

Westminster Area



"Building a Community Without Drugs"

March 2014

Dear Parent/Guardian,

It is spring and near the end of the school year. Prom preparations are being made and graduation parties are being planned. These are exciting times for our teens, and we urge you to assure that your teen and their friends are safe during these events and celebrations.

Underage drinking reaches a peak with our young people at this time of year. In addition to the obvious dangers of driving after drinking or riding with a drinking driver, many teens who drink alcohol also find themselves in situations involving other risky behaviors, including sexual activity, use of other drugs, and serious accidents resulting even in death.

Some parents make the incorrect assumption that if they provide their teen with alcohol, their children will be safer if they drink at home. It is against the law in Colorado to serve alcohol to any person under 21 (with some limited exceptions) and the adult provider can face a fine of 18 months in jail and/or a \$5000 fine.

Since the 2013 prom and graduation, the Colorado voters chose to legalize marijuana for recreational use for people over the age of 21. It is important to remind our teens that it is still illegal for anyone under the age of 21 to use or share marijuana or marijuana products with others. Marijuana remains the most abused illicit substance among youth. Today's teens have come to view marijuana as less harmful than before, while marijuana potency is increasing. Not only is marijuana use illegal, it is also unhealthy, especially for young people whose brains are not fully developed. One out of every 10 marijuana users will likely become dependent; a rate similar to alcohol. This risk rises to one in six when marijuana use begins in adolescence.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment issued a warning in September, 2013, about the danger of fake pot. There were over 250 emergency room visits after the use of synthetic marijuana, also known as Spice or K2.

Please support your teen during this prom and graduation season to make memories, not regrets. Provide them with a clear message that alcohol and other drug use is not acceptable, on prom night and on any other night. Set your expectations high for their behavior and follow-up with consistent consequences if their behavior does not match your expectations. Despite the presence of alcohol related parties, many families have been able to honor their senior's graduation successfully without introducing champagne or any other alcoholic beverage into the mix.

Please help protect your child's bright future by providing a safe, alcohol and drug-free season of celebrations for your son or daughter. Enclosed is a parent/teen contract to help you discuss this matter with your teen.

Sincerely,

Michael Pascoe, Chairman, Westminster Area C.A.A.T.

Dr. Pamela Swanson, Superintendent, Adams County School District 50

District Attorney Dave Young, 17th Judicial District, Adams/Broomfield Counties

Sheriff Douglas Darr, Adams County Sheriff's Office

Chief Lee Birk, Westminster Police Department