



Alliance for Safe Kids, Inc.

NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 10
July, 2009

Summer is here, and while school is out for the summer, our programming continues to be full. Teen Nights are happening throughout the summer, Youth Court is in session and hearing cases, teens and adults are in training to produce public service announcements for television, and we're continuing to involve more and more Yorktown residents in helping to keep our kids and families safe.

For instance, several teen groups are spending their summer break working on programs with ASK including public service announcements, athlete's and parent's pledges, and public relations for teen nights.

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.

Tricy Cushner, President Cathryn Adler, Director

Calendar

Tuesday, July 7th, 7-10pm

Middle School Teen Night, Lakeside at Osceola

Tuesday, July 14th, 7-10pm

Middle School Teen Night, Lakeside at Osceola

Tuesday, July 21st, 7-10pm with live band!

Middle School Teen Night, Lakeside at Osceola

Tuesday, July 28th, 7-10pm

Middle School Teen Night, Lakeside at Osceola

Tuesday, August 11th, 7-10pm

Middle School Teen Night, Lakeside at Osceola

Tuesday, August 17th, 7-10pm

Middle School Teen Night, Lakeside at Osceola

Tuesday, August 25th, 4 pm

ASK coalition meeting, Sparkle Lake Community Bldg

Tuesday, September 29th, 4 pm

ASK coalition meeting, Sparkle Lake Community Bldg

Tuesday, October 27th, 4 pm

ASK coalition meeting, Sparkle Lake Community Bldg

Tuesday, November 24th, 4 pm

ASK coalition meeting, Sparkle Lake Community Bldg

Tuesday, December 15th, 4 pm

ASK coalition meeting, Sparkle Lake Community Bldg

Youth Court News

By Art Lander

Youth Court is back hearing cases and all graduates are asked to re-connect with the court. We have conducted an outreach program with local communities and are now hearing cases from these locations. We also have worked with the Yorktown Town Attorney and are hearing cases with defendants over 16 years old who have been charged with Town Code violations.

Youth Court has scheduled cases to be heard every Wednesday evening throughout July. Members should be at the courthouse by 6:30 pm each Wednesday and be appropriately dressed for court.

Over the summer, court members will also be working with Jessica Cunnington, communications intern for ASK, to write, direct, star in and produce public service announcements about Youth Court for broadcast on local TV stations.

For further information on Youth Court, contact Art Lander at crimecat48@yahoo.com

Congratulations to Suzanne and Tom Jacobs, winners of the Trump Golf raffle! And many, many thanks to Mr. Trump and to Dan Scavino, General Manager and Executive Vice President of the Trump National Golf Course in Briarcliff Manor, for making the raffle possible.

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, or write to PO Box 106, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598. Please visit our website, www.AllianceForSafeKids.org

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed individuals can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has. -Margaret Mead

By Cynthia Cervini

I'd like to nominate Emily Waterfield for sainthood

Oh, alright. I know I have to go through the local Bishop first and I'll get to that as soon as the school year ends. Aside from being a stellar student and an amazing athlete, Emily can be credited with at least one miracle: her interventions have cured my daughter of her desire to "go to town and hang out."

Those six words were at one time a loaded phrase in my house, guaranteed to start an argument. By the time her request was turned down a second time, my daughter quickly went into offense mode (actually, offensive mode is a better description) attempting to draw parallels between my job and my refusal to allow her any fun. It sounded something like this: "just because the kids in Yorktown hang out and get in trouble doesn't mean I will." When that argument failed to win her any supporters she reverted to an oldie but goody, a classic like the little black dress that never goes out of style. -"You have ISSUES, mom."

Of *course* I have issues – show me a parent of a teenager who doesn't. What my daughter didn't give me a chance to say is, regardless of location I just don't see an upside to hanging out. If she wants to spend time with her friends they are perfectly welcome to hang out at my house or, for that matter, at any of her friend's houses where there is a parent on-site.

We limped through summer stuck on the battlefield, until Emily appeared in our lives. While my daughter and I were arguing about hanging out, too much time spent texting, and not enough time spent wearing her retainer, Emily was at work organizing the Cornwall Field Hockey team. For reasons unknown, Cornwall High School lacked a field hockey team, a condition which had always troubled Emily. After graduation she got a few friends together to play pick-up field hockey. Those friends spread the word, and now the team boasts fifteen to twenty high school-age girls, as well as two 'thirty something' women, who meet to play every Monday and Thursday afternoon as well as Saturday mornings. Yes, **every** week, because the Cornwall Field Hockey team doesn't limit themselves to field hockey season. Nope, they've played in temperatures ranging from the teens to nineties in all manner of precipitation and field conditions. My daughter has already been through two pairs of cleats (not including her brother's baseball cleats, one of which got stuck in the mud in the middle of a particularly heavy rain). The girls don't limit themselves to the mud-laden field, either. There have been field hockey movie nights, field hockey bonfires and field hockey bake sales. There is a Cornwall Field Hockey page on Facebook and during this year's annual Riverfest there was a Field Hockey exhibit booth where the girls gave lessons to local youngsters. Best of all there hasn't been any mention of 'hanging out' and that alone is worth a lifetime supply of cleats.

You've been introduced to the future St. Emily so let me acquaint you with a modern-day St. Matthew. Recently our school hosted Matt Ballace, a comedian/motivational speaker who addressed transitioning to college. Ballace's premise is that it is not enough to tell our youngsters to avoid drugs and alcohol; we need to also provide them with positive things they can do for themselves and others.

In October, 1993, Ballace - then an underclassman at Bucknell University - founded the group C.A.L.V.I.N. & H.O.B.B.E.S (Creating A Lively Valuable Ingenious New Habit of Being (at) Bucknell & Enjoying Sobriety) which lives on at Bucknell and through sibling organizations at colleges throughout the country.

Continued on Page 3

Never Doubt ... cont'd from Pg 2

They host weekly activities such as bowling, skating, hiking, BounceHouse (something to do with a trampoline) and Maize Maze (getting hopelessly lost in a cornfield and probably a muddy one at that). One of the stories Matt recounted for our seniors involved duct taping an (obviously willing) individual to a wall in the student union "just to see people's reactions". As a result of the group's success and the positive press generated, Bucknell trustees approved \$250,000 to refurbish a local fraternity house for the group.

Sitting among the seniors, many of them doubled over with laughter at Bellace's antics (let's just say he is interactive), I thought about Emily Waterfield out there in the trenches (maybe a muddy field is more apropos) giving my daughter and her friends an alternative to hanging out, and started to think about other possibilities. I remembered that the drama advisor from my daughter's high school instituted a summer workshop in acting last year, free to any interested high school student. My daughter and her friends were regular in their attendance, actually doing **homework** and preparing scenes and soliloquies for 'class' each week. In Yorktown, youngsters have the opportunity to participate in Youth Court (see Page 1 of this newsletter), receiving valuable training in the field of law while fostering necessary skills such as public speaking, group dynamics, and awareness of one's civic responsibilities. There are other local venues for volunteer work – the library, Teatown Reservation, and Snow Angels are a few organizations my students have participated in over the years. Local colleges offer alternatives as well - Berkeley College in White Plains offers summer career exploration workshops for students 16 years and older, and Westchester Community College allows high school juniors and seniors to take a college class in the summertime. These are certainly not 'one size fits all' suggestions; maybe we need to think like Emily, and create something out of nothing and challenge our kids to do the same. To borrow a line from the movie *Field of Dreams*, 'if you build it they will come'.

At U.S. Colleges, Binge Drinking Is on the Rise

By Steven Reinberg, *HealthDay Reporter*
Mon Jun 15, 7:03 pm ET

June 15 (HealthDay News) -- Binge drinking among American college students is on the rise, along with its consequences of drunk driving and drinking-related deaths, U.S. health officials report.

In fact, drinking-related deaths among students aged 18 to 24 years have increased steadily from 1,440 a year in 1998 to 1,825 in 2005, according to a report from the U.S. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. Binge drinking also increased during this time, with the proportion of students who said they'd binged on alcohol in the past month going up from 42 to 45 percent.

The proportion of students who admitted to driving under the influence of alcohol rose from about 26 to 29 percent, according to the report.

"Unfortunately, what we see is the proportions of college students who engage in binge drinking has increased," said lead researcher Ralph Hingson, director of the institute's division of epidemiology and prevention research.

"There's a whole culture that needs to be changed around drinking and driving under the influence among young people in the United States," he said. Adding to the problem is that alcohol is cheap and many alcohol beverage makers target high school and college students, Hingson said.

Often the problem begins before college. "The younger people are when they first become intoxicated," he said, "the greater the that when they are in college they will meet alcohol-dependence criteria: that they will drive after drinking; that they will ride with drinking drivers; they will be injured under the influence

Continued on page 4

Cont'd from page 3

of alcohol; or they will have unplanned and unprotected sex after drinking."

To reach their conclusions, Hingson's team used information from government databases and national surveys on alcohol use. Their report appears in a supplement to the July issue of the *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*.

Not only are the people who binge drink putting themselves at risk, but their drinking can have serious consequences for others, Hingson said.

"We estimate there are probably 700,000 students who are assaulted each year by a drinking college student and 100,000 sexual assaults that are linked to college drinking," he said. "Plus half of the drinking-related traffic deaths among college students are people other than the drinking driver."

Dr. David L. Katz, director of the Prevention Research Center at Yale University School of Medicine, said that to reverse the trends, society needs to take drinking among college students more seriously.

"Options for bad judgment available to a college student are determined by society, and ours is decidedly ambivalent about alcohol," Katz said. "Drinking to excess is often given favorable treatment in the media, and in social groups."

To change these trends, young people drinking to excess will need to be discouraged by the very people whose opinions matter most to them -- friends in their own peer group, Katz said.

"For this to occur, our society must both render and convey a clearer verdict opposing this casual form of alcohol abuse," he said.

Hingson said that a number of interventions have been shown to work, including counseling high-risk drinkers, raising the price of alcohol, and getting colleges, community health departments and police to work together on the problem.

Yet some college presidents think there should be a debate about lowering the drinking age, Hingson noted.

"But, when we look at the data, binge drinking and driving is mostly among 21- to 24-year-olds," he said.

"It's not among the 18- to 20-year-old group," he said.

"It appears to me that some colleges are not implementing the interventions, where we've got evidence that they work," Hingson said. "The challenge for us is to make sure colleges understand what things are working. We have to get them to expand screening and interventions to reach wider populations of students and work with communities."

Dr. Marc Galanter, director of the division of alcoholism and drug abuse in the psychiatry department at the New York University School of Medicine, said that binge drinking among college students has far-reaching effects for the students.

"The heavy drinking during college not only results in severe consequences at that time, [but] it also primes college students for later alcohol addiction," Galanter said. "Heavier drink at this age is a predictor of later alcoholism and is likely a major causative factor."

And Hingson said that efforts akin to what has been done to reduce smoking are needed to deal with the drinking problem among young people.

"We as a society have a collective responsibility to try and change this culture of drinking at colleges and among young people," he said.