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www.cobbat.org/safehomes

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Partnerships' Outreach to Parents

The latest survey from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism found that forty five percent of youth report binge drinking and twenty nine percent admit to drinking and driving. Binge drinking is defined as having five or more drinks in a row. A standard drink is:

- A 12-ounce bottle or can of regular beer
- A 5-ounce glass of wine
- A one and 1/2 ounce of 80 proof distilled spirits (either straight or in a mixed drink)

Reasons adolescents give for participating in binge drinking include: to get drunk, to improve social status, to escape academic and other stress, and in response to peer pressure to "fit-in".

The Cobb Alcohol Taskforce, in partnership with the Cobb Prevention Intervention Center, the Cobb Community Collaborative, and area PTA Councils, has prepared a twelve page newspaper especially for parents and adults. Content includes the latest research and information on alcohol and judgment, parental influence on use of alcohol, how alcohol effects the teenage brain, and proven strategies for preventing under-

age and youth binge drinking such as those used in the Cobb Safe Neighborhoods Safe Homes Campaign. These publications will be distributed through local middle and high school PTAs during Back to School celebrations and Open Houses during the month of August.

Please visit www.cobbat.org to learn more about the drinking attitudes and behaviors of Cobb County children and teens by clicking on the "2008-2009 Georgia Student Health Survey Results". While on the Cobb Alcohol Taskforce site, explore the variety of resources available for parents to support community education, enforcement and policy strategies for reducing underage and youth binge drinking and join as a member or supporter.

Encourage your friends to visit the site and become a member or supporter of the Cobb Alcohol Taskforce too. A member/supporter drive will be held during October and those who make referrals resulting in new members and/or supporters will be in the running for a prize.

JOIN TODAY!

REAL—*Refuse, Explain, Avoid, Leave* Being Taught in Cobb County Schools

Submitted by, Amy Head and Katie Love-Pride

This year, the Cobb County School District was awarded the U.S. Department of Education's Grant to Reduce Alcohol Abuse. One of the programs being funded through this three-year grant is the Keepin' it REAL program.

Keepin' it REAL (KiR), a classroom-based program that teaches drug resistance strategies, is being implemented in 8th grade classes at four middle schools located in East Cobb. Eighth grade students are the target group for this program as a result of the findings from the 2008 Georgia Student Health Survey (GSHS). The GSHS, which is administered in the fall for 6th, 8th, 10th and 12th graders, indicated that the average age that students report their first use of alcohol is age 13. The GSHS also showed that in the 8th grade, 7% of students report binge drinking (defined as consuming 5 or more drinks at one sitting) and that this number rises to 25% for 12th graders. Therefore, 8th grade is a critical year in steering youth toward skills that will help them resist the pressure to use alcohol.

The four skills highlighted in the Keepin' it REAL program are:

Refuse – say directly that you don't want to drink/use other drugs

Explain - give reasons for not drinking/using other drugs

Avoid – stay away from situations where alcohol/other drugs may be used

Leave – leave a situation in order to resist the pressure to use alcohol/other drugs.

The Keepin' it REAL curriculum utilizes

student workbooks, activities and class discussions to reinforce these skills. Additionally, video vignettes involving real-life situations are used to highlight each skill. As a part of this grant, a local video production company was hired to reproduce the curriculum videos in order to make the vignettes more relevant and realistic for students. More than 40 Cobb County youth, grades 8-12, contributed 115 service hours working as script writers, actors, and production assistants.

Keepin' it REAL is an evidenced-based program. Needs assessments, which measure student beliefs, attitudes and behaviors toward alcohol use, are administered at the beginning and end of the program. Preliminary results indicate that youth are benefitting from this program. After completing Keepin' it REAL, youth are reporting an increase in the belief that alcohol is harmful to their health. They are also reporting an increase in their willingness to utilize the four resistance skills when faced with peer pressure. Eighth grade students who went through the program this school year will receive follow-up booster sessions next year in the 9th grade. In addition, a youth advisory team comprised of 8th-12th graders will be created to enhance the efforts of the Keepin' it REAL program.

For more information on the Keepin' it REAL program being implemented in Cobb County, or if you would like to have a Program Specialist speak to your organization on the topic of underage drinking, please visit <http://www.cobbk12.org/centraloffice/preventionintervention/KIR.htm>

More School Officers Receive Passive Alcohol Sensors

Submitted by Cathy Finck, Coordinator Cobb Alcohol Taskforce

The Cobb Alcohol Taskforce purchased four PAS IV, passive alcohol sensor tools, to help deter underage drinking at school and community events. These high-tech tools quickly “sniff” out alcohol to one hundredth of one percent and are proving how technology can help combat underage drinking, save lives and money.

The P.A.S. IV Passive Alcohol Sensor samples exhaled air from in front of the face of an individual. A simple press of the sensor button activates the proprietary sample pump and draws the sample into the electrochemical fuel cell sensor alerting the operator to the presence and approximate concentration of alcohol. Holding the sensor up to ten inches from the suspected alcohol source is all that is needed to determine if alcohol is present.

This pump design also allows the sensor to check for alcohol in open containers or enclosed spaces. The alcohol level is shown in a few seconds after sampling on a color-coded display.



Changes to Cobb Schools Code of Conduct

In order to deter underage drinking, a committee of high school principals, social workers, teachers and staff from the Cobb Prevention and Intervention Center worked to propose innovative action with regards to school guidelines set up for students involved in extracurricular activities.

The committee discussed implementing more stringent consequences for student infractions involving alcohol. The committee presented their recommendations to the Cobb County School Board and the board accepted the proposed changes.

Students participating in these activities are considered to be school leaders and the

District may withdraw the privilege to participate in these activities when a student violates the new J-policy.

The new policy can be found at the following link http://www.cobbk12.org/centraloffice/adminrules/J_Rules/Rule_JICDD.pdf

School administrators throughout the county will be providing detailed information to parents and students involved in interscholastic/extracurricular activities at the beginning of the school year or during booster club “kick-off” dinners.





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Cobb Safe Neighborhoods Safe Homes

Continues to Grow in Cobb

One hundred six have joined over the summer bringing our total signed Safe Home Agreements to 487. These signed agreements have been collected by one individual! Image what could happen if each one of you reading this newsletter asks a friend to sign the Safe Homes Agreement. We would have Cobb County covered in no time.

Cobb Safe Neighborhoods Safe Homes involves neighborhood residents working together with law enforcement partners to prevent underage drinking and youth access to alcohol and other drugs; keeping our youth, families and neighborhoods safe. Cobb Safe Neighborhoods Safe Homes will:

- Increase community awareness of unsafe underage drinking realities and adult social host liability
- Increase shared adult accountability for preventing underage youth social access to alcohol
- Decrease alcohol availability to underage youth in private non-commercial settings

Please check out our website and download a Safe Home Agreement today, sign and fax or mail it as directed...and talk to your neighbors and friends and invite them to join the campaign in our efforts to curtail underage drinking and "social hosting" .

If you are reading this e-newsletter....YOU CAN help spread the news and help grow the Cobb Safe Neighborhoods Safe Homes Campaign!

With your help we hope to reach out to parents, youth and all adults in Cobb County to help engage everyone in the shared responsibility for enforcing underage drinking laws. We invite parents to be stressing the damage that alcohol has on the adolescent brain, and helping to educate themselves and their teens on the short and long-term implications underage drinking has on today's youth. Adult citizens can help by educating their neighbors and partnering with law enforcement to stop the "social hosting" of underage drinking parties that are all too frequent throughout Cobb County!