



## **PARENTS: Help Your Teen Enjoy Fun, Safe, and Drug-Free Gatherings**

Parents play a major role in their children's choices about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. In a survey to parents and teens from the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, one-third of teen party-goers have been to parties where teens were drinking alcohol, smoking marijuana, or using cocaine, ecstasy, or prescription drugs *while a parent was present*. The ERASE Substance Abuse Coalition has partnered with Drug Free Action Alliance to reinforce our community message that underage drinking is unsafe, unhealthy and unacceptable.

**FACT:** As a parent, **you cannot provide alcohol to your teen's friends** under the age of 21 under any circumstances, even in your own home, even with their parent's permission. You also cannot allow a person under 18, other than your own child, to remain in your home or on your property while consuming or possessing alcohol. You will face legal consequences if you do. Based on Iowa's Social Host Law, you can be charged criminally and be punished with a \$200 fine for the first offense.

It is imperative for parents to be aware of the potential dangers that accompany alcohol-fueled gatherings. The Center for Disease Control reports that **underage drinking results in 4,300 deaths each year**. It's important to remember that simply taking away the car keys does not solve problems related to underage drinking. Parents must proactively take measures to ensure gatherings are fun, yet safe and drug-free for their kids.

### ***Here are a few ideas for parents (and teens) planning teen parties:***

- Create a party plan, including a guest list, with your teen.
- Invite just the friends on your list and let them know in advance the party is 'invitation only.'
- Let party guests know that if they leave, they cannot come back.
- Plan some activities such as music, games, movies, etc.
- Make regular and discreet visits to the party area with sensitivity to teens' needs for privacy.
- Have a plan in place if alcohol shows up at the party and act on that plan.

### ***If your teen is attending a party:***

- Know where your child will be. Call the parent in charge to verify the location of the party. Ensure there will be adult supervision and that the host will not be serving or allowing alcohol.
- Set a curfew for your teen to be home. When they arrive home, have them check in.
- Know how your child is getting to and from the party. Reinforce the message that it's never safe for someone who has been drinking to drive them anywhere.
- Let your teen know you trust him or her and explain why you are concerned about underage drinking.

**The ERASE Substance Abuse Coalition would like to recognize those who are hosting an alcohol and drug free graduation party this spring by providing them with yard signs. Stay tuned for details on how to participate!** For additional information visit [www.helpingservices.org/erase](http://www.helpingservices.org/erase) or contact Carol Hopp by phone at 563.387.1720 or e-mail at [chopp@helpingservices.org](mailto:chopp@helpingservices.org).