



Alliance for Safe Kids, Inc.

NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 9
June, 2009

As things slow down for the summer, we're thinking about the prom, graduation, and other celebrations throughout the summer months. A prom article by Cindy Cervini starts on Page 2: if your children are grown, it's a reminder of some of what you went through; if your children are younger, it's a heads up. Prom today isn't what it was when we were in school. You'll also find updated information on Neighborhood Watch and Youth Court. If you're interested in either program, please contact Detective Lewis (for Neighborhood Watch) or Youth Court Director Art Lander. Their contact information is in the pieces.

We always welcome suggestions for other programs; either come to a coalition meeting and speak with us about it, or send an email. 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

Wednesday, May 27th

4 pm: ASK coalition meeting

Sparkle Lake Community Building

Friday, May 29th

7-10pm, Teen Night for 12-15 yrs

Lakeside at Osceola

Friday, June 12th

6pm-on, Relay for Life

Jack DeVito Memorial Field

ASK teams up with PBA and Leos to benefit American Cancer Soc.

Friday, June 12th

7-10pm, Teen Night for 12-15 yrs

Lakeside at Osceola

Friday, June 19th

7-10pm, Teen Night for 12-15 yrs

Lakeside at Osceola

Friday, June 26th

7-10pm, Teen Night for 12-15 yrs

Lakeside at Osceola

Youth Court News

The Alliance for Safe Kids Youth Court program, in cooperation with the Westchester County Department of Probation, has expanded to start hearing cases from other Northern Westchester communities. Youth Court members will also be conducting mock trials over the summer as part of their ongoing training for the court.

Youth Court is an innovative approach to juvenile justice and acts as an early intervention for first-time offenders. It is designed to give youth between the ages of 10 and 15 years old who have broken the law a second chance. The program also educates youth about the justice system, and through their participation they learn to become responsible citizens in our community.

For further information on Alliance for Safe Kids Youth Court program, contact Youth Court Director Art Lander at crimecat48@yahoo.com.

Mark Sterner of Campus Speak to appear at Lakeland and Walter Panas High Schools on May 29th

Mark Sterner will be speaking to Lakeland school district seniors on the dangers of drinking and driving (8:30 AM at Walter Panas High School, 10 AM at Lakeland High School). Mr. Sterner's tragic story deals with sensitive content and is highly emotional in nature. Students who have lost friends or loved ones to drunk driving may be particularly affected by this presentation. Please notify your student's counselor if you do not wish for your son or daughter to participate. Counselors and pupil personnel staff will be working with students afterwards to process Mr. Sterner's message.

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

Prama ... Coming Soon!

By Cindy Cervini

Gird your loins- prom season is upon us.

A couple of columns ago I mentioned my friend Jim from Karate, a member of our Village. He and I have supported each other (mostly via e-mail) through prom drama (known as "Prama") more than once ("Son of Prama"). While I'm not personally facing another Prama this year, I have the next best thing to it. In my house, because my daughter is slightly younger than the usual prom-goer, her social season is centered around the sweet sixteen circuit. I find myself saying 'no' much more often than either of us would like.

Sometimes I feel alone in my efforts to curtail spending on new outfits. Surprise - sweet sixteens now incorporate (heaven help us) 'themes' such as 80's dress (I was of age in the 80's and am hard-pressed to come up with what we wore), black and white, city chic and country club casual, you name it.

I'm not getting much encouragement either from articles run in the NY Times reporting that worsening economic conditions haven't touched the prom industry because parents refuse to let circumstances such as wage freezes and job losses affect the 'prom experience' of their offspring. Parents call the prom a 'once in a lifetime event' (I tell my daughter that my death is a once in a life-time event and at the rate she is spending there won't be enough money left to bury me.)

While the [school prom] pledge covers all school rules, it is specifically aimed at prohibiting consumption of alcohol and drug use.

If you are the parent of an attendee you have undoubtedly been in the prom-planning stages for months. Parents spend hundreds of dollars on tickets, limos, not to mention prom-wear (when being the parent of a boy can save you some bucks* and being the parent of a girl is going to cost you). Faster than you can say 'up-do', your wallet will fall victim to nails, hair, tanning, shoe and jewelry expenses, all of which put your family's fiscal health at risk.

Are we there yet? Sadly that is only the *pre*-prom. Hold onto your 'no' ... you'll be needing it later. For now you are sending your baby off to that 'once in a lifetime' event. At this point the schools step in to help - not for the cost of the up-do or new earrings but to require that your offspring and their date sign a prom pledge agreeing to abide by school rules at all times while at the prom. A parent's signature is also required. While the pledge covers all school rules, it is specifically aimed at prohibiting consumption of alcohol and drug use. Anyone found in violation (and this includes arriving intoxicated) will be prohibited from participating in the events and their parent(s) will be contacted to collect them.

So far so good. Most of the seniors I spoke with felt that the risk of getting caught was definitely not one worth taking. They couldn't imagine the embarrassment of being hauled away and have no compunction

**Except that this year there's a new twist: boys are factoring in the cost of speeding tickets to their prom costs, anticipating squeezing out the last possible second of the Seaside Experience before their sleep-deprived-but-hopefully-sober rush home.*

Continued on Page 3

Cont'd from Pg 2

about policing one another. So a parent can relax for just a nano second because after prom is over the third installment begins.

The Post-Prom Event

We've all done this. We give in to the \$800 dress. We don't even ask the price of the shoes, and by the time we've gotten down to jewelry (at least she can use it another time), the grocery bill has been scaled back (eating is overrated, after all, and I hear Spam is making a comeback) and all the while we're assuring ourselves that when 'no' needs to be brought out surely my little princess will understand and respect it.

I work with people who have lived here for years. No one can quite remember when the first post-prom Huskers traveled down the turnpike and the Garden State one hundred twenty miles to Seaside, NJ to rent out a block of hotel rooms, but the tradition is so embedded in the collective memory of Huskers it is almost impossible to say no to the request (try saying no to a salmon swimming upstream). If you're reading this and you are the parent of a prommer, the dye has been cast and more likely than not you are bidding your senior adieu (which, according to my daughter who knows enough French to be both annoying and dangerous, means 'God be with you' ... and you'll need it for this one). Even some of the most stalwart nay-saying parents eventually cave, but they're adding stipulations. Here again the school has subtly gotten involved, requiring the students to be back in Yorktown two days after the prom for graduation practice, sharply curtailing some Seaside activities.

It's not too late to encourage responsibility. We have a prom bulletin board (sponsored by Students Against Destructive Decisions) in a central hallway asks the question: "Your prom/graduation- a memory or a blur? It's up to you." Added to the board are a list of consequences to prom excess (accident, alcohol poisoning, tickets, overdose, arrest). I love that students walk by this everyday.

For those of us with juniors and sophomores- let's encourage them to think outside the corsage box. I have a group of seniors who are forgoing Seaside and taking a midnight post-prom cruise around Manhattan on a party boat designed specifically for that purpose. The boat's operators don't want to lose their license, so parents can be fairly certain this is a safe alternative. In the district where I live, the parents of juniors host an all-night party for seniors after graduation which is quite well attended. Why not retool something like that for Yorktown's post-prom? Catholic Central in Allentown does, renting out an entire restaurant from 11-2 am free to any member of the senior class whether or not they attended prom.

I think it'll take some time to change the culture, but we can't use that as an excuse not to pound the safe prom message home. There are parents amongst us (and maybe we've even deluded ourselves once or twice) who will say 'oh, my son/daughter will be on their own in college this fall' as a reason to not push the "no" button. Trust me, your children still need your input and guidance (and heck, if you're footing the bill for the \$800 dress you should be able to say anything you want!). We have a series of Senior Day workshops (pre prom) and one of the biggest sign-ups is for a talk entitled "Under 21 and the Law: Information You Need to Know" given by an assistant district attorney from Westchester County.

Back on the home front, once he survived both proms his son attended, Jim From Karate wasted no time in scheduling a well-deserved vacation. In retrospect, it was a pretty smart idea given Matt's first year in college....

Neighborhood Watch Program

As part of our commitment to a safe and drug-free community, the Alliance for Safe Kids has teamed up with the Yorktown Police Department to co-sponsor the Neighborhood Watch Program in Yorktown. Detective Sean Lewis of the Yorktown Police Department, who is the coordinator for the program, has supplied the following safety tips for this summer.

Travel Tips

During the upcoming vacation season many of us will be heading out of the house and hitting the roadways. Before you jump into your car to start the adventure you should be aware of some traveling tips:

- ❖ Always lock your car doors when traveling in your vehicle
- ❖ Always be aware of your surroundings when traveling
- ❖ Remember to bring a fully-charged cell phone with you when on the roadway
- ❖ If possible, travel with another person
- ❖ Travel well-lit and busy streets
- ❖ Let friends or family know your route and travel times
- ❖ If possible, do not carry large amounts of cash; credit cards and travelers checks are best
- ❖ If you're being followed, drive to a public location such as a hospital, fire station, or police station

You can help to make this a safer community by supporting the Neighborhood Watch Program. To help your neighborhood join Neighborhood Watch, contact Detective Sean Lewis at 914-962-381. And if you ever see any suspicious activity in your neighborhood, call the Yorktown Police at 914-962-4141.

TIPS TRAINING AVAILABLE

If you're an owner or manager of a business where alcohol is sold and are interested in getting your staff certified as TIPS trained, please contact Art Lander at crimecat48@yahoo.com

Relay for Life Volunteers Needed

For the past several years ASK has joined with the Yorktown PBA and Yorktown Leos to sell food and soft drinks at the Yorktown Relay for Life, raising money for the American Cancer Society. It's a busy, wonderful way to spend an evening. If you'd like to join us, please contact Cathy at cadlerask@yahoo.com.

Guitar Hero or Rock Band Competition!

Are you involved with a teen group who might be interested in organizing these events? There are locations in Yorktown interested in hosting them; just give ASK a call – we'd love to work with you!

Raffle: Trump National Golf Outing for 4

The day includes breakfast, a round of golf, lunch, and private tour of the facilities with Yorktown's own Dan Scavino, Executive Vice President and General Manager.

\$25 per ticket, \$50 for 3 Face value: \$2,500

Funds raised will help underwrite ASK's programs and events for Yorktown kids and community awareness. For information call (914) 736-1450 or email cadlerask@yahoo.com. The winning ticket will be drawn on June 1st.