



**This is the age of first alcohol use
in the East Haven community...**

Underage Drinking: A Community Problem - A Community Solution!

Dear Community Member,

Today's teens start to drink alcohol at a very young age, drink too often and too much. In fact, according to a recent community-wide youth survey, students in East Haven report starting to drink alcohol as early as age 10! East Haven teens are similar to the other teens in CT and around the world in this regard, and like other concerned communities, East Haven has decided to do something about it! We've created the East Haven Partnership to Reduce Youth Drinking (EHPRYD)!

EHPRYD was created to help raise awareness about underage drinking in our community and to reduce and prevent this harmful behavior among our children. Working in partnership with the town's Youth Service Commission (YSC) and The Connection, Inc., EHPRYD has secured a 4-year grant from the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services to implement measures to assess and address underage alcohol use in East Haven. Our efforts began last year with a series of Needs Assessments and Planning Sessions using DMHAS' Strategic Prevention Framework. From there, the SERAC School Survey (developed by Southeastern Regional Action Council) was implemented (unanimously voted on by the Board of Education) in Grades 6 through 12 in the East Haven schools and survey results shared with the EHHS students and the Board of Education. Many of those results are also shared in this publication.

EHPRYD has also been at work in the East Haven business community. An educational session was offered to all alcohol licensees in East Haven, and subsequently, compliance checks were implemented. A plan is in place to expand those services so that no one in East Haven sells alcohol to minors.

To further our outreach, EHPRYD has been working with a professional marketing group to develop a social marketing campaign targeting Underage Drinking issues. Efforts in this area will focus on community, parent and student education; use of social media applications (FaceBook, YouTube); and development of an interactive web site.

Throughout all of the work that EHPRYD has conducted over the past year, one thing stands out - EAST HAVEN CARES about it's youth! But to make a true impact on underage drinking in our area, we need the help and support of the entire community. We need parents, teens, business owners, members of faith communities, and municipal and community leaders to join our efforts. ***Underage drinking is a community problem that calls for a community solution!*** Help East Haven model healthy behaviors at home and in the community and get involved in the East Haven Partnership to Reduce Youth Drinking today!

Thank you for your support!

EHPRYD

THE PROBLEM...

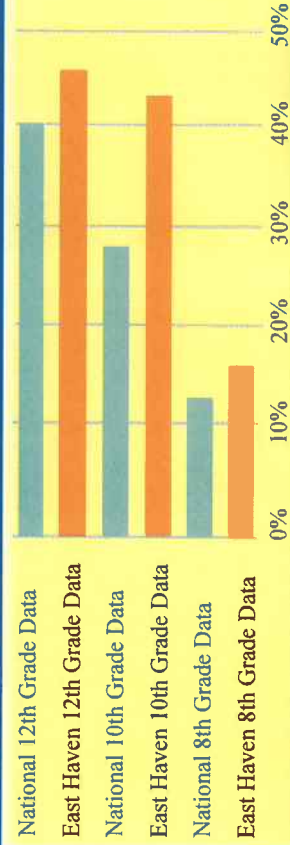
Alcohol is the most commonly abused substance among East Haven youth.

Comparing current alcohol use of 8th, 10th, and 12th graders in East Haven with youth nationally in the same grades demonstrates the high rates of alcohol use in our community...



"I don't use drugs.
I only use alcohol."
-Kids Everywhere

30-DAY USAGE COMPARISON



SERAC Student Survey data demonstrates recent alcohol consumption rates among East Haven youth ranged from 23% of 6th graders to 45% of 12th graders. On the days that those students drank, the number of drinks in one day ranged from 29.5% having two to three drinks to 25.6% having more than three drinks.

WHAT'S THE HARM?

Alcohol is a toxic, potentially addictive drug that causes more damage to the individual and society than all illegal drugs combined – in fact, alcohol kills nearly seven times more young Americans than all illegal drugs combined. (*Teens Under the Influence*, Ketcham and Pace)

Alcohol is the #1 health risk facing youth today.

Underage drinking is the common denominator in the three leading causes of death for youth – homicide, suicide and car crashes, and is also a factor in many acts of both youth & adult violence and crime, including sexual assault. Connecticut youth generally drink at much higher rates than youth nationally, and East Haven youth are no exception to these higher CT youth drinking rates.

In the spring of 2011, 1,469 East Haven 6th - 12th graders completed the East Haven Student Survey of Alcohol Use and Risk Factors. The survey, sponsored by the Town of East Haven Youth Service Commission and its partners the East Haven Public School System and the Connection Inc., measured students' behaviors and attitudes toward substance use, and revealed some disturbing facts.

Perception of Harm

Perception of harm related to underage drinking has a strong impact on usage. Twenty-four percent of 6th graders said that taking one or two drinks of an alcoholic beverage every day would have either no risk or only a slight risk. By 12th grade, almost one-third (31.5%) of youth said there would be either no risk or only a slight risk from taking one or two drinks of an alcoholic beverage every day.

By the 12th grade, almost one-third of youth feel there is no risk, or only a slight risk, to drinking alcohol each day.

When East Haven youth were asked "How wrong do your parents/guardians feel it would be for you to drink beer, wine, or hard liquor twice a month or more?", 7% of 6th graders, 25% of 9th graders and 35% of 12th graders reported their parents would feel it was "not wrong at all" or only "a little bit wrong". While this at first seems at odds with youth reports of family rules about alcohol, a little more examination clarifies these data. Youth were asked if their families had clear rules discouraging them from alcohol use. Youth reports of the existence of clear rules in their families discouraging them from alcohol use ranged from 96% of 6th graders to 74% of 12th graders. Unfortunately, when youth were asked if they were usually disciplined for breaking their parents' rules, 34% of 9th grade youth and up to 43% of 12th grade youth reported either "definitely not true" or "mostly not true".

Related Risky Behaviors

Alcohol use by youth has been associated with increased use of other substances. East Haven female 6th-12th graders who used alcohol in the past 30-days were almost ten times more likely to smoke cigarettes, sixteen times more likely to use marijuana, over three times more likely to use inhalants, and ten times more likely to use other illicit drugs. The association between alcohol and other substance use was perhaps even stronger for boys. East Haven male 6th-12th graders who used alcohol in the past 30-days were over twelve times more likely to smoke cigarettes, over fourteen times more likely to use marijuana, more than six times more likely to use inhalants, and nine times more likely to use other illicit drugs.

In addition, youth drinkers were more likely than non-drinkers to report spending more time after school without an adult present and to have a parent, sibling or close friend who drinks. Drinkers also reported they were more likely than non-drinkers to feel that no one understands them, to feel lonely, to feel that no one cares about them, to feel that they have nothing to be proud of, to feel sad most of the time, to have less energy than they should, feel restless, and have trouble concentrating. Conversely, non-drinkers were significantly more likely than drinkers to talk to a parent or other relative if they had a problem.

For full results of the 2011 East Haven Student Survey of Alcohol Use and Risk Factors, contact...



Fact: Adolescents drink less frequently than adults, but when they do drink, they drink more heavily than adults. When youth between the ages of twelve and twenty consume alcohol, they drink an average of five drinks per occasion about six times a month. (*The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking*, 2007)

Why This Matters: Teens who drink heavily impair their memory, attention span and spatial skills. Teens who are heavy frequent drinkers experience more emotional, social and behavioral problems such as anxiety, depression, anti-social behavior and conduct disorders.

The East Haven survey did report some positive findings....

SOME GOOD NEWS...

Over half of 9th-12th graders want to pursue more education after high school. Almost 65% of 11th graders have not used alcohol in the past 30 days.

East Haven youth generally had positive self concepts. Most youth responded positively to statements such as "I am good at making friends"; "On the whole I like myself"; "I have a number of good qualities"; and "All in all, I am glad I am me."

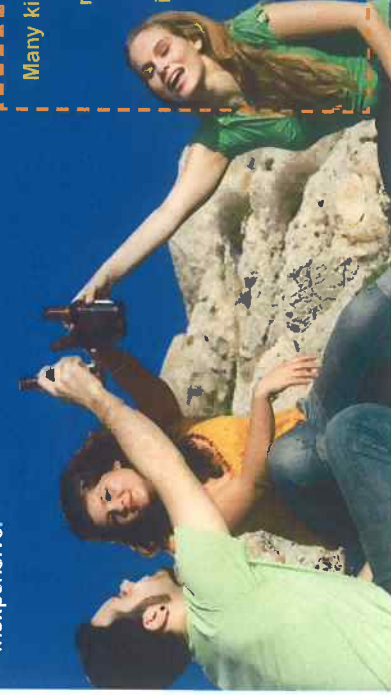
WHY KIDS DRINK...

Students generally overestimate the proportion of their peers actively involved in alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs (ATOD). Hence, it is easier to be pressured by the myth that "everybody is doing it."

Normative education, which includes tools such as student surveys and opinion polls, helps students realize that use of ATOD is not the norm for teenagers. EHPYD has been actively addressing this issue through our grant dollars with the goal to change normative behavior.

Other reasons that teens drink alcohol include exposure to extensive promotion of alcohol products in media which increases the desire to use the product; American acceptance and perception of underage drinking as a "rite of passage" to adulthood; availability/accessibility of alcohol in most homes, and the fact that alcohol is inexpensive.

Many kids use drugs (and alcohol) for the same general reasons adults use drugs – to get high, to feel happy, stimulated, relaxed, or intoxicated; to ease stress, frustration, tension, disappointment, fear, or anger; to take their minds off their pain or troubles. (*Teens Under the Influence*, Ketcham and Pace)



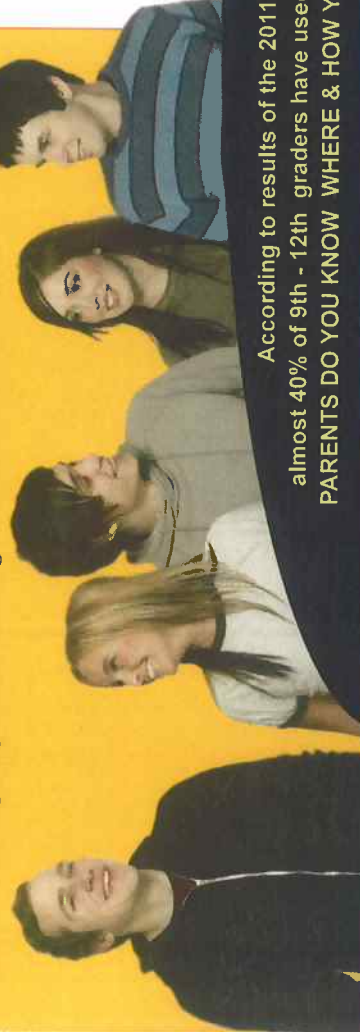
PARENTAL IMPACT

Parents are the most influential people in their children's lives. In fact, the reason most children decide not to drink is because their PARENTS TALKED TO THEM about it (Source: *Substance Abuses and Mental Health Services Administration*). In East Haven, parental strictness is more important than peer factors in preventing underage drinking. According to responses to the East Haven Student Survey, 52.3% of 6th -12th graders rated parental strictness as more important than peer factors in preventing underage drinking.

The graph below illustrates percentage of students in grades 6 - 12 who feel their parents would disapprove of student's usage of: TOBACCO, MARIJUANA, ALCOHOL (two drinks or more per month)*?



*Student responses indicate a belief that parents are more concerned about kids smoking cigarettes and using marijuana than drinking alcohol twice a month or more.



THE NINE FACETS OF PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

1. Be there: Get involved in your children's lives and activities.
2. Open the lines of communication and keep them wide open.
3. Set a good example: Actions are more persuasive than words.
4. Set the rules and expect your children to follow them.
5. Monitor your children's whereabouts.
6. Maintain family rituals such as eating dinner together.
7. Incorporate religious and spiritual practices into family life.
8. Get Dad engaged and keep him engaged.
9. Engage the larger family of your children's friends, teachers, classmates, neighbors, and community.

(Source: *How to Raise A Drug Free Kid*, Califano, 2009)



FACT...

Parents who are overly permissive or who support teen drinking put their children at risk. In addition, there is no evidence showing that if you let kids drink at home they will be discouraged from drinking elsewhere.

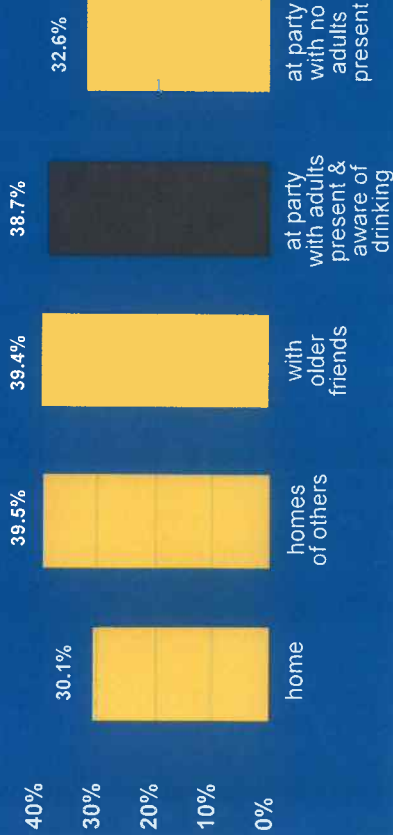
Realistically, you may not be able to stop your teen from experimenting with alcohol before high school graduation, but you can make it not easy for them to try/experiment through clear rules and consistent consequences. Kids who feel their parents will punish them if caught are less likely to drink.

According to results of the 2011 East Haven Student Survey,

almost 40% of 9th - 12th graders have used alcohol/drugs at the homes of friends
PARENTS DO YOU KNOW WHERE & HOW YOUR KIDS ARE SPENDING THEIR TIME?

Where do kids drink?

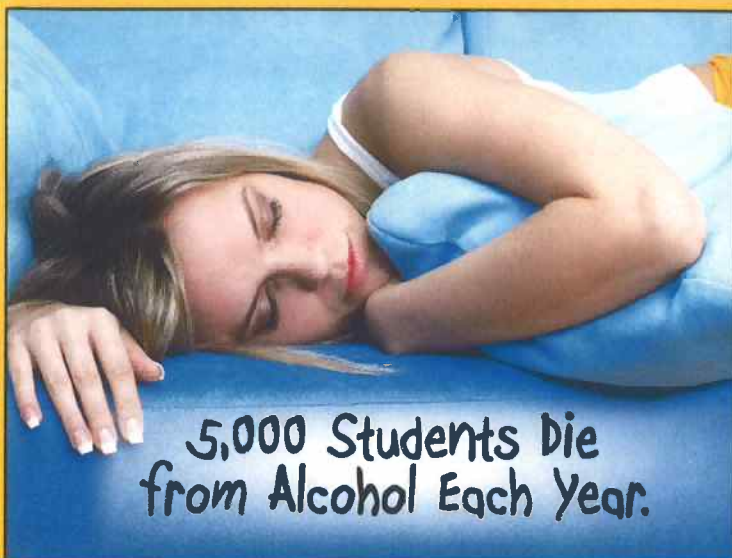
(represents average of 9th - 12th graders' responses)



High School & Risky Behaviors

Did you know that when students enter high school their risk of substance abuse triples? The transition to high school presents a major change in your child's environment. New influences and friends, increase in availability of alcohol/drugs, pressure to "fit in" with new social groups, and a shift in focus from parents to peers are all contributing factors. In addition, high schoolers often have fewer rules, less supervision and fewer restrictions at home, making it easier for students to engage in risky behaviors.

- Parent Tips
It is critical that during the summer and in the early months of high school, that parents develop and maintain open communication with their teens, and reiterate their values and expectations. Create and enforce clear and concise rules. Make time to get to know your child's new friends (and their parents) and routinely ask your child questions about substance abuse.



If you let her
"sleep it off,"
she may never
wake up.

EAST HAVEN
PR**YD**
partnership to reduce youth drinking

THANK YOU FOR HELPING EAST HAVEN STOP UNDERAGE DRINKING!

On October 22, 2011 and December 10, 2011, East Haven Police, along with the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection Liquor Control agents, conducted compliance checks of package stores, grocery stores, restaurants, and bars in East Haven. They were assisted by youth volunteers from other towns, trained by the Governor's Prevention Partnership. The East Haven community appreciates and applauds the following merchants for valuing our youth and helping protect their health and safety by not selling alcohol to minors.

Alex Grocery
Antonio's Restaurant
Beachhead Restaurant
Bottas Foxon Package Store
Bottle Cork & Keg Shoppe
Chili's
Crown East
Demir's Restaurant
De Palma's Restaurant
East Haven Discount Wine & Liquor

East Haven Village Restaurant
Franco's Ristorante & Pizza
Gelvani Liquors
John & Maria's Pizza
Michael's Cafe
Ocean Port
Pathways Liquors
Smitty's East Side Cafe
South Shore Wine & Spirits

Stop & Shop Supermarket
The Liquor Loft
The Sandpiper
Tollis Apizza Restaurant
Trolley Square Wine & Liquor
Twin Pines Diner
Village Grocery & Deli
Yamadora
Yankee Discount Liquor

Get involved in the fight against underage drinking in East Haven!
Contact EHPRYD at (860) XXX-XXXX or visit www.ehpryd.org.



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partnership to reduce youth drinking

mailing address
city, stage, zip