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Solutions to Community Alcohol Problems

Sony's Latest Cocktail: Tequila & Action Film



Sony Picture's recent PG-13 film, "XXX: State of the Union" has the cast, gunplay, and explosions to draw the young audience typical of action films. Although 60 percent of frequent moviegoers are between the ages of 18 and 20¹, Sony still teamed up with XXX Tequila to promote the film with a point-of-sale campaign in ten markets. The co-promotion means that the film's largely underage audience will pay even more attention to XXX Tequila's promotions. If you agree that this is a bad idea, visit TalkBack at www.MarinInstitute.org to file a complaint.



1. Motion Pictures Association of America. www.mpa.org



We are an alcohol industry watchdog and a resource for solutions to community alcohol problems.

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It's Easy for Kids to Get Alcohol and Other Drugs



Guest article by Thomas Lawn, age 17
Marin Youth Health Advisory Council

All across the country, and particularly in Marin County, it's easy for young people to get alcohol. With fake IDs, older friends, relaxed parents, and an increasing willingness to steal—not to mention that most teens know the worst part of getting caught is only six months of supervised sobriety—kids are becoming more interested, and involved, in alcohol and other drugs. This is no longer just an upperclassman scene; seventh grade kids are stealing alcohol and drinking it on bike paths and at school. Moreover, parks and other public places are littered with cigarette butts, Ziploc baggies, and empty alcohol containers. It would be different if the drug and alcohol culture in Marin wasn't so visible, and something done behind



Thomas Lawn, Marin Youth Health Advisory Council

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Youth Are the Experts In San Diego Project



When community leaders in San Diego County decided to do something about underage drinking they turned to the experts: youth. "There's no one better than young people themselves to tell you how underage alcohol use, binge drinking and media messages affect them," says Jill Galante, program coordinator of the San Diego Youth Council. The project is part of the County's Policy Panel on Youth Access to Alcohol, a coalition of policy makers from every sector of the community who have been working since 1994 to reduce underage drinking and related problems.

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Free Your Community From Alcohol-Related Problems

"Solutions to Community Alcohol Problems: A Roadmap for Environmental Prevention" is a guide to action for people who want to build communities free from alcohol-related problems. Order your free copy now! Visit www.MarinInstitute.org/roadmap

closed doors; however, it's often the topic of conversation for many teens. I'm not the only one who's noticed this. It's quite possible kids have nothing else to talk about other than alcohol, parties, and stories of running from the cops and hiding their habits from their parents.

I know that drug and alcohol abuse is a problem in Marin County (54 percent of teens reported that they used alcohol in the last 30 days, compared to 44 percent in California and 28 percent country-wide¹), especially after I saw someone not only get severe alcohol poisoning at a party, but then go to another party the next night. To try and help change these norms, I joined the Marin Youth Health Advisory Council (MYHAC), a project of the Youth Leadership Institute (YLI). To better understand where kids get alcohol and other drugs, we conducted a survey of 2990 students in most of the major high schools in Marin. Not only did we design the survey, but we also convinced the schools to administer it. We also took it upon ourselves to code and input some of the surveys, although we did break down and ask for some help from YLI staff.

Surprisingly, it's not that hard for kids to buy alcohol in Marin. Of the people who buy alcohol from stores, 41 percent reported that they are only carded some of the time, and 15 percent reported that they are never carded, meaning more than half (56 percent) are not consistently asked for ID.

What's more is that 14 percent of young people who drink alcohol get it from their parents or family, and nine percent who do other drugs get it most often from their parents or family. Although the numbers are relatively small, the fact that this is happening is outrageous. Not only are parents giving alcohol and/or other drugs to their kids, but many times kids will pass the alcohol/drugs to their friends, meaning that one parent will often supply numerous kids with alcohol and/or drugs.

The results are troubling because adults often blame teens for drug and alcohol problems, not realizing that the community environment affects young people's choices. Using the results from the survey, MYHAC will draft a press release to get the word out, and plans to use the survey results for future projects to help lower the number of teens that get alcohol and other drugs from parents and stores. When I go away to college next fall, I'll have satisfaction in knowing that my actions made people aware of the problem and that MYHAC is working to correct it.

54 percent of Marin teens reported that they used alcohol in the last 30 days, compared to 44 percent in California and 28 percent country-wide.

For more information about MYHAC visit www.yli.org or contact **Wendy Todd** at 415-455-1676 or wtodd@yli.org.

1 California Healthy Kids Survey (2001); California Student Survey (2001); National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (2002); Marin Community Health Survey (2001); California Health Interview Survey (2001)



Marin Youth Health Advisory Council (MYHAC) takes action on alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, and other community health issues that affect young people.

DISCUS Lifts Curtain on Advertising Complaints



With the release of its first public report on advertising complaints—actually a first for any alcohol industry trade group—the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States (DISCUS) has acknowledged that alcohol is no ordinary commodity. DISCUS instituted its Code of Responsible Practices more than 70 years ago, shortly after the repeal of Prohibition. But the March report marks the first time the trade group has made its internal process for reviewing advertising complaints open to the public. The DISCUS Code Review Board—eight DISCUS member representatives elected by the Board of Directors—reviews written complaints concerning advertising for any distilled spirits product as well as advertising for other alcoholic beverages produced by a DISCUS member. The advertiser is informed if the Board determines that an ad violates any provision(s) of the Code of Responsible Practices.

Making DISCUS' self-regulatory process more transparent is an important and mostly constructive development. Positive peer pressure within the industry does seem to have some power—most complaints led to responsive action by the advertisers. But the report also highlights some weaknesses in the current system. Advertisers do not generally present ads for review by the DISCUS Code Review

Board before release. While some advertisers agreed to discontinue print ads deemed inconsistent with the Code, it was impossible for them to recall ads distributed in national magazines. Placement standards in the current Code of Responsible Practices permit ads where as much as 30 percent of the audience is underage—essentially legitimizing the double exposure of youth ages 12–20, who represent just 15 percent of the population. Compliance is voluntary and not all the advertisers bother to respond to the review board. Finally, consumers are not using the complaint system—the vast majority of objections come from alcohol producers complaining about their competitors' advertising.

Now that DISCUS has created an open process, it's our job to make sure consumers use it! We created **TalkBack** to make filing advertising complaints easy. Visit www.MarinInstitute/talkback

Marin Institute denounced this Sky Spirits ad because it violated DISCUS' code. After complaints, Sky yanked the ad. Source: *Maxim*, February 2005.



Thumbs up...
to *Budget Travel* magazine for its November 2004 article, "How to Stay Sober and Still Have a Ball." The article is a resource for recovering alcoholics, and others who want to enjoy travel without alcohol. Because vacation destinations are often focused on drinking, these sober trips help create environments that support travelers who choose to abstain from alcohol. For more information visit www.sobervacations.com



Thumbs up...
to the University Hill Neighborhood Association, near the University of Colorado, Boulder and the problem bars and restaurants there that attract underage drinkers. The association helped persuade city officials to support bills in the Colorado State Legislature that would give local communities more control in reducing alcohol-related problems and combating underage drinking. For more information, see www.hillneighbors.com



New Booze Gets Youth Buzzed

An increasing number of alcohol producers are making it easier for young people to get drunk and wired at the same time. In October, Anheuser-Busch rolled out B^e (“B-to-the-E”)—caffeinated beer infused with ginseng and guarana extract. This year, Jim Beam and youth-friendly Starbucks Coffee Company partnered to produce Starbucks Coffee Liqueur nationwide. Now, Patron Spirits Company has caffeinated Coffee Liqueur Tequila, and Wingard recently released Everglo—a lime-green blend of vodka and tequila infused with caffeine.

Mixing two drugs like caffeine and alcohol together makes for a scary concoction—especially when underage drinking accounts for approximately 10 percent of the alcohol market, or \$10 billion annually.¹ According to the University of California, Davis, Cowell Student Health Center, “caffeine is the most widely consumed, mood-altering drug in the world and consumption is on the rise among American youth.”² The Center found that, “nearly 80 percent of adults begin their caffeine consumption patterns when they are teens and young adults.” Likewise, the average age at which American children first

consume alcohol is 12.³ Youth consumption is critical to the alcohol market because it sets the stage for long-term adult drinking habits.⁴ Offering alcoholic beverages with caffeine is a sure way for the industry to get young people hooked fast.

1 American Medical Association, Office of Alcohol and other Drug Abuse. Special Report: The Alcohol Industry: Partner or Foe?, April 2002. www.ama-

[assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/388/partner_foe_brief.pdf](http://www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/388/partner_foe_brief.pdf)

2 University of California Davis, Cowell Student Health Center <http://healthcenter.ucdavis.edu/topics/caffeine.html>

3 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), National Survey of Drug Use and Health, 2002.

4 See source one.



- Combines the drinkability and broad appeal of beer with caffeine, ginseng and guarana in one profitable package.
- Generates excitement for the beer category.
- Delivers the image and uniqueness that appeal to contemporary adults – male and female.
- Creates opportunity for incremental high-end sales.

For more information, contact your Anheuser-Busch sales representative, and visit us at www.beerprofitguide.com

Anheuser-Busch “B-to-the-E” print ads promise retailers the opportunity for “high-end” profits, while appealing to youth with its NBA, jersey like design.

“Sleep? That's what work is for. Go longer. The beer with caffeine, ginseng, guarana, and a crisp refreshing taste that never gets tired. After all, paper work makes the best pillow. -- Anheuser-Busch print ad for B-to-the-E



Using media advocacy and public policy strategies, the Youth Council is combating mixed messages about alcohol that young people hear everyday through radio, magazines, TV and billboards. When an "Absolut San Diego" vodka billboard featuring a Zebra popped up in town, the Youth Council's teen members responded with ads of their own.

"Absolute Trap - Don't Buy The Lie" says one of the bus shelter ads they created in partnership with local media professionals and funding from California's Office of Traffic Safety. The

Council launched the campaign with a press conference, and has since gone on to develop additional media advocacy projects aimed at reducing underage drinking and alcohol-related traffic deaths. The second campaign reached millions of people through mall kiosk ads and movie theater slides that featured pictures of Youth Council members and messages like "Nine teens die everyday from alcohol related accidents." The Council recently filmed a series of TV ads based on the campaign that will begin airing this summer.

Youth are involved in every aspect of the creative process and help develop advertising messages based on what they know from experience will reach their young peers. "You can't tell friends 'don't drink,' says Council member Gabriella Villada, 15, a sophomore at Crawford High School. "We try to educate young people about how the alcohol industry is brainwashing them."

The Youth Council consistently relies on insights and inspiration from young members to plan and deliver innovative media advocacy and alcohol policy projects. Two young women traveled to Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. to give testimony that helped prevent the alcohol industry from lowering taxes. Other youth listed the "ABCs of good alcohol outlets" in a report card that detailed whether San Diego stores met standards for good lighting, working pay phones and other safety-related criteria. The group has also called attention to alcohol industry marketing during Cinco de Mayo, and urged a boycott of companies that send mixed messages to teens by selling martini and shot glasses with high school logos.



For those who wonder how the San Diego Youth Council has managed to sustain this kind of impact over several years, it all comes back to understanding the young experts who are essential to successful projects like these. Jill Galante knows that even those young people who want to prevent underage drinking sometimes need motivation to get involved and reasons to stay active. "Prepare yourself," says Galante, "it takes lots of recruitment to get a handful of youth members." She's found that offering rides, providing dinner and even writing college recommendations are the kinds of incentives that keep young people engaged. Yet perhaps the best reward for such creative efforts is not just the young people's participation, but the awareness they gain about their own power to change lives and stop the cycle of alcohol-related death among youth. "We are the future," says Youth Council member Berge-Marie Vilsaint, 16. "We can prevent teens from dying over and over again."



Kentucky Community's Action Shapes Local Alcohol Laws



When the residents of Calvert City, Kentucky, passed a referendum allowing restaurants to sell alcohol by the drink in November 2004, they thought that was the end of the matter. But by early 2005 there was a growing disagreement about when and how alcohol should be sold in the community.

Following the November elections, City Council members proposed that restaurants be allowed to sell alcohol until 2 a.m. and on Sundays. Concerned community residents, like Reverend Lance Cordle of the Church of Christ in Calvert City, were upset with what they saw as an unlicensed expansion of alcohol sales. "Many people who voted 'Yes' on the original referendum don't like how it's playing out," said Rev. Cordle. "They don't feel comfortable with alcohol being sold until 2 a.m. and on Sundays."

In response to growing concerns, key community leaders mobilized residents, distributed petitions, provided testimony at council meetings, and put the pressure on Council members to listen to public comments. City Council members, realizing that the opposition to Sunday and late night sales was strong, voted to allow sales only during regular restaurant hours, Monday through Saturday. Calvert City residents were thrilled with the victory. "As a result of the action taken by community members, we were able to help shape city law," notes Rev. Cordle. "I know our city will be better for it."



Alcohol 101: Policies on Underage Drinking Parties

Underage drinking parties hosted by adults have increasingly become the focus of media attention, local policy efforts, and public debates. Some parents and other adults, concerned about drinking and driving crashes, have decided that "young people are going to drink anyway, so it's better that they drink at home." But the problem isn't limited to drinking and driving, it's that teen drinking parties almost always involve binge drinking, and can lead to sexual assault, alcohol poisoning and an array of lesser damage.

Two key policies that communities are using to address this issue include:

Social Host Liability Laws hold any adult who serves or provides alcohol to an underage person criminally liable for harm that the minor may cause to her/himself or another person. Social host liability laws also create penalties, in addition to civil liability, for adults who provide alcohol to a minor in any situation.

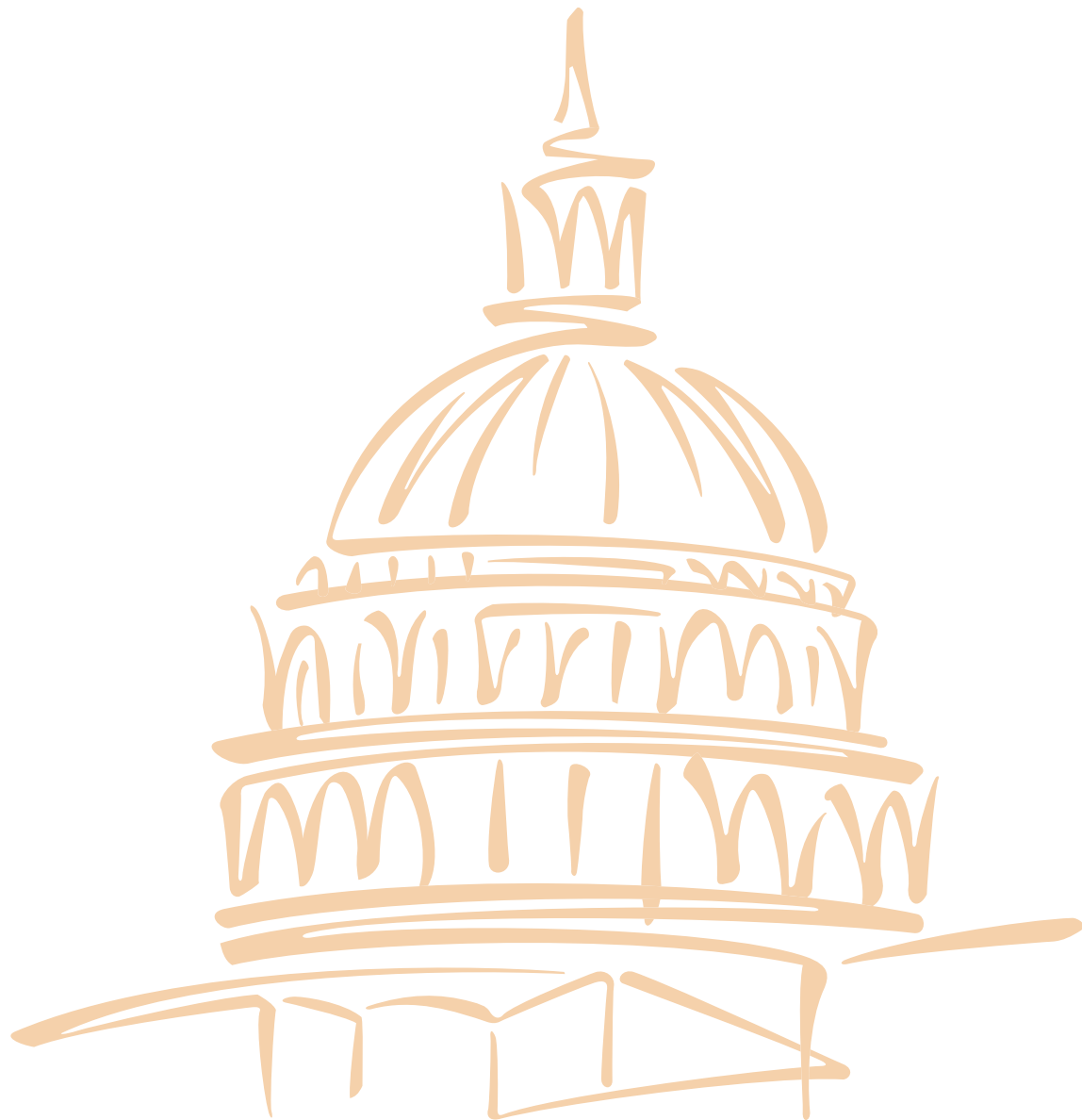
Teen Party Ordinances make it illegal to host a party at which underage youth are drinking. Under this law, any adult who knowingly allows underage drinking in their home can be penalized, whether or not he/she provided the alcohol.

Communities concerned about underage drinking are passing one or both of these ordinances as part of the solution.





Legislative Update



Marin County Takes Aim at High Rates of Youth Alcohol Consumption

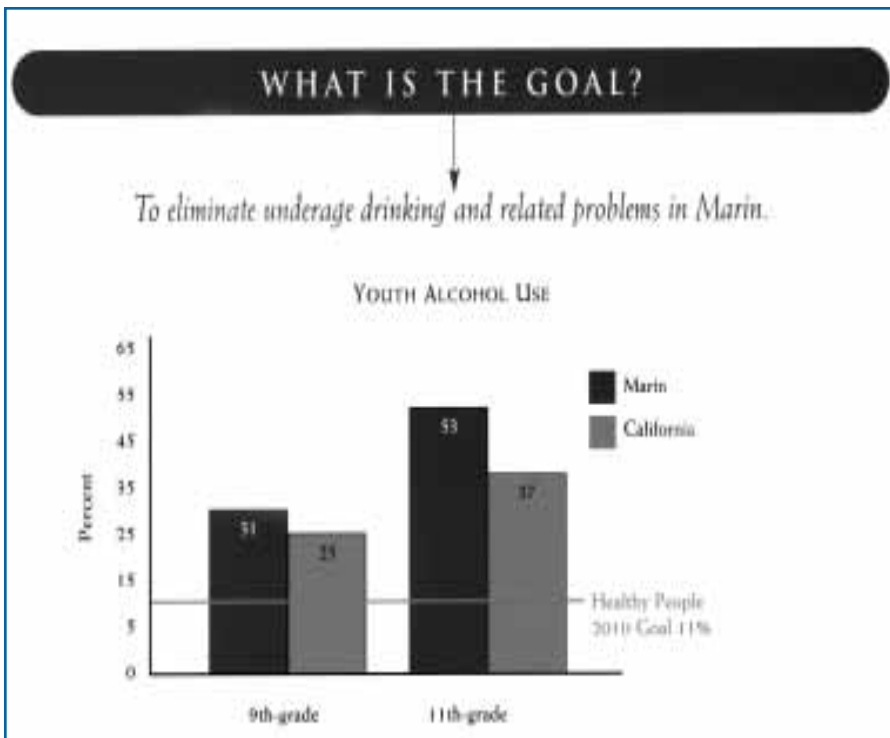


Underage drinking is one of three key problem areas affecting the long-term health of Marin County residents, according to the Healthy Marin Partnerships' 2005 Community Needs Assessment and Plan. For example, 53 percent of 11th graders in Marin regularly use alcohol, compared to the already-high statewide average of 37 percent. The assessment lists the following as major contributors to Marin's teenage alcohol consumption: normative support of alcohol; adult modeling; lack of ordinances restricting alcohol availability and accessibility; widespread incidence of parents and other adults providing alcohol to teenagers; saturation of alcohol marketing and promotion; and stress and boredom.

The Partnership's Plan recommends several strategies to help Marin County meet the national goal of reducing youth alcohol use to 11 percent by 2010:

- Increase support for environmental policies like Responsible Beverage Sales and service.
- Develop a training institute for prevention providers specializing in environmental approaches.
- Increase involvement in efforts to replace alcohol industry sponsorship at community events, such as the Marin County Fair.
- Develop and promote worksite wellness programs so that adults can model appropriate, alcohol-free ways to deal with stress.
- Develop media campaigns on underage alcohol access and use.

*"...alcohol consumption is higher among Marin teenagers than the state and national averages."
-- Pathways to Progress, Laying the Foundations for a Healthier Marin, 2005*



The Healthy Marin Partnership is a consortium of Marin hospital, community, government, and business organizations formed in response to a 1994 legislative mandate that requires not-for-profit hospitals to complete a community needs assessment every three years. Each assessment guides community planning for the three years that follow. Previous needs assessments in Marin focused on access to healthcare and youth wellness. View the full report at www.HealthyMarin.org

Source: California Healthy Kids Survey, 2003; California Student Survey, 2003

Play Fair Strengthens

Sponsorship Legacy at Marin Fair



When alcohol is a big part of the celebration, county fairs can be marred by problems such as violence, vandalism, traffic fatalities, and injuries. Recognizing these risks, six organizations in Marin County, California banned together in 2004 to replace Miller Brewing as the title sponsor of the Marin County Fair. The group, operating under the name Play Fair, successfully "branded" the event with a more family-and youth-friendly image and demonstrated its commitment to promoting healthy choices.

With nine participating organizations this year (including the Marin Institute) Play Fair will have exclusive rights to both the Entertainment Pavilion (previously sponsored by Miller Brewing) and to the Dining Tent (previously sponsored by Coors). Play Fair will also offer Responsible Beverage Service (RBS) training to all sellers and servers of alcoholic beverages during the event, and their managers. And, like last year, Play Fair staff /volunteers will lead games and other activities designed to educate fairgoers about the issue of youth exposure to alcohol marketing.

Also in the works for this year's fair and future ones is an ordinance proposed by the Marin Youth Health Advisory Council (MYHAC), a program of the Youth Leadership Institute, to permanently prevent the Marin County Fair from accepting sponsorship funding from alcohol companies. MYHAC proposes the following terms for the Marin County Fair:

- The fair will not accept money from the alcohol industry or its subsidiaries.
- There shall not be any alcohol advertisements, except at vendor booths, anywhere within the fair.
- Alcohol companies cannot furnish free promotional items such as hats, key chains, T-shirts, toys, stuffed animals, cups, or other items where any outward sign of the company is included.
- There shall not be any advertisement of alcohol companies in relation to the fair on the Highway 101 marquee.
- Publicity for the fair should not include placement of alcohol industry advertisements in close proximity to youth-oriented advertisements, activities, and other materials.

Play Fair's lead sponsorship of the Fair shows that you CAN have fun without beer.



MYHAC's proposal is currently being reviewed by Marin's County Counsel, and will likely be before the Board of Supervisors this summer. Learn more at www.PlayFairMarin.org or contact **Shailushi Baxi-Ritchie** at **415-456-5692** for help changing alcohol policy at community events.