

May 2012



coalition news

Prevention news and information from the Tiverton Prevention Coalition

Town Hall Meeting on Underage Drinking and Marijuana Use

Tiverton has “a lot of work to do” if it wants to reduce the number of its teens who are drinking alcohol and smoking marijuana, according to findings from the Tiverton Health and Wellness Survey, which was administered to 498 Tiverton High School students in February.



**TOWN HALL
MEETING
MAY 23**

The survey found that 48 percent of students in grades 9 – 12 reported they consumed alcohol in the previous 30 days. Among 11th graders, past 30 day use rose to 51 percent; among 12th

graders, it jumped to 60.5 percent. By comparison, the percentage of Tiverton teens who reported drinking in the past 30 days was higher than both the State and national averages. In addition, 44 percent of all students reported smoking marijuana during the previous 30 days, again higher than the national average of 25 percent, according to [Monitoring the Future](#), a survey commissioned by the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

“This is our baseline,” said Rebecca Elwell, Coalition coordinator. “In prevention, statistics are neither ‘good’ nor ‘bad.’ Annual surveys are required under our (Drug Free Communities) grant so that we can evaluate our efforts and measure our progress. This is our starting point for the five-year grant — and the reason why we got the grant, as well. That said, Tiverton does have a lot of work to do and we’ll begin by starting a community conversation about underage drinking in Tiverton.”

The Coalition has scheduled a Town Hall Meeting, at the Tiverton Town Hall, on May 23 to present complete survey findings and to begin a discussion of strategies the town can use to reduce the number of youth who are now drinking, and “to prevent younger children from starting,” Ms. Elwell

added. Parents, school administrators, teachers, police, elected officials, faith community leaders, alcohol vendors, coaches and other youth workers are encouraged to attend.

The program will include the use of an [“audience response system”](#) that enables instantaneous, anonymous polling of the audience. Presenters include Ms. Elwell and Coalition consultant Ray Davis, a Certified Prevention Specialist Supervisor; John Mattson, the DFC grant evaluator who designed the survey and wrote the report; and Ed Parr of [O’Toole + Parr](#), The Coalition’s communications consultants.

The Meeting runs from 6:30 to 8pm. Doors open at 6pm. Seating is first come, first served until capacity is reached.

TPD Adds DRE Capacity

Officer Aaron Kay of the Tiverton Police Department is now a certified Drug Recognition Expert, trained in a [12 step protocol](#) that enables him to determine with a high level of accuracy if a person is drug-impaired and which of seven categories of drugs caused the impairment.

“Vital signs don’t lie,” Officer Kay said. “Different categories of drugs cause specific symptoms. DREs are trained to recognize these symptoms.”

Officer Kay completed two weeks of classroom training and then went to Arizona to test his skills during an intake procedure at a state prison. Subsequent urine analysis of inmates confirmed the accuracy of DRE evaluations in more than 95 percent of the cases, Officer Kay said.

DREs also become a valued community resource, offering drug recognition classes for teachers and parents.



TPD Officer, Aaron Kay

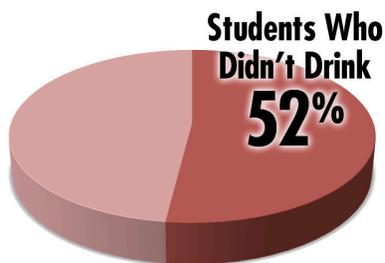


REBECCA'S notes

Underage drinking is not inevitable but, unfortunately, many adults believe that it is. They say it's just a 'rite of passage,' even though evidence shows that this "social norm" actually contributes to higher incidences of underage drinking!

Underage drinking is not a rite of passage, and many young people choose not to drink. Overall, 52 percent of THS students reported not drinking in the recent DFC survey. Teens who reported not using drugs or alcohol say that the Number One reason they don't is to avoid disappointing their parents. Parents who tell kids early and often that they should not drink or use drugs do make a powerful impact.

Past 30-Days Alcohol Use by THS Students



All adults must play a role in reducing underage drinking. Ultimately, kids get alcohol from adults. Tiverton teens report several typical sources of alcohol: their friends, parties with no adult in the house, and from their parents without their knowledge. Others report that someone over 21 bought it for them. In each case, some adult provided or facilitated access to alcohol.

Adults need to guard against teens getting alcohol. This takes a community commitment. I'm confident Tiverton adults can make that commitment.

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Please Forward!!

Please help The Coalition keep the community informed about preventing and reducing underage drinking and substance abuse in Tiverton. Forward this newsletter to friends and family. Thanks!



Practicing Prevention

Alcohol and drug related tragedies are preventable. There's a wealth of research that tells us what we can do now to



reduce underage drinking and substance abuse. They're called "protective factors."

For example, when teens are active participants in a faith community, extracurricular activities, sports, clubs, organizations, hobbies, they are significantly less likely to use alcohol and other drugs.

We practice prevention when we give kids plenty of activities to choose from — and that is a community's responsibility. It's an attitude, one that says kids are important and I'm not waiting for something bad to happen when I can prevent it today.



Around the Country

A [new survey by State Farm Insurance](#) reports that teens think drinking and driving is riskier than texting and driving — despite the fact that research indicates the consequences of texting while driving can be as severe as drunk driving.

The survey also underscored the vital role parents play in keeping their young drivers safe on the road. When parents and teens have regular conversations about safe driving, teens are less likely to text and drive. The problem is that parents often stop talking about road safety when the learner's permit "becomes" a license, even though the first year after getting a license is the highest lifetime crash risk.

Another way to say it: talk to your teens about driving and road safety for at least a year after they get their licenses. Road safety begins at home.

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