

January 2013

## Workshop for Parents on Friendship, Bullying and Cliques



Ellington Youth Services and The Parent Connection will present a workshop for parents of tweens and teens covering ***Friendship, Bullying and Cliques*** on **Tuesday, evening, January 15th.**

Lisa Tregoning, the Program Manager of Safe Schools and Communities with The Governor's Prevention Partnership will cover the following with hopes of providing a better understanding for parents:

- The difference between friendships and cliques as well as how to help their child navigate through each.
- The difference between conflict, bullying and harassment.
- The schools' responsibilities, as well as parent rights, under the new Connecticut anti-bullying law.
- How to offer support whether their child is the target of a bullying incident or demonstrating mean behavior.
- Effective questions to ask their school to ensure their child is getting the maximum support from the teachers and administration.

The presentation will be held from 6 pm to 8 pm at Hall Memorial Library at 93 Main Street in the upstairs (stage) room. Free child care is available. *For more information or child care, please contact Diane Lasher-Penti at Ellington Youth Services at 860-870-3130 or email her at [dpenti@ellington-ct.gov](mailto:dpenti@ellington-ct.gov).*

Nationwide

### **Bullying Stats**

- 1 in 7 Students in Grades K-12 is either a bully or a victim of bullying at school.
- 56% of students have personally witnessed some type of bullying at school.
- 15% of all school absenteeism is directly related to fears of being bullied at school.
- 90% of 4th through 8th graders report being victims of bullying.
- 71% of students report incidents of bullying as a problem at their school.
- American schools harbor approximately 2.1 million bullies and 2.7 million of their victims.

Source: [www.makebeatsnotbeatdowns.org/facts\\_new.html](http://www.makebeatsnotbeatdowns.org/facts_new.html)

### New Year's Resolutions to Benefit the Whole Family

Healthy habits start at home. Below is a list of important behaviors to model for your children.

- Turn off the TV and technology—By simply turning things off you allow for an endless array of healthier possibilities.
- Eat a healthy, well-balanced diet.—Have more fruits and vegetables available in the house.
- Take time to relax and be calm—Stress has a way of stopping people in their tracks. It is important for all family members to learn how to deal with stress.
- Exercise regularly—Spending time together in activity also strengthens the bonds.
- Drink responsibly—Refrain from drinking alcohol before you drive.
- Wear your seatbelt and limit distracted driving.—Teach your children safety inside the vehicle.
- Don't smoke—Teens are more than twice as likely to smoke if their parents do.

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## Scott Driscoll Speaking to Parents on Internet Safety



Ellington Middle School will sponsor an evening on February 12th from 7:00 to 8:30 pm at the middle school with Officer Scott Driscoll, an expert on internet safety who has been in law enforcement for 24 years. The majority of those years he spent working with children. As a result, he has seen a lot and has developed a program for students and their parents on the dangers that exist on the internet. Officer Driscoll was here in October and spoke to the students at an assembly about internet safety.

With firsthand knowledge of Internet crimes and the dangers of the world wide web, Driscoll started his company called Internet Safety Concepts. Through presentations, Internet Safety Concepts teaches people of all ages how to stay safe while on-line. In November 2010, his first book co-authored with Laurie Gifford Adams was published. The book, “www.R U In Danger.net,” is a guide for families and educators on what dangers lurk on the Internet and

how we can all be safe.

Officer Driscoll presented to all 430 middle school students and kept them engaged the entire time. Principal David Pearson asked the 8th grade class if they thought bringing Officer Driscoll back to speak to parents would be a good idea and they unanimously said YES. Driscoll discussed his internet safety book with the students in October and one of them asked if they could get a copy of the book. The school responded by purchasing 10 copies for the school library. Two months later all the copies are still completely signed out!



According to Officer Driscoll, studies show that 68% of teens regularly receive personal messages online from people they do not know. In addition, the average age of first time internet porn exposure is 11 years old and one out of five have sent or received nude or semi-nude photos. 33% of teens say they have been cyber bullied. 88% who use social media have seen someone be cruel to another person on a social network site. Only one in six parents know their child has been bullied over social media.

## Helping Our Children Cope With Tragedy

- Answer any and all questions your children have. Nothing is off the table. If you don't have the answer be honest and tell them you will research the answer and get back to them.
- Be verbally attentive, physically affectionate, and nurturing in tone during your talk.
- Talk with, not at your children
- Discuss and educate them about mental illness.
- Reassure the low likelihood of this type of tragedy happening to them while balancing validation of the reality that it did and does happen.
- Ask them what they need to feel safe, and what you can do to help them to feel safe.
- Normalize what they are feeling, re-assure them that their thoughts and feelings are normal.
- Balance the worry and pain kids feel with a discussion of what they can do to help those who have been affected, and continue to be supportive of activities they enjoy doing so their entire mind is not on the tragedy 24/7. The balance of living life while mourning is just that—a balance, and yet it is important for children and parents to continue to live knowing that does not disrespect the honor of those who are not longer living among us.
- Some kids are chattier than others. Don't assume because there are no questions your children are fine, nor assume because they are talking about it they are not fine. Check in on them.
- Display strength and calm, and remember, how you act is a role model for them.

Source: AAMFT (American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy)



The Parent Connection and Rise Above are on Facebook

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

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



**Diane Lasher-Penti, LMFT**  
**Youth Services Director**  
 Offers counseling to children and adolescents and their parents.  
 She can be reached at  
**860-870-3130**  
 or email  
[dpenti@ellington-ct.gov](mailto:dpenti@ellington-ct.gov)

## Rise Above



Core Group members of Rise Above met over the summer months and decided it was time to have a new look and mission. In its 6th year, the student leadership group changed its logo and mission to reflect the community service the members perform. *(Their mission: Rise Above is a community based student leadership group offering high school students the opportunity to learn and apply leadership skills by hosting a variety of events for the school and community).*

The students held a Kid's Fair in the spring and a Fall Festival in the fall for children in 2nd grade and below. They also held a leadership camp during the summer for 5th and 6th grade students and just recently participated in the Side by Side program where students and local police work together on projects and activities. A Welcome Freshmen bonfire started off the school year and in November and December they ran a dodge ball tournament for high school students and one for middle school students. In addition to the activities, Rise Above students decided to move its monthly meeting to a location outside the high school. Their meetings are held every 3rd Thursday at 7 pm at the Ellington Senior Center located at 16 Church Street in Ellington. For more information, visit our website or contact advisors Kathy Larew at [klarew@comcast.net](mailto:klarew@comcast.net) or Debbie Stauffer at [dstauffer@ellington-ct.gov](mailto:dstauffer@ellington-ct.gov).

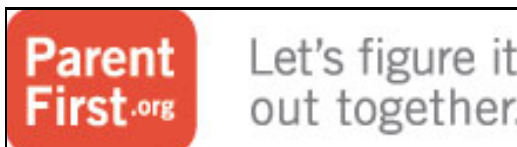
## College Kids Home On Semester Break

Teen Drinking – what do (or can) you say about drinking to a college freshman home for the holidays? Not only that, but what do you say to a senior in high school who's finally in the home stretch to graduation? You can start by informing them that as of October 1st the Social Host Law in Connecticut got tougher. You can read the new law by visiting: [www.cga.ct.gov/2012/ACT/PA/2012PA-00199-R00HB-05360-PA.htm](http://www.cga.ct.gov/2012/ACT/PA/2012PA-00199-R00HB-05360-PA.htm).



According to [The Partnership at DrugFree.org](http://ThePartnershipatDrugFree.org), the MOST influential person in a child's decision to drink (or use drugs) is their parent. Not only that, "90% of addictions start in the teen years," reports The Partnership. "Cut the risk in half by talking to your kids."

## Parent First. Org



Ellington and 12 other surrounding towns have joined with ERASE (East of the River Action for Substance Abuse Elimination) to create a website where parents can go to join in on a conversation about parenting. There is also an interactive facebook page along with the website where feedback is welcome. Here is where parents, guardians and professionals can team-up to share insights and develop tools that give us all more confidence in the most important commitment we can ever make: to provide our kids with a solid, nurturing foundation filled with opportunities for growth. The website is [www.parentfirst.org](http://www.parentfirst.org) and the facebook page can be found from the website. *Join the conversation!!*

**Be sure to check out our websites!**

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