



Parent Program on Underage Drinking

“Underage drinking is unhealthy, unsafe and unacceptable.” says Patricia Harmon Drug-Free Action Alliance Executive Director. And **it’s against the law.**

Join us for an informative and timely program about underage drinking. Our engaging speaker Ohio Department of Alcohol & Drug Addiction Services, Ohio Investigative Unit agent **Kevin Piazza**, helps parents understand our legal responsibility and teaches strategies to keep teens safe during the upcoming prom and graduation season.

**April 30, 2008
7:00 PM**

**Westlake Porter Public Library,
27333 Center Ridge Road**

Families Anonymous

FAMILIES ANONYMOUS is a fellowship of people whose lives have been affected by the use of mind-altering substances or related behavioral problems of a relative or friend.

FAMILIES ANONYMOUS is designed for us – the parent, spouse, brother, sister or other emotionally involved relative or friend. We meet in the **Senior High Room of Hope Christian Church** every

**Thursday at 7:00pm
32575 Detroit Road**

In the beginning we seem to be most helped by listening to those who have shared similar experience – and found some answers.

Through attending meetings, studying the literature, talking to other members,

and working the steps of this program, suddenly or gradually, our situation begins to look different to us, and our reactions to it begin to change.

What is happening is that we are learning to face reality with comfort, and our emotional growth is being encouraged. Moreover, these changes in us can develop a family atmosphere conducive to recovery.

We have found that working on ourselves is the most important single thing we can do to help those we care about. There are no rules or “musts” in our program – except perhaps one: “KEEP COMING BACK!”

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A Word from WPC President ...

We were handed a unique opportunity to address the drug and underage drinking problem in our community. For many, learning that heroin had penetrated Westlake came as an unbelievable shock. For others, the news was expected.

How we deal with this event defines how we see our role as members of this fine city; let’s use it as a community-wide teachable opportunity.

Heroin remains one of the most ferociously addictive drugs on the market. How can we educate parents, kids and community members about the vile lure it possesses? How do we address the needs of families whose children are exposed to gateway drugs and their hard-core successors? How can we work together to strengthen the resources at hand? How do we talk about this in a proactive, nonthreatening way? How do we begin to solve this problem?

Knowledge is Power and Education is the key!

Since the first arrest, our community has come together to learn about and address these issues. Nearly 300 people attended the WPC and Westlake City School’s community 411 program; over 175 attended our program where one family shared what they’ve learned since the loss of

their son to a heroin overdose.

This is the time for our community to commit to sending a strong message that Westlake does not condone underage drinking and drug use—the undeniable precursors to harder drug use.

April 30 we launch our campaign against underage drinking. Learn more about your legal responsibilities and liabilities from Agent Kevin Piazza—a truly dynamic and entertaining speaker. All adults are welcome 7 PM, Westlake Porter Public Library. We’ll continue with The Parents Who Host Lose the Most Don’t Be a Party to Underage Drinking campaign through Prom and Graduation season.

In August the WPC and Parent to Parent Network, with support from the Westlake Schools, City Hall and our local hospitals, will convene all community stake holders for a roundtable discussion about what’s happening in Westlake and what each segment is willing to do to address the drug and alcohol problems here.

We will ask these people to:

- take a look at the real situation vs myth;
- examine what we are doing or can do individually and as groups to promote healthy

Dani Altieri Marinucci

behaviors;

- identify initiatives to incite all of Westlake to change community attitudes about underage consumption; and
- promote initiatives that will provide our youth with healthy places to go and things to do.

It is time for all of us to take ownership of the direction our children are going—we each need to stand up and declare what we can do together to keep our kids safe.

If we have learned nothing else from the past few weeks, we now know that anything is possible when it comes to our kids making unhealthy choices. None of us are immune.

Know that you can make a difference in your child’s choices. They are looking to us for guidance and boundaries. Define for them your expectations, listen to their words and keep communicating with them – even if it is through a slammed door! Demonstrate by your words and your actions—send them a clear message that you care about their health, safety and wellbeing.

~ Dani

Alcohol and Kids—Busting the Myths

Myth: All teenagers will drink at some point, no matter how we try to stop them.

FACT: Although underage drinking is a serious problem, 81 percent of adolescents ages 12 to 17 have chosen NOT to drink in the past year.

Myth: My kid knows everything about drinking, so we don't need to talk about it.

FACT: Many teens have dangerous misconceptions about alcohol, for example they don't realize wine coolers have the same alcohol content as a shot of whiskey. The potential for alcohol poisoning is very real.

Myth: As long as they don't drive, kids can drink safely.

FACT: WRONG! Kids don't metabolize alcohol the same way adults do. When kids drink alcohol too quickly it can build up in their bodies and cause alcohol poisoning in just a few hours. Without proper medical intervention, this is deadly. Alcohol is a factor in the three leading causes of death among 14 and 15 year olds: unintentional injuries, homicides and suicides.

Myth: My kid only drinks beer—it's a phase he'll get over, I

did.

FACT: 52 percent of eighth graders have used alcohol at some time. Kids who begin drinking before the age 15 are four times more likely to develop alcohol dependency problems than those that wait until age 21. Teens who use alcohol are more likely to become sexually active at earlier ages, to have intercourse more often, and to have unprotected sex.

Myth: What parents say makes no difference—kids only listen to their peers.

FACT: Parents can be very influential. Studies show that adolescents whose parents supervise their friendships and activities are less likely to engage in risky behaviors. Teens say that they rely on adults on their lives more than anyone else to help them make tough decisions and to provide good advice.

Myth: High school is the time when kids start drinking. My kids are still too young to talk to them about alcohol.

FACT: Most young people who start drinking before age 21 do so when they are about 13-14 years old. That's why it is so important to start talking early and keep talking.

Q: If I am not home and teens are drinking at my house am I still liable?

A: Parents can be held civilly liable when courts determine they should have known, even if they did not see a youth drinking, or even if they were not home at the time of the party. Parents are liable when the injury committed by the child is the foreseeable consequence of a parent's negligent act.

Q: Can I allow underage youth to drink in my house if I don't let them drive?

A: You cannot give alcohol to your children's friends, under the age of 21, under ANY circumstances—not in your own home, not with their parent's permission. If you do, you may face both criminal and civil liabilities:

- A maximum sentence of 6 months in jail and/or a \$1,000 fine.
- Civil action if the minor gets hurt, hurts someone else or damages property.
- Police can take possession of alcohol, money, or property that was used in committing the offense.

If you leave your teen home and go out of town:

Give the local police department permission to check your house for parties and leave a phone number where you can be reached.

Tips for Hosting a Teen Party:

- Be home for the party and monitor it.
- Lock up your alcohol.
- Make sure guests stay at the party and go home before curfew.
- Don't permit guests to leave the party and then return.

It's Time To:

- Change how we all think, talk, and act when it comes to underage drinking. We need to stop accepting it and start discouraging it.
- Help young people understand that it is not okay for them to drink alcohol
- Start the discussion long before youth start thinking about drinking.

Don't accept drinking, tobacco or drug use as normal "rites of passage" for teens.

Youth who first drank alcohol before age 15 were more than four times more likely to have alcohol-related problems later in life.¹

Alcohol remains the most heavily abused substance by American youth. We can no longer ignore what alcohol is doing to our children.¹

7,000 young people under 16 have their first drink of alcohol every day.²

Every day at least six underage youth die from non-driving alcohol-related causes.³

- Sleepovers, even with only one friend, are often the time youth start experimenting with alcohol.
- Don't permit co-ed sleepovers.
- Develop a code with your child so that if s/he is uncomfortable or feels unsafe somewhere, s/he can call you to be picked up.

Q: Where do kids get alcohol?

A: Most underage drinkers say it is easy to get. The primary source for the youngest drinkers is HOME. Keep your alcohol locked up.

Q: What are the real risks of underage drinking?

A: Alcohol is a powerful, mood-altering drug. It affects the mind and body in often unpredictable ways—and teens lack the judgment and coping skills to handle alcohol wisely.

Q: How can police break up a teen party?

A: Police can call on a home for noise or parking violations. Police cannot enter a home unless the homeowner or a resident lets them in, except where medical assistance is necessary. Police can check license plates of the cars at a party and notify parents/owners of those vehicles. Parties can be reported to police anonymously.

Q: What happens if police are called to a party with underage drinking but my child is not drinking?

A: Even if s/he's not drinking, an underage youth at a party with alcohol can be charged with possession. If s/he cooperates with police, charges are much less likely.

Q: How do police determine if a minor has been drinking?

A: Police use several indicators: slurred speech, red glossy eyes, alcohol on breath, field sobriety tests, the minor's admission or a witness' statement. A breathalyzer is not required because any amount of alcohol is illegal.

Q: What is the legal alcohol limit for a minor to be charged with underage consumption?

A: There is no legal limit; any amount of alcohol is illegal. Those who are in a car or at a party with alcohol, whether it's in opened or closed containers are considered to be in possession. Possession and consumption carry the same penalties in Ohio.

Q: What happens if a teen is charged with underage consumption?

A: The teen may be eligible for the Court Diversion program, which allows him/her to avoid going before a judge. Eligibility for Diversion is influenced by many factors including: youth/parents attitude and cooperation, blood-alcohol level, and/or the amount of alcohol in possession. Youth may be required to receive drug/alcohol treatment and do community service.

If the teen is not eligible for Diversion, the court may suspend his/her driver's license (up to age 21), impose fines and court costs, and/or require participation in a drug/alcohol prevention program. If the teen is over age 18, s/he will be tried in adult court.

Q: Will an underage alcohol violation go on my minor child's permanent record?

A: Two years after all court orders have been completed, juvenile records are eligible for sealing: records remain intact and are only accessible by the juvenile court in very limited circumstances under court order. The military requires recruits to sign a waiver to release juvenile records. If a case is dismissed, all records are destroyed/expunged.

Curfews

			Avon Lake	Under 13	10PM-5AM
Westlake & Bay	15 and under	11PM-5AM	Fairview Park	Under 13	10PM-5AM
Avon	Under 18	11PM-5AM Mon-Fri	Rocky River	Under 14	11PM-4AM
Lakewood	Under 15	11PM-4AM	North	15 & under	11PM-5AM



Thank You for Your Support

The P2PN Mental Health Awareness Campaign is brought to you through the generous support of many. As of March 13, 2008 we have received the following assistance:

Financial: We thank the sponsors below for financially assisting with programming promotion, execution and post-program education efforts; print media marketing; mailings; website updating and maintenance; speaker expenses; and printed program materials for parents.

- Cuyahoga County Community Mental Health Board
- Nordson Corporation Foundation
- Woodruff Foundation
- Lakewood Hospital
- Law Offices of Timothy M. Sullivan
- Celebrate Westlake
- Community Challenge
- Recovery Resources
- Westlake Shore Ministerial Forum

In-Kind: We thank our in-kind supporters, whose donations below allowed us to deliver quality programming to hundreds of parents from Amherst to Cleveland.

Westlake Porter Library: Book Club and Speaker promotion; stocking the Price of Privilege for loan.

Borders Books and Music Promenade of Westlake: hosting

Please Support the Westlake Parent Connection

Through our supporters' generosity we provide Westside families with timely and relevant parenting programs and helpful tools such as the WPC website, an online resource guide, and our lending library. We are a one-stop shop for information regarding the prevention of risky behavior in our youth.

We hope you will take this opportunity to pledge your financial commitment to our children's health, safety and well-being. Your contribution is 100% **tax-deductible**. Track how your dollars are spent on our website at www.westlakeparentconnection.com and help us to continue to spread the word.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

I would like to receive meeting and program notification.

I would like to be contacted regarding the WPC Corporate Sponsorship Program

My contribution is eligible for corporate matching funds Form included Form will be sent separately

Contact your employer's HR dept for matching fund form.

Enclosed is my donation to support the Westlake Parent Connection:

\$5 \$10 \$25 \$50 \$100 \$other

Please make checks payable to: Westlake Parent Connection (WPC) and mail to: Tammy Smanik, WPC Treasurer, P. O. Box 451043, Westlake, OH 44145

the Price of Privilege Book club, promoting Madeline Levine event and inserting Mental Health Awareness Campaign bookmarks into general public book sales.

Cuyahoga County Public Libraries and Lorain County Public Libraries: Promoting book club and Levine event.

Westlake City Schools: providing the venue for Madeline Levine at the Westlake Performing Arts Center.

Lorain County Board of Mental Health Child and Adolescent Services: Conducting mental health programming throughout the campaign.

Lakewood Hospital Teen Health Center: hosting the campaign kick-off with Dr. Sylvia Rimm and conducting mental health programming throughout the campaign.

NAMI Greater Cleveland and Mental Health Advocacy Coalition: programming and presentation assistance.

Affiliate Participants: We thank our affiliates who included mental health programs in their parent programming this year: Amherst Parent Connection, Avon Lake Unites for Teens, Avon Local Schools, Bay Advocates, Community Challenge, Lakewood Hospital Teen Health Center, Rocky River Parent Support Network, Westlake Ministerial Forum, Westlake Parent Connection.