
Parenting for Prevention

Student Assistance Services Corp., 660 White Plains Road, Tarrytown, New York, 10591, October, 2014

Opportunity for Our High School Students

What began as a dream in a major snowstorm at the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) conference six years ago in Washington, DC, has now been a reality in Westchester County for the past six years.

Alternating between middle and high school students, the Westchester Coalition for Drug and Alcohol Free Youth has held an annual conference for Westchester students. The conference promotes and reinforces healthy lifestyle choices in terms of not choosing to use alcohol and other drugs.

This years the conference will be held for high school students on Nov 11, Veteran's Day, and we hope that every school in the county will be represented. Not only is it a fantastic opportunity for the teens that attend but it has also been a vehicle for students to bring healthy messages back to their school community and form clubs and organizations that positively influence additional students.

Patricia Murphy Warble, LCSW, CPP



Parents Teaching Teens

“Responsible Drinking” is a Myth

The following article was written by Celia Vimont and was posted on the Partnership for Drug-Free Kids website on October 1, 2014.

Parents who provide their teens with alcohol and a place to consume it may think they are teaching their children “responsible drinking.” A new review of studies concludes this view is misguided. Researchers found parental provision of alcohol is associated with increased teen alcohol use. In some cases, parental provision of alcohol is also linked with increased heavy episodic drinking and higher rates of alcohol-related problems, the researchers report in the *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, July, 2014.

“We suspect there is a surprising amount of ‘social hosting’ going on—parents providing alcohol for their teens and their friends,” said study co-author Ken C. Winters, Ph.D., Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Minnesota Medical School. “Parents probably aren’t aware that social hosting could have criminal implications in some states if things take a bad turn. I can appreciate that social hosting is often done with good intentions. Parents think they are preventing something worse by having their kids drink at home with their friends. But the risks are great.”

Senior author Dr. Övgü Kaynak and her co-authors reviewed 22 studies that examined the association between parental provision of alcohol and teen drinking. Based on their findings, they recommend that parents discourage

drinking until their children reach the legal drinking age of 21.

Parents influence their children's risk for alcohol use in both direct and indirect ways, Winters notes. Indirectly, parents can influence their teens' behavior by failing to monitor their activities while their child still lives at home, having permissive attitudes toward underage drinking, expressing direct approval of underage drinking, or simply by providing unguarded access to alcohol at home.

More direct ways of influencing teens' drinking behavior include offering to buy alcohol for them, supplying alcohol for a teen party, or allowing their teen to drink at home, either supervised or unsupervised. "The most worrisome things parents can do are to model poor behavior by drinking excessively in front of their teens, and to provide alcohol to their teens," Winters said. "I'm not talking about giving a sip of alcohol or an occasional glass of an alcoholic beverage with a meal for an older teenager. I'm referring to parents who host a drinking party and provide alcohol, thinking they will be

able to make it safe. It creates more problems than it solves."

The researchers say there is little research to support the notion that it is possible to "teach" children to drink alcohol responsibly. Their research suggests that by allowing alcohol use at a young age, parents might increase the risk for progression toward unsupervised drinking more rapidly than it would otherwise have been." Allowing teens to drink may instill a sense of comfort in alcohol use, which could increase their tendency to drink, with or without their parents present.

Parents may be giving their teens subtle messages about drinking without even realizing it, Winters notes. For instance, they may not take the opportunity to say something negative about underage drinking if they see it in a movie or TV show they are watching with their teen.

The researchers said they want parents to understand that allowing teens to drink underage, even when supervised by the parent, is always associated with a greater likelihood of drinking during adolescence over time.

Social hosting is never a good idea, they emphasize.

"Adolescents who attend parties where parents supply alcohol are at increased risk for heavy episodic drinking, alcohol-related problems, and drinking and driving," they wrote.



Upcoming Events

Dec. 3 8am to 3:15

Abigail Kirsch at Tappan Hill, Tarrytown, NY

When The Holidays Aren't So Happy Conference

Clinical Strategies for Assessing and Intervening With Depressed Substance Abusing Youth

For more information, call Student Assistance Services at 914-332-1300

Youth Leadership Conference



Once again, Youth to Youth International from Columbus, Ohio will facilitate a county-wide Youth Leadership Conference being planned for high school students. The Youth Leadership Conference is being underwritten and planned by the Westchester Coalition for Drug and Alcohol Free Youth and will be held on Tuesday, November 11 at the County Center in White Plains from 9am to

3pm. There is no charge and breakfast and lunch are provided.

The featured presenter will be Ty Sells from Youth to Youth International. Ty, an effective motivational speaker, has presented in middle and high schools throughout the county and he will be joined by student leaders from his organization. Using humor and his own experiences, Ty inspires students to be true to themselves, to make healthy decisions and to accept the differences in others.

Another presentation will feature Matt Bellace, Ph.D., who has been a youth motivational speaker and stand-up comedian since 1995. Dr. Bellace has a Ph.D. in clinical psychology and is the author of the book, "A Better High". He is also a contributing author for the National Geographic Kids book series, "This or That." His "How to Get High Naturally" program has encouraged over a hundred thousand students a year to pursue natural highs and make healthy choices. Matt was a recurring comedian on truTV's "World's Dumbest."

In addition to the presentations, there will also be an opportunity for the teens to gather in small groups to discuss the presentations, share ideas and interact with students from other schools. At the end of the day, the teens will meet with their classmates who attended the conference to discuss ways to bring the conference experience and prevention activities back to their school. This will be facilitated by a "Toolkit" booklet prepared by the conference sponsors that will be given to each school group to take back with them. The toolkit gives practical prevention activities and strategies to organize and/or energize school-based groups promoting a healthy, drug-free lifestyle.

Many of the high school students who attended the Youth Leadership Conference in the past, when asked to rate the conference on a scale of 1 to 10, responded 100! That says it all. It is hoped that every high school in the county will be represented at the conference. Each school is invited to send a group of students who must be accompanied by a responsible school employee.

To register, contact Debra Storms at dxs4@westchestergov.com for registration forms and permission slips.

REGISTRATION CLOSES ON OCTOBER 31.

Westchester Youth 2 Youth

Attendance at the yearly Youth Leadership Conference has not only provided a wonderful leadership opportunity for the students of Westchester County, it has also been the catalyst for a group of students to form a Westchester Youth 2 Youth group and to meet on a regular schedule throughout the year.

The meetings are held at the Student Assistance Services office at 660 White Plains Road, Tarrytown and are facilitated by Joyce Sixsmith, LCSW. These meetings for high school students in the county, are a wonderful opportunity for the students who want to be alcohol and drug-free to gather together in a safe and supportive environment.

In the past, the students have planned many interesting and informative meetings that include preparing public service announcements, receiving media training, interacting with youth officers and school resource officers, role-playing under the direction of a theatrical group, and discussing the challenges involved in remaining alcohol and drug free.

Youth 2 Youth sponsors drug-free social gatherings including bowling and ice skating together. One of their annual projects is to collect and distribute books to children (around Valentine's Day) whose parents are in substance abuse treatment program.

Many of these students also attend the annual Youth 2 Youth 4-day summer conference in Rhode Island. This past year over 60 Westchester students traveled on a bus, provided by the Westchester Office of Prevention and STOP DWI, to Rhode Island, for the conference.

Many students are so inspired by attending the conference that they want to continue the commitment to a healthy lifestyle. As a result, those students attend monthly Westchester Youth 2 Youth meetings where they make new friends and become even more empowered and supported to make healthy choices.

Participating in this Westchester group often leads to the students attending the Youth 2 Youth summer conference in RI. These students then provide a solid foundation in their schools and home communities to begin or strengthen alcohol and drug free clubs like SADD and other prevention activities.

**Vampires, witches,
zombies, goblins,
peer pressure, drugs,
and alcohol.**

**Some Halloween dangers
are much more real
than others.**

Halloween is one of the biggest nights for teen drinking and drug use. Combined with unsupervised parties and careless drivers, Halloween can be a frightful night for families. Power to the Parent is here to empower Westchester parents. Learn the facts, strategies and information to help you get through to your teens. Teach your teen how not to get tricked this Halloween. PowerToTheParent.org.



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660 White Plains Road
Tarrytown, New York 10591