



Parents Are Heroes

A Newsletter of the Making Sobriety Attractive (MSA) Program,
a Drug-Free Communities Project for Kent County, Michigan
Preventing Underage Use of Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD)

May Edition 2009

In this issue:

- **What does “drink responsibly” mean to you?**

What about your kids? Email us at info@alertlabs.org

- **Do you provide or allow alcohol at teen parties?** (95% of parents with children aged 13-20 don't.) **Data Development Worldwid**

- **Did You Know?**

- **Quick Facts**

To see previous MSA Newsletters, click below
alertlabs.org/newsletter.php

CONTACT Us: Send Questions, Comments, Suggestions, click on
info@alertlabs.org

Smokers are 10 times more likely than nonsmokers to suffer from alcohol addiction. **Nicotine and Tobacco Research**, February/ March 2004

Women who consume two or more alcoholic drinks daily are 57 % more likely to suffer from coronary *heart disease* than moderate drinkers .
Jan 2004 journal *Addiction*
<http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/118795635/issue>

“Drink Responsibly.” Tell Us What It Means to YOU

The alcohol industry claims that when it runs an ad featuring beautiful, half-dressed people playing volleyball on the beach with cans of beer and ice chests full of more beer, with the tiny words, *drink responsibly*, at the end, that they are being “responsible” corporate citizens.

What does the phrase mean? College freshmen, between 18 and 20, say it means “drink, but don’t get caught!” A few parents say it means, “drink if you must, but don’t drive.” Teens say it means, “nothing.” AOD Prevention experts say it means, “Drink!” It’s a command. And the meaning of “Drink!” is clear. The meaning of “responsibly” is not clear.

What do you think it means? What do your kids think it means? Tell us. Email info@alertlabs.org. A panel of Preventionists will judge the entries: “best” entry WINS a \$30.00 gift certificate to the River City Mall.

It’s OK Not To Drink

Close to half of American adults drank no alcohol last year, not even one drink --
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov

Family arguments are going on in West Michigan. Planning is nearly complete for GRADUATION OPEN HOUSES for high school seniors. One parent is saying, “Of course we won’t serve alcohol. It’s illegal for high school seniors to drink. And besides, it is illegal for us to serve drinks to anyone under age 18, even our own daughter. There’s a fine and possible prison sentence for doing it. Remember that slogan: **Social Hosts Lose the Most!**”

The 18-year old daughter says, “But everybody serves beer at these things – lots of people have kegs! Besides, we’re on our way to college and everybody there drinks. It’s just beer, not the hard stuff! And we promise not to drive.” And still another family member is saying, “If we don’t serve drinks, nobody is going to come and if they do come, they’ll leave right away. That would be embarrassing.”

Who’s right? Who’s wrong?

Fact: it is illegal in the U.S. to serve alcohol to anyone under 21, anywhere, anytime. 18 is too young to drink (remember the brain damage? College is hard enough without volunteering for a learning disability), and lack of judgment – kids drink and just plain “forget” that they shouldn’t drive or ride with a driver who has been using AOD.

Compromise: Buy a root beer keg and serve it with ice cream, after the parents vs. kids Volleyball match.

Children who start drinking before age 15 are:

1. 4 times more likely to become addicted,
2. 50% will have major alcohol problems as adults .
3. 7 times more likely to be in a car accident. 11 times more likely to experience alcohol-related violence.

See: David H. Jernigan, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. <http://www.jhuccp.org/pubs/>

Those who begin binge drinking at age 13 and continue throughout their teen years are nearly

- 4 times more likely to be overweight or obese and
- almost 3 ½ times more likely to have high blood pressure by the time they are 24 years old

Journal of Studies on Alcohol, July/04. <http://www.jsad.com/>

MSA research shows that about 23% of Kent Co. teens surveyed, binge drink, and need help to quit. The average age at which they begin to drink, is 14. www.alertlabs.org

What/Who is MSA?

The MSA Project is Sponsored by the Kent County Prevention Coalition and Implemented by the ALERT Labs Group* (Alcohol Laboratories for Education, Research, and Training) Group. MSA is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services through SAMHSA's "Drug Free Communities Support Program." see www.alertlabs.org

DID YOU KNOW?

What's normal drinking for adults?

- 25% of adults abstain – never drink
- +33% are light drinkers (1 – 3 drinks per week at most)
- +15–17% drink moderately (fewer than 1 drink per day for women; fewer than 2 drinks per day for men, and never daily drinking).

Total = **73-75% drink moderately or not at all.** www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/alcohol.htm

Teens Who Don't Drink Also Don't Use Marijuana or Other Drugs

MSA Survey Results at a Comprehensive High School in Kent County:

	Have not used alcohol in past month	Did not drink AND have not used marijuana in past month	Did not drink AND have not used other drugs in last month
2007	64%	97.7%	99.8%
2009	70%	95.4%	98.9%

Know your teens' friends: Having been offered marijuana is the 2nd major predictor (after smoking cigarettes and/or drinking alcohol) of early use and of eventual major drug problems and addiction. (Yes, marijuana IS addictive, just like any other drug.)

Support your friends: If you see their teen drink or use marijuana, tell the parents. AND ask them to tell you if the situation is reversed. THEN get help for the "victims":

Our kids are victims of advertising and false perceptions – we have to help them resist the false idea that "everybody drinks " and the ads that glorify alcohol.

Call the STARR Intervention Program if you think (or know) your teen is using alcohol or other drugs – call Geoff at 269-929-2333. STARR is FREE to students at MSA schools and price can be adjusted for others. **Call. Ask. Learn: MSA Powerpoint: The STARR Program 2009** at <http://www.alertlabs.org/media.php>

93% of Kent County Students Surveyed Disapprove of Drinking and Driving BUT, Students Who Drink Alcohol are at HIGH RISK for Traffic Crash Injuries/Death: about 64% of students surveyed in local high schools who drank on only one occasion last month, said "yes" to "Have you ever ridden in a CAR driven by someone (including yourself) who was "high" or had been using alcohol or drugs?" 100% of students, who drank on five or more occasions last month, also said "yes" to this question. For more: info@alertlabs.org

The Grand Rapids Police Department participates in the Law Enforcement Against Drugs Program by providing information and affordable at-home drug and alcohol test kits. The kits can be purchased at the front desk:

Available kits: Alcohol single test (\$4.00), Amphetamines single test (\$4.00), Cocaine single test (\$4.00), Marijuana single test (\$4.00), 4-panel for cocaine, marijuana, methamphetamines, and opiates (\$12.00), and an 8-panel for opiates, cocaine, methamphetamines, marijuana, barbiturates, benzodiazepines, amphetamines, oxycodone (\$14.00).

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