

September 2012

## Open House Bags



The DPYC and Youth Services will again distribute complimentary reusable shopping bags at all school open houses this fall. Inside each bag will be some important information along with a few interesting gifts including a magnetic school calendar. Be sure to pick up your bag when you attend open house! The DPYC will also have a table at the high school open house on September 13th in the cafeteria foyer.



## Connecticut Social Host Law Just Got Tougher



State Representative John Frey of Ridgefield introduced a bill after a series of alcohol related motor vehicle accidents. Several of them resulted in the tragic deaths of young adults from Ridgefield who were seen beforehand drinking at a private residence while the property owners or other adults were present. The House and Senate passed the bill in May and it was signed by the Governor in the beginning of the summer. It will take effect on October 1st. This legislation places stricter punishments upon anyone who knowingly, recklessly or with criminal negligence endangers minors by letting them drink on their property. Representative Frey feels that parents and other adults are in the best position to deter and prevent underage drinking parties, but some fail to take reasonable steps to do so.

Under the current legislation, it is an infraction for first time offenders punishable by a fine. As of October, hosting underage drinking in a private residence will be considered a class A misdemeanor punishable by up to one year in prison, up to a \$2,000 fine, or both.

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If any of the minors drinking in the residence are under the age of 16, then an additional *risk of injury* may be charged. **This is a felony.**

## Top Talking Points for Parents with Teens Going Back to School

- **Talk Early and often**—Don't wait until the day before school begins to have a conversation about expectations.
- **Create an annual contract**—A contract that puts expectations in writing, created with the teen's input, provides an objective record of agreed-upon rules. Topics to address in the contract may include drugs and alcohol, curfew, technology usage and family rules and consequences.
- **Set expectations regarding academic performance** - If a teen is consuming drugs or alcohol, parents are likely to observe a decline in his or her grades. Teens who understand that they're expected to achieve a certain caliber of academic performance will often be more focused.
- **Prescription Drugs**—Teens who are prescribed medicine for ADD, depression or anxiety sometimes share or sell it to their peers. Remind your teen they should never take a friend's prescription drug.
- **Stress**— Help your teen cope with stress so he/she is not tempted to turn to drugs and alcohol for what may be believed to be relief.

Source: [www.caron.org](http://www.caron.org)

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## Parenting Workshop Series—The Tween Years

Parents of 5th and 6th grade students were polled in the spring and asked what issues they felt affected both them and their pre-teen children. As a result of the survey, Youth Services and The Parent Connection are sponsoring an interactive parenting series. The speaker will make a short presentation and then open the floor for a conversation with parents.

*All presentations will be held at Hall Memorial Library from 6 pm to 8 pm in the upstairs stage room.*

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Thursday, September 20th—

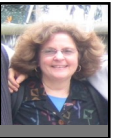
**Anthony E. Wolf, PhD**  
**Setting Limits and Discipline**



*Dr. Wolf is a practicing psychologist in Springfield, MA and is the author of five books on parenting.*

Wednesday, October 24th—

**Ruth Ettenberg Freeman**  
**Parenting Styles**



*Ruth is a licensed clinical social worker and is co-founder of the CT Parenting Education Network. She is also a teacher of Yale's Parent Effectiveness Training.*

Tuesday, January 15th—

**Lisa Tregoning**  
**Friendship, Bullying and Cliques**



*Lisa is the Program Manager of Safe Schools and Communities with The Governor's Prevention Partnership.*

Free child care will be available for each presentation. Please contact Diane Lasher-Penti at 860-870-3130 or email [dpenti@ellington-ct.gov](mailto:dpenti@ellington-ct.gov) if you are interested in child care.

More workshops will be offered in the spring.

## Rachel's Challenge at Windermere October 2nd



Rachel Scott was the first person killed at Columbine High School (CO) on April 20, 1999. Her acts of kindness and compassion coupled with the contents of her six diaries have become the foundation for RACHEL'S CHALLENGE, one of the most life-changing school programs in America.

Sponsored by Ellington Public Schools, Windermere PTO and Youth Services, RACHEL'S CHALLENGE will be presented to 5th and 6th grade students on **Tuesday, October 2nd**. The program begins as an assembly for students but is intended to create a momentum that will be carried throughout the school year. In the evening of October 2nd a session for parents and community members will take place at 7 pm at Ellington High School. For more information, visit their website at [www.rachelschallenge.org](http://www.rachelschallenge.org).

## Stress Relievers



Some stress is normal and even useful. Stress can help your child if he or she needs to work hard or react quickly. For example, it can help your child win a race or finish important homework on time. But if stress happens too often or lasts too long, it can have bad effects. It can be linked to headaches, an upset stomach, back pain, and trouble sleeping. It can weaken your child's immune system making it harder to fight off disease. If your child already has a health problem, stress may make it worse. It can make your child moody, tense, or depressed. He or she may not do well at school. Learning how to deal with stress is an important part of growing up. You can't keep your children from feeling stressed, but you can teach them what to do when stressful situations occur.

Adults can help children and teens with stress in many ways. Three important things you can do are to:

- Create a low-stress environment. This is accomplished by acknowledging your child's feelings, developing trust, being supportive, showing love, having clear expectations, not over-scheduling your child and being aware of what your child wants.
- Help them build positive coping skills. Provide a good example of being calm and controlling anger. Teach them about consequences and rational thinking while providing them with some things they can control.
- Teach them to let stress out. Getting regular exercise and eating healthy is important to relieving stress. Some children benefit from writing about or drawing the things that are bothering them. Hobbies or volunteer work is a great stress reliever. Encourage your child to let their feelings out. Laughter and having fun is a great relaxer. Laughter really can be the best medicine.

Source: WebMD

## Rise Above



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 group worked with Youth Services to offer a leadership camp this past summer for 5th and 6th grade students called *Finding The Leader in Me*. Along with its well known dodge ball tournaments for middle school and high school students, the group will be doing a variety of community events this year including Fall Festival and Kid's Fair. For high school students in Ellington interested in taking on leadership roles and running events along with community service activities, the first meeting will be on **Thursday, September 6th at 7:00 pm in the upstairs stage room at Hall Memorial Library**. 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).

## Set The Rules CT



"SetTheRulesCT" is a statewide media campaign educating parents and adults about Connecticut's Social Host Law and the impact of alcohol on teenage brain development. Information can be found on their website [www.ct.gov/opm/SetTheRules](http://www.ct.gov/opm/SetTheRules). Free travel mugs emphasizing the campaign with the slogan, "SERVE TEENS BOOZE, You Both LOSE," are available while supplies last and can be obtained by visiting [Holiday Restaurant on Main Street in Ellington](#).



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)



### Coming Soon...

A regional movement called **ParentFirst.org** was created to assist parents with the various issues that come with parenting. With the theme, **"Let's figure it out together,"** it will be an interactive website with a facebook component so parents can share thoughts and ideas.

Be sure to check out our websites!

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