



The summer has been busy this year! Public service announcements are being planned, a group of parents has dedicated each Thursday evening through the summer to learning how to film and produce TV shows, Teen Nights are continuing, Youth Court is in session and hearing cases, and we're continuing to involve more and more Yorktown residents in helping to keep our kids and families safe. With fall approaching we're also planning the 2009 Taste of Yorktown ... and Beyond!

You'll find information on all of these programs in this newsletter. As always, if you have an event or other item you'd like to see in future newsletters or have questions about any programs listed here, please let Cathy know at (914) 736-1450 or [cadlerask@yahoo.com](mailto:cadlerask@yahoo.com).

*Tricy Cushner, President    Cathryn Adler, Director*

### Calendar

**Tuesday, August 11<sup>th</sup>, 7-10pm**  
*Middle School Teen Night,*  
*Lakeside at Osceola*

**Tuesday, August 17<sup>th</sup>, 7-10pm**  
*Middle School Teen Night,*  
*Lakeside at Osceola*

**Tuesday, August 25<sup>th</sup>, 4 pm**  
*ASK coalition meeting,*  
*Sparkle Lake Community Bldg*

**Thursday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 7-10 pm**  
*2009 Taste of Yorktown ... and Beyond!*  
*Field Home Mansion, Yorktown*

**Tuesday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, 4 pm**  
*ASK coalition meeting,*  
*Sparkle Lake Community Bldg*

**Saturday, October 10<sup>th</sup>, 11am – 6 pm**  
*New Yorktown Chamber of Commerce's*  
*Yorktown Festival & Street Fair*  
*Commerce Street, Yorktown*

**Tuesday, October 27<sup>th</sup>, 4 pm**  
*ASK coalition meeting,*  
*Sparkle Lake Community Bldg*

**Tuesday, November 24<sup>th</sup>, 4 pm**  
*ASK coalition meeting,*  
*Sparkle Lake Community Bldg*

**Tuesday, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 4 pm**  
*ASK coalition meeting,*  
*Sparkle Lake Community Bldg*

## ***2009 Taste of Yorktown .... And Beyond!***

*The Taste is back, and will be held on Thursday,*  
*September 17<sup>th</sup> from 7 PM to 10 PM*  
*at the Field Home Mansion*  
*Catherine Street, Yorktown Heights*

*Tickets are \$75*

*Come taste foods & wines from Yorktown area*  
*businesses and support The Alliance for Safe Kids,*  
*Inc, a not-for profit 501(c)(3) corporation dedicated*  
*to keeping our kids out of harm's way.*

*For questions or to purchase tickets please email*  
*Cathy Adler at [cadlerask@yahoo.com](mailto:cadlerask@yahoo.com)*  
*or call (914) 736-1450*

*The Alliance for Safe Kids, Inc., is a not-for profit 501(c)(3) corporation dedicated to keeping our kids out of harm's way. For further information, please email the Alliance at [Alliance4SafeKids@yahoo.com](mailto:Alliance4SafeKids@yahoo.com), or write to PO Box 106, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598. Please visit our website, [www.AllianceForSafeKids.org](http://www.AllianceForSafeKids.org)*

## ***The Sisters Bollinger***

By Cynthia Cervini

My mother is one of seven sisters who never lacked for an opinion on any topic. Show me a Bollinger woman unable to take a stand and I'll show you an imposter. As offspring of these formidable women, my cousins and I always knew where we stood - or, rather, where our mothers stood - on any issue.

To this day I am incapable of going to bed with dirty dishes in the sink or of owing a person (banks or credit card companies don't count ... they aren't persons) money for more than twenty four hours, which, incidentally, is the same time frame in which 'thank you' cards should be issued (which makes for some interesting honeymoon stories amongst us cousins). As we grew older and the issues became more loaded, like a good compass our moms were unwavering in pointing out the correct direction. Their credo 'if it's good enough for the authorities it's good enough for me' applied to all things like drinking, drugs and driving ... which explains why my mother never received a traffic ticket until she was eighty-two; and even then it was by taking her foot off the gas while driving down a hill – she was still accelerating, didn't apply the brakes (after all, if you're coasting it's free gas, right?), and managed to break the speed limit. Simply put, if it wasn't legal you didn't do it. There were no gray areas with my mother and neither she nor any of my aunts ever, *ever* looked the other way where their kids were involved.

Which is why I am dumbfounded when parents of my graduating seniors say to me "oh s/he is going off to college, s/he is over eighteen, I can't control what goes on" in terms of campus drinking and drug use. Now, I don't think I am naïve, and I know not everyone has the mettle (or meddle) of a Bollinger woman, but I am not convinced that eighteen is the magic age at which we parents no longer have any influence (I have a

problem with the word "control") and are disallowed our opinions about the activities our offspring engage in. Studies have shown that although this feeling of loss of control is common among parents of college freshman, it is far from accurate; which means that our kids listen to us more than we think. "Parents often underestimate their role in their child's life once their child has left for college" but in a 2001 study (Turrisi, Jaccard, Taki,

***...when parents talked with their college-bound child about alcohol use and how to avoid it, this simple action resulted in ... a significant reduction in drinking and drunkenness on the part of their children.***

Dunnam & Grimes) when parents talked with their college-bound child about alcohol use and how to avoid it, this simple action resulted in their children having less of a positive perception about drinking activities and a significant reduction in drinking and drunkenness on the part of their children. College admissions personnel have long held that the source that students listen to most when selecting a college is their parents. So how is it that parents believe that only a few months later, when an adolescent leaves for campus, that eighteen years of the role family relationships play in influencing values, norms and behaviors comes undone?

Some tips for staying involved even when your offspring is seven hundred miles away (this section could also be entitled "*If an eighty-three year old Bollinger woman can do it, you can too!!!*"):

1. Pay special attention to your child's first six weeks on campus. Students often don't know how to handle all the free time and are at risk for involvement in heavy drinking, which considerably hinders their successful transition to campus life.

*Cont'd on pg. 4*

## ***Coming Soon to a TV Station near You***

By Jessica Cunnington

While many college students have been spending their summer taking a train down to the city or returning to more local jobs from last year, I've been the communications and public relations intern with the Alliance for Safe Kids! As a broadcast journalism major, this has been a great opportunity.

I knew I wanted to help ASK after talking to Mrs. Tricy Cushner about exactly what they do for the community: the main concern and goal of the Alliance is to gain a relationship with every part of the community with a connection to Yorktown youth. "We want to create a safety net for every child in this community," Cushner said. The safety net is woven with the help of any groups that are connected to youth in the community. The Alliance eventually wants to help these groups get information about their services out to the public. And to do that, I have three words for you: Public Service Announcements.

Using the Lakeland High School, Strang Middle School and Cablevision studios, PSA's can be recorded, edited and broadcast on school TV channels as well as the Cablevision channel. They can be as short as 30 seconds and can relate to any topic that focuses on helping keep kids safe. To start the program rolling, I decided to use an incredibly motivated and fun group of 14-18 year olds as my first victims: the Alliance for Safe Kids Youth Court! As many of their recent cases have involved shoplifting, the first piece they're doing is on theft. After some practice they're moving on to the studio! As the summer is coming to an end, at least one PSA will be on its way to millions of viewers in the area. I hope to come back to work with other youth groups who want to get their message out there!

*Jessica Cunnington is attending SI Newhouse School of Public Communications after spending the summer as ASK's intern.*

## ***Why I'm a Member of the Youth Court***

By Stephanie Hines

About a year ago I heard about the ASK Youth Court program and wanted to become involved with it. When I talk about it with other students, they usually ask these sorts of questions:

*Q: Youth court? You study how courts run?*

*A: Well, yes. We do study how courts run, learning the specifics of the court system and taking positions in the court, but we also hear cases. We're the defense attorneys, prosecuting attorneys, court clerk, bailiff and judge.*

*Q: Yeah, but they're not **real** cases, right?*

*A: They're real cases. But we start with a mock trial before we hear those cases – a made-up trial that lets us practice some of the court positions. Once we're ready, then we hear real cases – local kids who are arrested for shoplifting, or trespassing, or any other misdemeanor. Any kid who hasn't committed a crime before and is under the age of 16 is eligible, if their parents are okay with it.*

*Q: So why would they want to go through the court? Wouldn't it be kind of embarrassing?*

*A: A couple of reasons. When they finish their sentence their record is cleared. Second, they apologize for their actions – which really does help them come to terms with whatever they've done. The embarrassment is actually a really good thing. If kids think about doing something wrong and think about having to stand up in a court run by kids they go to school with, they might think twice about it.*

*Q: So why do you like being involved with the youth court?*

*A: Because it really gives us a sense of leadership in the community. We really do help these kids – after going through our court they usually don't get into trouble again. And I wasn't really comfortable speaking in front of other people. We keep practicing it --- I feel like I'm much better at it now.*

*Cont'd from pg 2*

2. Find out if there is a program offered during orientation which educates students about campus policies regarding alcohol use. Attend the program with your child if possible.
3. What is the college's policy regarding parental notification? What procedures are in place to notify parents about alcohol and substance abuse problems? What counseling services are available to students? How consistent and thorough is the follow-up on students who exhibit alcohol abuse and other problem behaviors?
4. Call your son or daughter frequently during the first six weeks. Pay them an unexpected visit; ask to meet their friends. Attend Parents' Weekend and other campus events open to parents.
5. Make sure your son or daughter understands the penalties for underage drinking, using a fake ID, driving under the influence and other alcohol-related offenses. Make sure they understand how alcohol use can lead to date rape, violence, and academic failure.
6. Remain actively involved in the life of your college freshman. Even though they're away, they continue to be a member of your family and are shaped by its values.

Number 7 on the list: don't be surprised when they balk at your interventions. Hopefully they are accustomed to it by now.

In the sixth grade my daughter brought home a permission slip to participate in DARE. She took me by surprise by informing me that there was no necessity for her to participate since she had already taken the program. I was taken aback; had she done the program without my even knowing about it? Was I that out of touch? "No," she emphasized holding out the slip of paper "you can just write them a note and tell them I've been doing DARE **since I was two years old!**" In this instance she didn't exaggerate. There was an anti-drug commercial out there a few years ago where the viewer sees a close-up of a parent delivering a lecture on the dangers of drugs and alcohol. The words appear on the screen 'is it ever too early to tell your kids about the dangers of drugs?' The camera then pulls away from the parent so the viewer can see the recipient of the lecture - a six-month-old in a high chair. That pretty much sums up my daughter's exposure to my outlook on alcohol and drug abuse. Sixteen years later it's near impossible for me to bring up the topic without a lecture from her. I wouldn't be my mother's daughter if I didn't continue to make the attempt, and my daughter can tell you chapter and verse what my expectations are. She won't leave for college for two more years, but I've already drawn my line in the sand (if you're really a Bollinger you're prepared well ahead of time). Basically it comes down to finance: if you are in college on **my** dime (and that includes living in my house when you are not in college) then I have a say in what goes on.

Would it be easier not to argue, to look the other way, to not make a nuisance of myself? Perhaps, but it's not in my genes. Besides which, at forty-eight I'd still have to answer to **my** mother and her sisters. On second thought, it's far easier just to keep on top of my daughter; there's just one of her.

*Cynthia Cervini is a guidance counselor at Yorktown High School and a parent.*

### ***Youth Court, continued***

By now they're usually asking me how to get involved with the court. All they have to do is contact the director, Art Lander, at [crimecat48@yahoo.com](mailto:crimecat48@yahoo.com)

I truly believe it's one of the best programs created, and I feel as though it's a way for me to increase my skills but also help to change Yorktown for the better.

*Stephanie Hines is a member of ASK's Youth Court and a student at Lakeland High School*