

# What You Need To Know...

FROM THE COUNSELING DEPARTMENT AT RUSH-HENRIETTA SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

## Illegal and Ill-Advised Underage Parties



**P**arents who host - or allow their children to host - parties where alcohol is served are criminally and civilly liable here in Monroe County. Insurance policies for home and auto often contain loopholes that render coverage null and void if there is deemed to be criminal activity. This can mean that million-dollar coverage becomes zero coverage.

**Underage drinking parties occur in many settings and result in a number of problems including:**

- Alcohol poisoning
- Impaired driving
- Violence

Other Resources - Videos

[www.rhnet.org/videos.cfm?vID=2106](http://www.rhnet.org/videos.cfm?vID=2106)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z2mf8DtWWd8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z2mf8DtWWd8)

**Lifeline - 275-5151**

**Party Tip Line - 1-800-851-1932**

R-H District Safety Coordinator, Tom McShea - 359-7809

Senior High School Counseling Center - 359-5220

Ninth Grade Academy Counseling Center - 359-5570

Burger Middle School Counseling Center - 359-5320

Roth Middle School Counseling Center - 359-5120

### Defining the problem:

Underage drinking/drugging is associated with:

- Sexual Assault
- Physical Assaults (fights)
- Property destruction
- Theft
- Unprotected sex
- Combination drug use
- Quality-of-life crimes

### Addiction: A pediatric illness

It begins in adolescence right in front of adults who fail to recognize the signs and don't take action, usually because these parents think substance abuse problems are happening to OPKs (Other Parents' Kids) and "not my kid." Studies indicate parents underestimate their child's chemical intake by as much as 70 percent.

The younger an individual is when he or she begins to use mood-altering drugs and alcohol, the greater the chance for harmful effects or addiction.

Underage drinkers consumed

16.5 percent of all alcohol in New York, totaling \$1.7 billion in sales. Sales provide profits of \$834 million dollars to the alcohol industry.

Parents, siblings and relatives are by far the most common providers of illegal chemicals, including alcohol. If these enabling and misguided practices were halted, this problem could be cut by an estimated 60 percent.

Guest lists should be formally organized a week in advance.

A reasonable cap on attendees should be mutually agreed upon and enforced

Parents names and phone numbers for each guest should be listed for networking and communication purposes. In the case of an emergency, it eliminates a last-minute scramble.

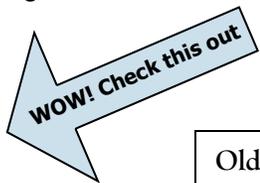
The number of chaperones should be proportional to the number of party guests; two chaperones for each 10 teens that are attending the party.

**ALCOHOL-RELATED TRAGEDIES ARE THE #1 CAUSE OF DEATH FOR 16- TO 24-YEAR OLDS IN THE U.S.**

**NICOTINE & ALCOHOL KILL MORE AMERICANS THAN ALL OTHER CAUSAL FACTORS COMBINED**

*Studies indicate that, on average, parents underestimate their own child's chemical intake by 70 percent.*

**Parents, siblings and relatives are by far the most common providers of illegal chemicals, including alcohol.**



## 'The Times Are Changing'

Old School 	Present 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pooled money - (less money in pocket)</li> <li>• Piled into one car</li> <li>• Fake IDs usually altered</li> <li>• Drink in the woods or a remote field at school</li> <li>• Beer usually available</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most kids have access to 20</li> <li>• More kids have cars</li> <li>• Computer-generated, more elaborate watermarks</li> <li>• Drink at home or at a hotel</li> <li>• Remote location (away from adults)</li> <li>• Wider selection available, including hard liquor</li> </ul>

# Parent - Teen Party Tips



## Safe Parties– Happy Parties

Distinguishing between normal adolescent behavior and behavior that involves substance abuse is difficult. It makes sense that a child's rebellion against rules or a change in attitude would seem like a normal part of growing up. But sometimes it is an indication that something is wrong.

Coupled with this is the natural denial that our children would make the decision to become involved with substance abuse. It is easy to miss signs of substance abuse if we don't want to acknowledge it. We can convince ourselves that the guidance we have given our children and the information they have received will be enough to prevent them from being tempted to try alcohol and other drugs. But sometimes kids will make bad decisions despite all they have been taught.



Trust your intuition.

For more information, or if you suspect your child is involved in substance abuse, please contact Mark Head at 359-5233.

**Mark A. Head LCSW, CASAC**  
Social Worker/Substance Abuse  
Counselor  
RH Senior High School



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Proper procedures are more likely to be followed in the event of an emergency if adults who are supervising a party don't drink alcohol or use other substances. This also reduces the risk of liability for the host.

- A host should be aware of the ages of all party guests and which attendees, if any, will be operating a motor vehicle.
- Clearly define the area for the party (e.g. party can take place in the family room or the living room or kitchen, but not the bedrooms or a home office, or unsupervised area like outside or in the garage. Garages are hard places to supervise because of darkness and proximity to back yards and the street.
- Parents should be socializing and observing what is taking place, not up in their bedroom watching a movie or escaping to their next door neighbor's house for refuge.

- Parents of attendees should verify all of the above with host parents.
- Verify that the host parents will be home for the duration of the party.
- If party-crashers arrive, promptly ask them to leave. If they refuse call 911.
- If you become aware of an underage drinking party, call **1-800-851-1932**. This is a tip line. You can remain anonymous.
- Call the school (nurses, social workers, counselors, vice principals, principals, pupil service personnel). Partner with school personnel to prevent problems from arising before they happen..
- Call the police and inform them of your suspicions.
- Check your child's Facebook for clues to any shady plans.
- If a child is unresponsive or "passed out," don't let them "sleep it off." Call the ambulance and then call their parents. Let's consider safety before personal liability.
- Don't be bullied out of being a concerned and caring parent.
- Party dispersal (if drinking/drugging is discovered) is tricky but it needs to be done. Get help and call in professionals. Most parents are too close to the action to be objective - lives may be at risk.

## A Teen's Tricks Of The Trade

**"The Old Shell Game"** - Each child in a group tells their respective parents that they are staying the night at a designated friend's house. The problem is parents do not follow through and network with the host parents, therefore each kid has told a different story about whose house they will be going to and no parents check.



**"The Bend and Break, Guilt Them Into Submission Scam"** - This is where the child plays on the parent's need to be liked and accepted and convinces the parent that their demands to contact the host parent are the acts of a "psycho parent." If this prompts the parent to back off their instinct to formally connect with the other parents, the child has won, but in so doing they have also lost. Don't be manipulated, ridiculed or bullied out of your good judgment. You are the adult.

**"False Reassurance Scam"** - "Yeah, the host parents are home but don't be lame and call there. I will give you the number in case of emergency. Please don't embarrass me."

**"I'd like to be honest with you but, whenever I am, you always tell me no."** - This is the kid that would make a very good lawyer or litigator some day. Don't be deterred from the taking action that your gut tells you is correct. Obviously, your child lacks sensible judgment, otherwise you wouldn't be telling him no.