovery program for young people.

Service: Mental health support groups, individual counseling, psychosocial and psychiatric evaluations, crisis intervention, referrals and case management.

Description: Private non-profit organization that gives the community's families a place to work through some of their difficulties.

How to contact us:

City of New Haven Commission on Substance Abuse Policy and Prevention

Address: 165 Church Street, New Haven, CT

Number: (203) 946-8445

Fax: (203)946-8587

Youth Continuum

Address: 924 Grand Ave.,
New Haven, CT

Number: (203) 495-1632

Service: After-school and day programs; group homes; independent transitional living; respite and reunification; street outreach; and training and research.

Description: Organization dedicated to protecting and promoting the well-being of at-risk youth and providing them with the skills necessary to take advantage of opportunities for a healthy and product

Dixwell/Newhallville Community Mental Health Services

Address: 660 Winchester Ave.,
New Haven, CT

Number: (203) 776-8390



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