



March 2007

Welcome to the Northfield Area Parent Communication Network's monthly e-newsletter! You are a member of a network of unbelievable parents that do make a difference and help create a healthier and safer community for all our youth.

WHAT IS ZAP?

You may have noticed the "Consider us invited" posters featuring county and local law enforcement representatives around town or heard people mention ZAP, but do you know what it is?

Rice County Zero Alcohol Providers (ZAP) is a project that involves a cooperative response to reports of underage drinking parties by local law enforcement agencies. The Rice County Chemical Health Coalition's Enforcement Team applied for and received funding from the Minnesota Institute of Public Health to initiate this judicial reply to underage drinking parties. The effort is based on a similar model implemented in other communities, including Freeborn County/Albert Lea, Ramsey County and Chisago counties.

Here's how it works. Law enforcement is informed of an underage drinking party. Members of local police and sheriff's departments work together to respond to the party and handle it as a crime scene. Underage drinkers are processed through the legal system, including a pre-assessment for substance abuse. Vigorous efforts are made to identify and process the adults who provided the alcohol to underage drinkers.

ZAP projects in other communities have reduced the number of underage drinking parties; have prosecuted adult providers; and have acted as a deterrent to youth attending drinking parties. Law enforcement partners include Faribault Police Department, Northfield Police Department, Morristown Police Department, Lonsdale Police Department, Dundas Police Department and the Rice County Sheriff's Department. Other partners in the project include Rice County Community Corrections, the Rice County Attorney's Office, Rice County Public Health, the Northfield Healthy Community Initiative, and the Rice County Family Services Collaborative.

For more information, contact Northfield Police Department, Sgt. Bill Olsen, 645-4477; Rice County Sheriff's Department, Sheriff Richard Cook, (507) 332-6010; or Healthy Community Initiative, 664-3524.

TEENS & ALCOHOL

According to research by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (<http://www.niaa.nih.gov/publications/aa59.htm>), adolescents who begin drinking before age 15 are four times more likely to develop alcohol dependence than those who begin drinking at age 21. An early age of drinking onset is also associated with alcohol-related violence not only among persons under age 21 but among adults as well. It has been estimated that over three million teenagers are out-and-out alcoholics. Several million more have a serious drinking problem that they cannot manage on their own. The three leading causes of death for 15- to 24-year-olds are automobile crashes, homicides (<http://www.focusas.com/Violence.html>) and suicides (<http://www.focusas.com/Suicide.html>)-- alcohol is a leading factor in all three.

While drinking may be a singular problem behavior for some, research suggests that for others it may be an expression of general adolescent turmoil that includes other problem behaviors and that these behaviors are linked to unconventionality, impulsiveness, and sensation seeking. Binge drinking, often beginning around age 13, tends to increase during adolescence, peak in young adulthood (ages 18-22), and then gradually decrease. Individuals who increase their binge drinking from age 18 to 24 and those who consistently binge drink at least once a week during this period may have problems attaining the goals typical of the transition from adolescence to young adulthood (e.g., marriage, educational attainment, employment, and financial independence).

For further information visit: www.niaaa.nih.gov

THANK YOU FOR RESPONDING TO THE PCN ON-LINE SURVEY

We are pleased to provide PCN members with a monthly e-newsletter and encourage you to share the information with your children and other parents. The results to the question, "Do the monthly PCN newsletters and tips enhance your ability to talk to your children about substance abuse or other risky behaviors?" 93 members yes responses and 18 members no responses.

TALK WITH OTHER PARENTS. YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

As private as parenting is, we all need ideas - especially when we are raising our teens in today's culture. Get together with other parents to share advice and stories. Let's start using each other as resources and support in keeping Northfield's youth healthy and safe.