

# Straight Up e-newsletter to Adult "Connect" list, October 2010

**STRAIGHT UP**  
ventura county



promoting social change regarding  
underage & binge drinking and impaired driving

## Straight Up CONNECT

October 2010

The Latest News and Events

For more information

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### Parents letting kids drink: is it ever okay?

#### Parents hosting teen drinking parties

Most parents will readily agree that teen drinking is a problem, and that they want their kids to abstain from alcohol. However, the truth is that some parents provide their children with alcohol, and sometimes even provide it to their children's friends. Often they do it with the rationale that they are keeping their kids safe, "protecting" them in the semi-supervised environment of a party at their own home, and taking keys to prevent teens from driving while intoxicated. However, it is impossible to control for all the variables, and drunk driving is not the only issue associated with teen drinking. In Ventura County, home parties have been the most common locations for alcohol poisonings and sexual assaults. Alcohol is also linked with deaths of youth by drowning, fire, suicide, and homicide. Teens that use alcohol are more likely to become sexually active at earlier ages, to have sexual intercourse more often, and to have unprotected sex. Young people who drink are more likely than others to be victims of violent crime, including rape, aggravated assault, and robbery. Teens that drink are also more likely to have problems with school work and school conduct<sup>1</sup>.

In addition, parents are putting themselves in a bad position in terms of liability. Ryan Wright, a Judge for the Ventura County Superior Court, states

**"Many adults do not understand the significant legal consequences of providing alcohol to minors. Not only can they face jail time and probation for merely furnishing the alcohol, there are more significant legal consequences that can happen as well. If a minor were to die as a result, for example, felony charges could be issued.**

**Furthermore, if the alcohol provided plays a role in the death, assault, or injury to another person, the adult who provided it could be on the hook for civil damages. Can you imagine losing your home, your**

savings and everything you have worked for because you thought it was a good idea to allow minors to drink alcohol in violation of the law? I would not be willing to put my life savings in the hands of any teenager, let alone one who has been drinking."

### Drinking at home with the family

Even parents who "only" allow their children to drink with their family in small amounts while supervised, hoping that this will teach them how to drink responsibly, do more harm than good. The message this sends to the child is that underage drinking is okay, both eroding a respect for the law and setting the child up for greater future alcohol use. 75 percent of teens ages 13-17 say their parents are the No. 1 influence in their decisions about whether or not they drink alcohol<sup>2</sup>.

IN AUSTRALIA, where it is common (and has been legal) for parents and other adults to provide alcohol to minors, huge problems have developed. Perth is facing a binge drinking epidemic with over 96% of teens under 17 having drunk alcohol, and 1/3 drinking at "harmful levels." Lawmakers are now having to scramble to create stricter legislation that will hold parents and other adults responsible for the consequences<sup>3</sup>.

### We'd like your feedback

If you'd like to respond to this article, ask questions, or find out more about Straight Up and its parent outreach program Let's Talk, Please [comment on this article at our blog](#).

### Additional information and resources

- ["Parents: Underage Drinking is Illegal, Even Under Your Roof"](#) [Fox News]
- ["'60 Minutes' Focuses on Parents Hosting Alcohol Parties for Minors"](#) [PR News Wire]
- ["Parents Give Mixed Messages to Teens on Drinking Alcohol"](#) [Caron Centers]

### Sources

1. [SafeYouth.org](#)
2. [PR News Wire](#)
3. [Perth Now \(Australia\)](#)