



A MESSAGE FROM ANTHONY A. SCARPINO, JR.  
*Westchester County District Attorney*

Dear Friends,

As Westchester County's chief law enforcement officer, I am concerned for the well-being of our children. I recognize the bright futures that are unfolding before them. It is a priority of mine to do everything in my powers to eliminate the possibility that an exercise of poor judgment might somehow negatively affect your child and your family.

Like every community in the nation, Westchester County is not immune to the problem of underage drinking and drug use. Rest assured that my Office is working diligently to combat this through education and enforcement. We conduct compliance checks at local stores and prosecute those who supply alcohol to our children. In addition, we are out in the community at schools and other public forums where we educate both teenagers and parents on the perils of underage drinking, drug use and unsupervised parties.

As a parent, I know that communication with our children is very important. Knowing where our children are, who they are with and what they are doing is key. Coordinating with other parents to make sure there is supervision is one of the best things we can do to make sure no one's life is lost or ruined.

Enclosed you will find some tips to make our children's celebrations safe and lawful. Working together, we can keep our teens safe. Please keep these considerations in mind as you plan with your children.



# SAFE CELEBRATIONS

Teenage Parties-Every Parent's Responsibility



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## Teenage Parties-Every Parent's Responsibility

We know that, despite our best efforts, teen drug use and drinking remain problems in our County and that they are associated with serious negative behaviors and outcomes.

Here are some tips to make our children's celebrations safe and lawful, free of drug use and underage drinking.

### If you are hosting a party for your teen...

- Set ground rules before the party. Tell your teen your expectations and why you are setting rules.
- You and your teen should understand local laws about alcohol and other drugs.
- Decide what part of the house will be used for the party. Choose an area where you can maintain supervision.
- Limit party attendance and times.
- Make it very clear that party crashing will not be permitted.
- Have plenty of food and non-alcoholic drinks available.
- Make sure at least one adult is present for the entire party.
- Do not allow party guests to come and go. This will discourage teens from leaving the party to drink.
- Avoid easy access to alcohol in your home. If necessary, lock up your liquor.
- Be prepared to ask guests to leave if they try to bring alcohol and refuse to cooperate with your rules.
- Notify the parent of any teen who arrives drunk.
- Do not allow anyone under the influence of drugs or alcohol to drive. If necessary, take away their car keys and call their parents.

### If your teen is attending a party....

- Know where your teen will be and for how long he/she will be there.
- Contact the parent of the party-giver. Confirm that an adult will be home and supervising the party. Make certain that no alcohol will be served.
- Know how your teen will be getting to and from the party.
- Discuss how your teen would handle a situation where alcoholic beverages or drugs were available at a party.
- Make sure your teen knows what time he/she is expected home.
- If your teen is staying overnight at a friend's house after a party, verify with the friend's parents that your child will be staying over and that they will be home.

The #1 place adolescents say they get their alcohol is from their own homes and the #1 place they drink alcohol is at other people's homes.

Parent networking is the best prevention tool we have to combat underage drinking. Get to know your teen's friends and their parents. Make sure their parents share the same beliefs that you do as far as not allowing their teen to drink alcohol.

### The Party Doesn't Just End Here:

Parents should be aware that they have a special responsibility with respect to hosting house parties. Under the New York Penal Law, any person who gives, sells or causes to be given or sold any alcoholic beverage to someone under the age of 21 faces potential prosecution for Unlawfully Dealing with a Child, a class "A" misdemeanor.

The possible penalties for the "A" misdemeanor are:

- up to 1 year jail
- probation of up to 3 years
- a conditional discharge
- a fine of up to \$1,000.

For criminal court purposes, this provision can apply not only to a host parent, but also to a teenager 16 and older.

### Good Samaritan law

It is important to remind our young people of their responsibility to their friends and classmates. New York's 'Good Samaritan' law (N.Y. Penal Law 220.78) offers people who seek emergency help for themselves or another immunity from prosecution for possession of an unlawful drug or an alcoholic beverage in most circumstances. In the case of a life threatening medical emergency involving an alcohol or drug overdose, they should seek medical help immediately.

For more information, please visit [westchesterda.net](http://westchesterda.net)

