

Valley Mom Shares Prom Night Tips for Parents

By Michelle Petersen

It's that time of year again, thoughts turn to prom, graduation and other special occasions to mark the end of the school year. These wonderful memories will be with our kids for the rest of their lives... hopefully. Unfortunately, these festivities are all too often destroyed by teens using alcohol and other drugs. Every year we hear the heart-wrenching stories of kids who are hurt or worse, killed, as a result of a prom or graduation after-party.

This year please talk with your teens about the dangers of mixing prescription drugs with alcohol. Kids are dying from this lethal combination and don't realize the risks and possible deadly consequences of their actions.

The Partnership for a Drug-Free America, Arizona Affiliate also suggests the following prom night tips for every parent to read before the big night:

1. Be sure you know your child's complete itinerary for the evening, including who they will be with and phone numbers where they can be contacted.
2. Discuss the school's prom rules regarding alcohol with your child and the consequences for violating these rules.
3. Determine a fair curfew that is based on your child's previous history of responsibility.
4. Take stock of all the alcohol and prescription drugs in your home.
5. Do not rent hotel rooms for the after-party.
6. Communicate with other parents and school officials to create a unified force against alcohol and drugs.
7. Know who is driving and ensure the driver will remain sober for the entire evening.
8. Establish a couple of mandatory call-in times such as right after prom, from the after-party location and on their way home.
9. Give your child the unconditional option of calling you at any time for help or advice which includes picking them up if needed. Create a code word that your child can use to indicate that they need your assistance.
10. Talk to your child about the risks of alcohol and drug use. Kids who learn about the risks of drugs from their parents are up to half as likely to use drugs.

Michelle Petersen is the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, Arizona Affiliate's board recruitment chair and the mother of a teenage daughter.

About The Partnership for a Drug-Free America

The Partnership for a Drug-Free America was formed in 1986 by the communications industry to educate children, parents and communities about the consequences of illicit drug use and the benefits of living drug-free. The Partnership is highly regarded for its proven effective media campaigns and public awareness programs. Independent studies from academia, business and science document the profound impact of The Partnership's programs on attitudes and behavior.

The Arizona Affiliate was established in 2003 to carry out The Partnership's mission to reduce illicit drug use in Arizona while meeting the unique needs of communities. Through its programs, the Arizona Affiliate inspires and empowers Arizonans to join in a united effort to prevent illicit drug use among teens through community-based education. The Partnership is a non profit 501-c-3 organization.

For more information, visit the Affiliate website at www.PartnerUpAz.org.