

Not Just a *minor* Thing

Arizona Statewide Underage Drinking News

Underage Drinking Prevention Committee

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VERY Young Drinkers: A Hidden Epidemic

They may be very young, but that doesn't stop them from drinking alcohol. Some studies indicate that although the total number of underage drinkers has remained the same since the 1990s, with about 20% of 8th and 12th graders who report being drunk at least once in their lives, youth who drink are starting at a much, *much* earlier age.



Currently, there are no large scale representative surveys specifically targeting kids under 12. However, a national survey conducted by the University of Michigan shows that a significant number of 13- year-olds reported that they first started drinking alcohol when they were 11 years old.

Further research shows that a third of youth between the ages of 13-17 years old had their first drink before the age of 13. That's about 6.4 million kids nationally. *(Continued on page 2)*

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The magic of family dinners...



Family dinners are not only tasty, but they are also an underestimated and cost-efficient prevention method in reducing teen substance abuse.

According to recent research published by the Center of Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA), teens who have infrequent family dinners (three or fewer per week), were twice as likely to use tobacco, marijuana or other drugs, and one and half times more likely to use alcohol than those who have frequent family dinners (five or more per week).



The report also indicates how the frequency of family dinners may also have an effect on how easily teens can access drugs. According to CASA, teens who have infrequent family dinners are twice as likely to be able to get marijuana and one and a half times more likely to be able

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VERY Young Drinkers: A Hidden Epidemic - continued from page 1

In the prevention world, the epidemic of very young drinkers poses a huge concern and a great need for intervention. According to research, kids who start drinking before the age of 15, are about four times more likely to develop substance abuse problems in the future than those who start drinking at the age of 21. Young drinkers are also at risk for a multitude of issues including other substance abuse, brain impairment, accidents and homicides. Experts also agree that these young drinkers are at a higher risk of becoming victims of crime and having unprotected sex, which subsequently places them at greater risk for contracting sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS.

Prevention and intervention programs should focus on parental and community education as most of these young drinkers obtain alcohol from home or from an older peer or adult. According to the American Medical Association, which conducted two nation wide surveys in 2005 — the surveys polled kids as young as 13 — underage drinkers expressed that it was fairly easy to get alcohol from an adult: About two-thirds expressed that it was easy to get alcohol from home without their parents' knowledge, and one-third said they can get it *with* their parents' knowledge. This research reinforces the fact that underage drinking prevention programs need to target parents and adults as they play a key role in youth accessibility to alcohol, in addition to targeting kids, even before they reach the age of 11.

Family Dinners Make a Difference – continued from page 1

to get prescription drugs within an hour than teens who have frequent family dinners.

“The magic of the family dinner comes not from the food on the plate, but from who’s at the table and what’s happening there. The emotional and social benefits that come from family dinners are priceless,” said Elizabeth Planet, CASA’s vice president and director of special projects. “We know that teens who have frequent family dinners are likelier to get As and Bs in school and have excellent relationships with their parents. Having dinner as a family is one of the easiest ways to create routine

opportunities for parental engagement and communication, two keys to raising drug-free children.”

Research shows that the average family dinner lasts about 35 minutes; however, since families live such a busy life schedule about 28 percent of teens say their family dinners last less than 30 minutes.

To further promote the benefits of frequent family dinners in combating substance abuse, CASA initiated Family Day, which has become a nationally celebrated day on the fourth Monday of September.

To learn more about this initiative and find out ways to incorporate it into your work in the prevention of substance abuse, please visit: www.CASAFamilyDay.org

Compared to teens who have frequent family dinners, those who have infrequent family dinners are more than twice as likely to be able to get marijuana within an hour...

Not Just a *minor* Thing is published quarterly in March, July, October and January. We are looking for community/coalition stories announcements and other leads that are related to efforts to reduce under age drinking in Arizona. Due to space limitation, each story should not exceed 500 words. Our deadline is the 1st of the month prior to the publication date. Please email articles or ideas to the editor at: madanas@azdhs.gov. Ideas and comments are welcome as well! Thank you.

Keeping an Eye on Self-Service Checkout Lanes

One of the things that California is keeping an eye on in order to combat underage drinking are the self-service checkout lanes. These lanes can be an easy way for minors to purchase alcohol.



California has a law that forbids the sale of cigarettes, spray paint and over-the-counter medications through self-service checkout lanes to make it harder for minors to obtain them. Anti-alcohol groups are now trying to add beer, wine and spirits to the bill to force supermarkets to route all alcohol sales through live cashiers who could ensure that buyers are sober and of legal drinking age.

While the bill has much support from community organizations that are fighting to stop underage drinking like Mother Against Drunk Driving, it has met resistance from large supermarkets who fear that it will affect business, as the additional labor costs is apparent.

Self-service checkout lanes are growing in popularity among consumers and businesses alike. For example, the Fresh and Easy market chain runs exclusively on these fast and convenient checkout lanes. If approved, the legislation will have a huge effect on such stores, which would have to adjust their checkout model.

When purchasing alcohol through self-service checkout lanes, the device freezes the transaction until a super-market staff attends and confirms drinking age. However, in a recent study on southern California stores conducted by the University of California Los Angeles, it was shown that 20 percent of the time, this safeguard was actually ignored.

Regardless of the growing concern from supermarkets, this bill, if passed, may be a great approach to prevent underage drinking and would send a strong message against underage drinking for other states to follow.

In Prevention, Culture Matters!

On September 5, 2009, the TERROS COPE Coalition embraced culture to prevent youth substance abuse in planning and sponsoring an alcohol-free *Quinceñera* for 13 young ladies and their families. *Quinceñera* refers to the celebration of a young lady's 15th birthday, *Quince*, but more accurately, in Latino cultures it represents a ritual that symbolizes a female's coming of age and role into the community.

Research has shown that culture works as a protective factor against Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs (ATOD). Additional data from the Southwest Interdisciplinary Research Center at Arizona State University shows that first generation Latino immigrant youth are less likely to abuse ATOD than second generation Latino youth due to the protection that arises from greater attachment to one's culture and family.

This event was inspired by a group of parents from the Lela Austin School in the Roosevelt School District who requested an alcohol-free *Quinceñera* in order to help change parental attitudes towards alcohol. The idea was to utilize the celebration of the *Quinceñera* as a vehicle for educating youth, parents, and family members about the risk of alcohol use, while also promoting youth attachment to family and culture. The entire process had a powerful emotional impact on the participating youth and their families. One father, who initially opposed not having alcohol at the event, stopped drinking as a result of the classes given to the parents and youth, and the discussions the family had during the preparation for the event.

The event was widely supported by the community: Approximately 25 volunteers were involved in organizing the event. Local businesses donated gowns for youth and parents, and even provided nail and hair services. Additional community donations included a live music, food, a venue, limousines, decorations and more. The event aired on Phoenix Know99.

[To watch a segment on YouTube click here](#)



*This newsletter was created by the **Arizona Underage Drinking Committee** to increase the sharing of information between coalitions and people who are working to prevent underage drinking.*

Coalition of the Quarter

The Santa Cruz County POWER Coalition is based in Nogales, Arizona, and serves the greater Santa Cruz County area. The coalition is composed of diverse organizations which represent law enforcement, youth, parents, business community, media and more. Coalition coordination is provided by the Santa Cruz County Attorney's Office, and technical assistance and support is provided by Southeastern Arizona Behavioral Health Services. Since its inception in 2008, the coalition has focused on two major issues that were identified by the Arizona Youth Survey and the Southern Arizona Community Opinion Surveys: high school student consumption of alcohol (e.g. 86% of students) and easy access for youth to alcohol (e.g. youth cross the border to Mexico for alcohol).

The POWER Coalition targets programs in the local middle and high schools that include delivering presentations on the impact of alcohol on youth, and the consequence of alcohol use from the perspective of law enforcement, and how to deal with the pressure to use alcohol. The coalition has facilitated the youth-produced campaign for radio and television public service announcements (PSAs) that spread a tag-line that they created: Stop! Think! Don't Underage Drink! As part of the multimedia project, the messages in the PSAs were derived from a theater script that youth will perform during a tour over the next several months. The campaign has been such a success that the local radio station has adopted it and created a program that tours the schools, and with the participation of a youth, plays PSAs, gives messages via a DJ, and hands out materials along with POWER wrist bands.

Most recently, the coalition has begun looking at the issue of social host ordinance and, with several community partners, will begin the process toward the possibility of instituting this in the community.

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Announcements, Events & More!

Congrats!

Congratulations to Amistades Substance Abuse Coalition in Tucson and the Williams Unified School District #2 for receiving the Sober Truth on Preventing Underage Drinking Act Grant (STOP) award.

Both the coalition and school district were among the 23 grant awardees across the state totaling more than \$4.4 million over four years. Each recipient is expected to be funded up to \$50,000 per year in their efforts to reduce alcohol use among youth.

Free Resources

Check out a new free resource to promote prevention activities in the workplace. This resource is designed to help coalitions work with their area businesses.

[Download the resources as well as access other available resources here.](#)

Mark your calendars!



- **Apache Substance Abuse Prevention Conference, 75 W. Cleveland, St. Johns, AZ. October 27, 2009**
RSVP by Oct. 19 e-mail Karen Bender at kbender@co.apache.az.us
- [Red Ribbon Week October 17-25, 2009](#)
- [National Traffic Youth Safety Month. Youth PSA Contest! Deadline November 21, 2009](#)
- [National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month, December 2009](#)