

Rise Above to Sponsor Pasta Dinner

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As middle school students get ready for high school, Ellington's student leadership group, Rise Above, would like to help them prepare for the peer pressure they may encounter to drink and do drugs. Their mission is to encourage making positive choices. There are better things to do than to drink and do drugs! On Saturday, March 14th, Rise Above is sponsoring "An Evening of Pasta-tive Choices." All 7th and 8th grade students and their parents or guardians are invited to enjoy this evening of food and entertainment. The evening will feature motivational speaker and comedian **Matt Bellace, Ph.D.** Matt was at both the high school and middle school back in October and was a huge hit. He started a group similar to Rise Above when he was attending Bucknell University and now travels around the country reaching students with his message to LEAD. More information on Matt Bellace can be found on his website, www.mattbellace.com. Flyers with registration forms for the pasta dinner were distributed to all middle school students the first week of February and can also be found on the website <http://bethechange.ellington-ct.gov>. There are two seatings for the pasta dinner and tickets are \$7.00 per person. There will be door prizes too! There is a seating capacity so get your tickets early!!



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

<http://bethechange.ellington-ct.gov>
www.theantidrug.com
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



** Coming: Student Survey **

The Drug Abuse Prevention Council in conjunction with the school system has conducted an anonymous drug and alcohol survey to middle school and high school students every four years since 1996. Results from the 2005 survey revealed that binge drinking in Ellington had increased since the 2000 survey. Other important data from this survey was used to write a \$255,000 three-year grant for the prevention of underage drinking that the Town of Ellington received in 2006. The 2005 survey also included risky behavior questions and as a result a comprehensive health curriculum was introduced this year at the middle school. This May another survey will be conducted to students from grades 6 through 12. The results of this survey will be very important. We will be able to evaluate our efforts since receiving the grant and results will also provide data to help in obtaining future grants. Parents will receive a letter in the mail regarding the survey and a copy of the survey will be available on our website for parents to view.

Be sure to check out our websites!

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

Tips on helping your child with peer pressure

Communication is key!

- Start early-drug education starts in the home
- Listen carefully and know what you are talking about.
- Empower kids to make their own decisions
- Be a Role Model
- Establish clear family rules and be consistent
- Use a Hands-on Approach to Raising Teens:
 1. Monitor what teens watch on TV
 2. Monitor what teens do on the internet
 3. Put restrictions on the CDs they buy
 4. Know where they are after school and on weekends.
 5. Be very aware of their academic performance
 6. Impose a curfew
 7. Make clear you would be extremely upset if your teen used drugs or alcohol.
 8. Eat dinner with your teen six or seven nights a week.
 9. Turn off the TV during dinner
 10. Assign your teen chores
 11. Have an adult present with teen when they come home from school.

The above actions are all indicators of a hands-on approach to raising teens. If you know where your kids are after school and eat with them six or seven nights a week, you are simply going to know each other better.

source: *Just Say Know: Talking with Kids About Drugs and Alcohol*
By Cynthia Kuhn, Ph.D,
Scott Swartzwelder, Ph.D and
Wilkie Wilson, Ph.D



Alcohol Poisoning

Many times teens are faced with the situation of themselves or a friend who has had so much to drink that they are on their way to suffering from alcohol poisoning. Some people laugh at the behavior of others who are drunk. Some think it's even funnier when they pass out. But there is nothing funny about the aspiration of vomit leading to asphyxiation or the poisoning of the respiratory center in the brain, both of which can result in death.



Common myths about sobering up include drinking black coffee, taking a cold bath or shower, sleeping it off, or walking it off. But these are just myths, and they don't work. The only thing that reverses the effects of alcohol is time-something you may not have if you are suffering from alcohol poisoning. And many different factors affect the level of intoxication of an individual, so it's difficult to gauge exactly how much is too much.

What Happens to Your Body When You Get Alcohol Poisoning?

Alcohol depresses nerves that control involuntary actions such as breathing and the gag reflex (which prevents choking). A fatal dose of alcohol will eventually stop these functions.

It is common for someone who drank excessive alcohol to vomit since alcohol is an irritant to the stomach. There is then the danger of choking on vomit, which could cause death by asphyxiation in a person who is not conscious because of intoxication. You should also know that a person's blood alcohol concentration (BAC) can continue to rise even while he or she is passed out. Even after a person stops drinking, alcohol in the stomach and intestine continues to enter the bloodstream and circulate throughout the body. It is dangerous to assume the person will be fine by sleeping it off.

For more information on alcohol poisoning, the signs and symptoms, and what to do, visit our website <http://bethechange.ellington-ct.gov>

*info taken from www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov

Safe Graduation Party



The economic climate has affected The Ad Hoc Substance Free Graduation Party Committee and donations are low. A letter that went out to all parents of seniors states the importance of the party to keep the graduates safe and the need for donations. It costs approximated \$100 per student to run the substance free night. The night begins at 10 pm and ends at 5 am and offers food, activities, music and prizes for the graduates. For more information on how you can help out, contact Natalie Lapointe at 875-8983 or email her at natalie@laprjns.com. To make a donation, please send it to Ellington Safe Graduation Committee, P.O. Box 377, Ellington, CT 06029

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Alcohol Advertising and Youth

Research indicates that in addition to parents and peers, alcohol advertising and marketing have a significant impact on youth decisions to drink. In 2006, the world's biggest brewer, Anheuser-Busch, spent roughly \$25 million to buy 10 ads for Bud, Bud Light and Michelob during the Super Bowl when an estimated 25 million underage youth, including 7 million under 12, were watching. A study published in the *Journal of Health Communication* found that youth 10-17 years old prefer beer ads with humor, music, and animal characters. This past Super bowl was no different with horses and dogs used in the beer commercials.

The average U.S. child will view approximately 75,000 beer ads by the time they reach 18 years old. Alcohol marketers use characters that are cartoon like and comical animals such as lizards and bears and personalize them with names that appeal to youth.

In 2005, in Connecticut alone underage drinkers consumed 16.2% of all alcohol sold in Connecticut, totaling \$325 million in sales. These sales provided profits of \$157 million to the alcohol industry!



Bud and Bud Light ads using animals make kids want to drink the beer.

The Teen Brain

We have known for decades that exposure to alcohol and other chemicals during prenatal brain development can damage the brain. Now we have to consider the possibilities that later exposures can do so as well.

The fact that adults' brains and children's brains are different has been obvious to teens and parents for centuries, but now it is known just how big the difference is. The young brain does not completely finish developing until well into the twenties. The part of the brain that appears to undergo the most developmental change during adolescence is a large region just behind the forehead called the frontal lobes. The frontal lobes are perhaps the region most responsible for giving us the capacity to process highly challenging kinds of information and plan our lives in an orderly and effective way.

The frontal lobes also have a powerful effect on organizing other brain functions. When the frontal lobes are damaged or become diseased, a person suffers deficits in her his/her ability to plan and execute goals, learn complex kinds of information, and solve problems. He/she may have difficulty with self control and fail to appreciate the implications of his/her own behavior. A young brain appears to be "built to learn." Since the young brain is in the process of making permanent connections between nerve cells, the presence of any chemical during this period could change that "wiring" in unpredictable ways for the rest of a person's life.

Source: *JUST SAY KNOW* by Cynthia Kuhn, Ph.D,
Scott Swartzwelder, Ph.D and Wilkie Wilson, Ph.D

STOP...THINK

Providing Alcohol To Minors Makes You A

CRIMINAL

Up to 18 months in prison and/or fine up to \$1,500

Please Keep Ellington Youth Safe!

SPONSORED BY:

Rise Above
Ellington Student Leadership Group

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