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It's Back to School Time!



Summer is drawing to an end, and kids are headed back to school (whether they like it or not). Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) is offering to parents suggestions to make this a successful school year. Do you have the supplies you need? No, they are not talking about backpacks and pencils but the tools every parent needs to keep their kids safe.

Did you know alcohol kills more teens than all other illicit drugs combined?

MADD would like to help. They have a publication called Power of Parents. It's Your Influence and it provides parents with proven tips and tools to help kids stay alcohol-free this school year. Visit their website at www.madd.org/underage-drinking/the-power-of-parents/ to download the booklet.

Here are seven tips from MADD for getting through to your teen:

- **Communicate before a problem starts** – Have important discussions now, before there's blame, anger or punishment. Agree on a time to start talking together about the dangers of alcohol.
- **Discuss rules and consequences** – Explain how you expect your son or daughter to act, and why. Tell your teen plainly that you don't want him or her drinking. Agree on consequences of broken rules.
- **Show you care** – Gently touch your teen on the arm or back to show affection. Tell your teen you love them and want them to be healthy and safe. Explain that's why you need to talk together about the dangers of underage drinking.
- **Pay attention** – Even when life gets hectic, take time out to listen to your teen. Monitor where your teen is and what your teen is doing.
- **Share family activities** – Have dinner together at least three times a week.
- **Give and get respect** – When your teen talks to you, listen and reply respectfully. Insist that your teen treat you with respect, too.
- **Enforce consequences consistently** – If your teen breaks the rules, stay calm and enforce the consequences.



For more information on youth and alcohol, check out these websites:

<http://bethechange.ellington-ct.gov>
www.settherulesct.org
www.faceproject.org
www.theantidrug.com
www.teen-safe.org
www.stopalcoholabuse.gov
www.preventionworksct.org
www.housepartybill.org
www.madd.org/under21
www.mourningparentsact.org
www.dontserveteens.gov
www.alcoholfreechildren.org
www.Alot2Lose.com
www.thecoolspot.gov
www.sadd.org
www.niaaa.nih.gov
www.notmykid.org
www.drugfree.org

Be sure to check out our websites!

<http://youth.ellington-ct.gov> and <http://bethechange.ellington-ct.gov>

Remember, parents do matter.

Have a conversation today about alcohol!

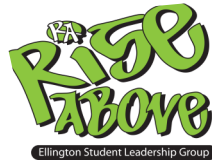
- Emphasize the fact that drinking is illegal for teens and for very good reasons.
- Let your teen know that not everyone their age is drinking. Teens often overestimate how many of their peers are drinking or have tried alcohol.
- Talk about how drinking will affect them and that a person who is drinking is not a good judge of how impaired they are.
- Explain your own position concerning your teen's drinking. Discuss your family's rules about alcohol and agree on the consequences for breaking the rules.
- Talk about what sometimes motivates teens to drink, and discuss alternatives for achieving those goals.
- Discuss reasons for NOT drinking and the many bad consequences that can result from drinking.
- Help your teen brainstorm ways to resist inappropriate peer pressure. Reinforce that you want to help your son or daughter find constructive alternatives to drinking.

Source: MADD Power of Parents

The Parent Connection is on facebook



Rise Above Student Leadership Group



Rise Above, in its 5th year, is comprised of Ellington High School students from every grade and meets once a month after school. It is community based and focuses on encouraging positive choices, especially concerning drugs and alcohol. They sponsor a variety of activities throughout the school year and also act as role models for Ellington's student community. Rise Above has sponsored activities such as dodge ball tournaments, flag football and pool tournaments, bowling, movie and game nights and EHS Talent Show. They have also participated in community service and were in charge of the kids' games at the Fair on The Green the past two years, produced several shows on The Community Voice Channel, sponsored several car washes for the Safe Graduation party, created a poster campaign for middle school students and assisted with hosting the Connecticut Youth Forum. Rise Above welcomes any high school student who is committed to making positive choices especially concerning drugs and alcohol. The first meeting will be an open house and is scheduled for Wednesday, September 14th at 2 pm in the high school library. All past and prospective members must complete and return an application with signatures from both the member and parents.

Is It Worth It Campaign



The Drug Abuse Prevention Council (DAPC) launched a media campaign in May directed to those individuals who supply alcohol to underage youth. A billboard, lawn signs, postcards and a front page spot in the summer edition of The Ellington Connection helped get the message out that it is not worth the consequences. For more information on the laws and consequences with supplying alcohol to youth or hosting parties with alcohol and youth, visit the DAPC website at <http://bethechange.ellington-ct.gov>

Open House Bag Giveaway



The DAPC is happy to announce they will be giving out complimentary reusable shopping bags once again, filled with information and gifts at all the school open houses this fall. **Attention middle school and high school parents:** We are asking you to fill out a brief anonymous survey. For those parents who complete and return the survey that evening of open house, their names will go into a drawing for 3 Big Y gift cards. Thank you for your help!

Deborah Stauffer, Prevention Coordinator~ Ellington Drug Abuse Prevention Council/Ellington Youth Services~ 31 Arbor Way, Ellington, Connecticut 06029 ~ Telephone: 860-870-3130

~ Email: dstauffer@ellington-ct.gov

Website-<http://bethechange.ellington-ct.gov>

Decriminalization of Marijuana

Smoking Marijuana is Still Against the Law

Effective July 1st of this year, the State of Connecticut decriminalized the possession of less than one-half ounce of marijuana. If a person is found to possess exactly one-half ounce they will be subject to the penalties outlined for MORE than one-half ounce. This law DOES NOT mean marijuana use is legal.



- Decriminalization means the penalties for marijuana possession in the State of Connecticut have changed from jail time to fines (infractions) which is similar to a speeding ticket. Since a violation is not a crime, persons who commit a violation do not have a criminal record and can pay the fine by mail.
- This law also reduces, from a crime to an infraction, the penalty for actions involving drug paraphernalia related to the use of less than one-half ounce of marijuana. There are 13 other states in the country that have decriminalized marijuana.
- Possession of less than one-half ounce of marijuana carries a \$150 fine for the first offense and a \$200 to \$500 fine for a subsequent offense.
- Possession of one-half ounce or more but less than four ounces of marijuana, for a first offense may be fined not more than \$1,000 or be imprisoned not more than one year or both; for a subsequent offense, may be fined not more than \$3,000 or be imprisoned not more than five years or both.
- **For those 21 years or younger** the law requires a 60 day driver's license suspension. If the person does not have a driver's license their ability to get a license will be delayed until a period of 150 days.
- **For those 16 years old or younger-in addition to the license suspension-** they will not be allowed to pay a fine and will have to appear in juvenile court. In that court, these offenses will be deemed "delinquent acts" and, as such subject to a maximum disposition of a commitment to the Department of Children and Families for a period of up to 18 months.
- **For those 17 years or younger—in addition to the license suspension-** a 17 year old who is charged with either offenses-possessing less than one-half ounce of marijuana or actions involving drug paraphernalia-between July 1, 2011 and July 1, 2012 would not be entitled to youthful offender status in the adult court if they elect not to , or fail to pay the fine. After July 1, 2012 a 17 year old will also be considered a juvenile and will have to appear in the juvenile court and face the same penalties for a "delinquent act."

The main chemical in marijuana is THC (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol). Short-term effects include problems with memory and learning; distorted perception; difficulty in thinking and problem-solving; loss of coordination; and increased heart rate, anxiety, and panic attacks.

Rachel's Challenge



Windermere Intermediate School in conjunction with Youth Services and Windermere Intermediate PTO will once again sponsor **Rachel's Challenge** on October 13th. Rachel Scott was the first person killed by shooters at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado on April 20, 1999. Her acts of kindness and compassion coupled with the contents of her six diaries found after her death have become the foundation for Rachel's Challenge. Windermere 5th and 6th grade students will participate in an assembly and then be invited to join any of the Rachel's Challenge Chain Link Clubs offered by Windermere School. The Chain Link Club is intended to foster kindness and compassion to help continue the momentum created by the assembly and last all throughout the school year. There will be a presentation for parents on the evening of October 13th in the Ellington High School auditorium. For more information visit their website at www.rachelschallenge.org