

PUTNAM COUNTY COMMUNITIES THAT CARE COALITION

Parent Alert – Tips for Parents During the Holiday Season

The **Putnam County Communities That Care (CTC)** Coalition is an anti-drug coalition that works to build a safe and healthy family-oriented community, which includes reducing the use of harmful substances by our adolescents. It is composed of individuals from all sectors of the community who work together to reduce risk factors and strengthen protective factors through education, enforcement and policy initiatives. As part of our mission to educate the community, we are sending this letter as a way to provide you with information that you can share with your coaches, parents and participants.

As parents take part in holiday festivities, it is of critical importance that they make healthy choices around the use of alcohol. According to a recently released report from the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, “teens who have seen their parent(s) drunk are likelier to drink and get drunk than teens who have not seen their parent(s) drunk. They are also likelier to try cigarettes and marijuana”.

Research has taught us time and again that active parents, voicing their disapproval of alcohol and other drug use, have proven themselves to be the most effective preventative method for keeping our children substance-free. A cohesive family with parents who model healthy decision making can make all the difference in helping young people to avoid antisocial behavior.

To further reduce the prevalence of underage drinking, legislation has been passed in all Putnam County towns, entitled ‘Social Host Liability’, that makes it a crime to “host, suffer, permit, organize, or allow a party, gathering or event at his or her place of residence or other private property ... where three or more minors are present and alcoholic beverages are being consumed by any minor”. This crime is punishable by up to one year in jail and/or a \$3,000 fine.

A 2008 survey of Putnam County students in grades 8 - 12 revealed that 42.7% of respondents believe that parental attitudes favor drug use. What better way to end 2009 and begin 2010 than for parents throughout Putnam County to loudly and affirmatively voice their disapproval of alcohol and other drug use.

Members of CTC are available if you have any questions or would like for us to do a presentation to your organization on this or any other substance abuse trends that affect our children. Please call the Putnam County Youth Bureau at 845-225-6316, Ext. 46117 or the National Council on Alcoholism/Putnam at 845-225-4646, Ext. 11 for further information.

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