



COMMUNITIES THAT CARE COALITION

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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 posting this release 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.

Holiday parties give individuals more of an opportunity to use drugs and alcohol. This accounts for the increase in alcohol and drug related tragedies during the festive season.

A few holiday party tips for parents:

- Lay down the law. Tell your child, prior to the party, that he or she is absolutely prohibited from drinking and using illegal substances.
- Practice what you preach. If your child is expected to behave responsibly, so are you.
- Be a model for conscientious behavior. Have a plan for those who drink too much and make sure your guests do not drink and drive.

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- If you are hosting the party, offer an ample amount of non-alcoholic drinks, foods, and games to all.
- Children may drink leftovers. Dispose of all unfinished beverages to prevent alcohol poisoning.
- If your child is going to a party at a friend's house, phone ahead and make sure there will not be any alcohol beverages available.

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 2010 survey of Putnam County students in grades 8 - 12 revealed that 44.6% of respondents believe that parental attitudes favor drug use. What better way to end 2010 and begin 2011 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 & Drug Dependencies of Putnam at 845-225-4646, Ext. 11 for further information.

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