



Parents. The Anti-Drug

Bannockburn, Deerfield, Highland Park, Highwood, and Riverwoods

Dear Parent,

September 20, 2009

Though you may not realize it, you are the strongest influence in your teen's life. Your words and actions concerning alcohol use make a big difference in the choices they make now and when they're adults. Chances are you won't be there to guide them through every encounter with alcohol. But you can do a lot "behind the scenes" to help them stay healthy, strong, and safe. ([Click here](#)¹ for more resources!)

According to District 113 students, in the past year nearly 1 out of 5 sophomores and 1 out of 3 seniors report riding in a car driven by a teen that has been drinking or using drugs.

It's no secret that society gives teens mixed messages about alcohol. As a parent, you should know that underage drinking can have serious consequences. The teenage brain is still developing. Alcohol can impair the parts of the brain that control the following:

- **Motor coordination.** This includes the ability to walk, drive and process information.
- **Impulse control.** Drinking lowers inhibitions and increases the chances that a person will do something that they will regret when they are sober.
- **Memory.** Impaired recollection and even blackouts can occur when too much alcohol has been consumed.
- **Judgment and decision making capacity.** Drinking may lead young people to engage in risky behaviors that can result in illness, injury and even death.

Consequences to underage drinking are not only physical. There are laws and policies in place in an effort to help youth make healthier decisions and also to provide opportunities for youth to change behaviors if bad decisions are made. District 113 has a [synopsis of their extracurricular policy](#)² available for viewing. Additionally, local communities have ordinances that are helpful to know. Contact your local village or police department for information about minors and alcohol.

Take the Time to Talk!

Consider negotiating and signing a parent-teen agreement. It should spell out the way you expect your teen to behave and state the consequences if he/she drives or rides with others under the influence. The parent-teen agreement should include the following elements:

- A limit on passengers under 18
- A limit on night-time driving
- Rules with clear, stated consequences on seat belts, speeding, cell phone use and texting, and intoxicated driving
- Rules about knowing where your teen is going, with whom, and when he will be back. Add an understanding of what to do if plans change.

[Click here](#)³ for a sample contract from SADD.

We encourage everyone to **Take Time to Talk** every day, and especially on October 4, 2009. Do you have a question for us? Contact us at Parents.TheAntiDrug@gmail.com.

Your Friends at...

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¹ <http://www.mvparents.com>

² <http://dhs.dist113.org/Students/Documents/StudentCodeSynopsis.doc>

³ <http://www.sadd.org/contract.htm>