

June 2013

ELLINGTON, CONNECTICUT

Safety Campaign



We have all seen the horrible accidents caused by texting and driving. It is heartbreaking and preventable. In a new survey by AT&T, almost half of adults admitted to texting while driving. About 49% of adults say they've sent a text while behind the wheel, compared with 43% of teens in a survey from last April.

The survey and report is part of AT&T's "It Can Wait" campaign, designed to discourage texting while driving. The AT&T "It Can Wait" campaign visited students at Ellington High School on Tuesday, May 28th. They brought a virtual reality simulator allowing students and faculty to

experience firsthand the dangers of texting and driving. AT&T, its employees and supporters are calling on all drivers to go to www.ItCanWait.com to take the no-texting-while-driving pledge, and then share their promise with others via Twitter and Facebook. The pledge is part of the public awareness campaign aimed directly at stopping the dangerous practice of texting while driving. Please visit our website for more info on the laws in Connecticut.

DPYC supports this public awareness campaign and has placed signs throughout town as a reminder.

DPYC Sponsors Project Prom 2013



DPYC sponsored *Project Prom* again this year for students at Ellington High school. The theme of Project Prom 2013 was **Remember the Knight**. Before the week of prom (May 13-17) students were invited to write in a text bubble a

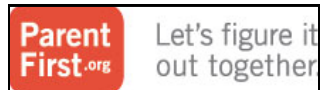
message of safety related to the prom season. Text bubble messages were displayed in the school the week of the prom and two students names were drawn from the messages to receive a free prom ticket. Each day of prom week a message was conveyed to the students via bracelets, cookies and a Grim Reaper sponsored by the school's Peer Advocate group who took students out every 20 minutes to represent the number of students who die from a drug/alcohol related accident. The students then wore a white t-shirt that said "Don't Be A Statistic," and remained quiet the rest of the day. On Friday of that week a video was shown to students in an assembly with messages from parents.

In addition, Rise Above members assembled 360 prom favors with the message "Please Celebrate Safely" and each student who attended the prom received one at their place setting.



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Summer Safety Tips for Children and Teens

- **Children and teens shouldn't talk to strangers**-Remind them to never go into a vehicle with someone they do not know.
- **Be aware of water safety**-Swim where there are lifeguards. Know depth of water before diving.
- **Monitor children's computer and internet use**-The internet provides access to games and fun things but also to danger.
- **Safety in numbers** - Tell your child or teen to stay with a group when out.
- **Talk to your child or teen and educate them about drug and alcohol use.**-Teens who are talked to about drugs and alcohol by their parents are at a much lesser risk of drug and alcohol use than those parents who don't.



Tweens and "Dating"



Kids start having crushes and thinking about sexuality and romance between the ages of 10 and 13. That is the time of the start of puberty. Many parents think of dates as actual physical events like going to the movies. Tweens don't. They socialize online in a way that is invisible to adults. Child psychologists say it is very important to stay close to your child and ask questions. They really do value your opinion and advice.

Many parents wonder what to discuss when the topic arises. Tweens really want to talk about feelings and what happens to them when they are around someone of interest. Let them guide the conversation. Most likely they are not thinking about sex so jumping into the topic right away is not always the best approach. "Young love feels serious," says Lynn Ponton, M.D, a child and adolescent psychologist in San Francisco. Be careful not to trivialize their feelings. Experts agree ground rules are necessary. Let your kids know you will be checking their social media pages and browser history from time to time.

Summer Months and Teens



The end of the school year and summer months are exciting and fun times for teens, but they are also the most dangerous. Studies have shown marijuana use increases among teens in the summer. Celebrations and outdoor gatherings bring alcohol into the mix as well. In addition, more teens are behind the wheel. Distractions, speed, inexperience and drugs/alcohol are major danger factors in teen drivers.

A survey conducted by SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) and Liberty Mutual Insurance Company revealed that 91% of teens consider themselves to be safe, cautious drivers. Nearly 40% claim that alcohol has no impact on their driving. 75% under the influence of marijuana feel the same way! "Parents play an incredibly important role in communicating expectations to their teen drivers, enforcing consequences for ignoring family driving rules, and setting a good example behind the wheel," says Penny Wells, SADD's President and CEO.

SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) has released a new anti-drinking campaign targeting youth as young as 9 years old. The campaign is called "Talk. They Hear You." SAMHSA's latest report on underage drinking shows that more than a quarter of American youth engage in underage drinking. Although there has been progress in reducing the extent of underage drinking in recent years, particularly among those aged 17 and younger, the rates of underage drinking are still unacceptably high. The campaign provides resources and suggestions on how to start talking to your children about alcohol. For more information, visit their website at <http://www.samhsa.gov/underagedrinking/>



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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
www.teen-safe.org
www.stopalcoholabuse.gov
www.preventionworksct.org
www.madd.org/under21
www.mourningparentsact.org
www.dontserveteens.gov
www.alcoholfreechildren.org
www.thecoolspot.gov
www.sadd.org
www.niaaa.nih.gov
www.notmykid.org
www.drugfree.org
www.samhsa.gov/underageddrinking/



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Rise Above Update



Ellington's Student Leadership Group, Rise Above, enjoyed a busy year of changes and community service. Last summer the group decided to change things up and began meeting at the Ellington Senior Center on the 3rd Thursday evening of every month. They also decided to change their logo. With a more prominent focus on community service, the group sponsored a freshmen bonfire, Fall Festival and Kid's Fair for the younger kids, and a Community Variety Show for all ages. In between they sponsored dodge ball and game night, activities for their peers at Ellington High School that they have become known for and assembled 360 prom favors for the Ellington High School Junior/Senior Prom. Several members participated in a leadership camp last summer for 5th and 6th grade students and *Side By Side*, a program that teams up 6th, 7th and 8th grade students with high school students and our local police officers and State Troopers. We sadly say goodbye to our 14 graduating seniors, 11 of which are on our Core Group. Best wishes for success and happiness!

Tips for Parents of College Bound Children

Leaving for college is a major transition for both the teen and the entire family. Encourage self-reliance and independence, but remind them you are always there if they need you.

- Don't pick your child's courses. Let the academic adviser do his or her job.
- Keep in touch, however, resist the urge to call him or her five times a day.
- Help your child develop his or her passion. Do not pressure him or her to pick a major too early or to pick a field solely for its job prospects.
- Don't edit your child's papers.
- Encourage the student to see the professor. One of the hidden resources at every college is the professor's office hours.
- Direct your child to appropriate campus resources.
- Don't panic too soon. If your child gets a bad grade early on don't send in the troops. Most students will do better as the course goes on.
- Never call the professor, department chair or dean. There are no parent-teacher conferences in college.
- Talk about the realities of excessive drinking, drugs and partying. First-year students can get in over their heads quickly. Educate your children.
- Make sure your child knows help is always available.

Coming Soon...



We're all ears...

Coming soon to your mailbox, greetings from Youth Services!

Be sure to check out our websites!

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