

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Dr. Sharon Harris

516- 676-2008

safeglencove@yahoo.com

SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: Prom Season Often Associated with Underage Binge Drinking

Binge drinking often occurs before and after-prom celebrations. This is due to peer pressure, the desire to celebrate milestones, and the perception that drinking is necessary to have fun. Underage drinking can have significant negative consequences, including impaired judgment, increased risk of accidents, and potential long-term health problems as underage drinking can increase the risk of developing alcohol use disorder and other substance use disorders later in life.

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) Defines Underage Binge Drinking: Children and teens have smaller body sizes and developing brains, meaning they reach dangerous blood alcohol concentration (BAC) levels much faster than adults.

- Ages 9 to 13: (average 3) drinks within a 2-hour period
- Ages 14 to 17: (average 3) drinks (for girls) or (average 4 - 5) drinks (for boys) within a 2-hour period

Hidden Dangers: During April, May, and June—the peak of prom and graduation—motor vehicle fatalities involving youth spike. The NIAAA highlights several immediate and long-term risks:

- Impaired Judgment: Leads to poor decision-making regarding unsafe sexual activity, fighting, and getting into cars with intoxicated drivers.
- Physical & Sexual Assault: Underage youth who consume alcohol are significantly more likely to both commit and become victims of violence.
- Brain Development: Alcohol can alter the trajectory of the adolescent brain, damaging areas responsible for memory, decision-making, and impulse control.
- Addiction: Youth who begin drinking before age 21 are at a much higher risk of developing an Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) later in life.

Parents remain the strongest protective factor for teens. The NIAAA offers the following tips to parents to prevent underage drinking during prom season:

- Open Communication: Parents should have open and honest conversations with their teens about the dangers of underage drinking by setting clear expectations and enforce them.
- Plan Alcohol-Free Celebrations: Support and encourage safe, supervised, post-prom activities organized by the school or community such as attending a movie, going to a sports event, or having a pizza party.
- Avoid "Turning a Blind Eye": Never host teen parties where alcohol is served or permitted. Allowing teens to drink in a "supervised" setting reinforces the idea that party drinking is acceptable.
- Know Your Child's Friends: Parents should be aware of their child's friends and their behaviors to monitor the situation and offer support if needed.
- Parents should review with their teen the NIAAA's website Facts About Teen Drinking
- Information for teens to know how alcohol affects their health, how to identify the signs of a problem, and where to get help.

According to SAFE, the best method of protecting against underage alcohol use and binge drinking is early prevention education and encouraging a goal to "Live SAFE" and substance free.

The SAFE Glen Cove Coalition was formed in 2003 to change societal norms about alcohol and substance use. The Coalition is concerned about excessive alcohol use in youth and adults and seeks to educate the community about its negative effects on one's health and wellness.

The Glen Cove Police Department has been a longstanding member of the Coalition and works diligently to monitor alcohol sales to minors, monitor hot spots where youth are known to drink and provide prevention education to youth and adults about Glen Cove Social Host Law and its consequences throughout the year. Annually, the Glen Cove Police Department, Glen Cove School District and SAFE partner to provide pre-prom presentations tailored to High School graduating students regarding social hosting, behaving responsibly and emphasizing health and safety.

In 2006, the Coalition worked with the City of Glen Cove Mayor and City Council to adopt Nassau County's first "Social Host" Law, which makes it a violation for adults to permit alcohol use in their homes by persons under the age of 21. In 2007, the law was adopted county-wide. This law aims to prevent underage drinking and its associated risks by holding individuals accountable for providing alcohol to minors at social gatherings.

To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition or visit SAFE's website to learn more about Alcohol and its negative consequences please visit SAFE's Underage Drinking Awareness page at www.safeglencove.org.