



SECTION

**Substance Abuse
and Drug Dealing**

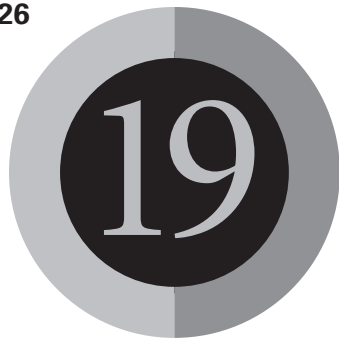
19

SESSION

Underage Drinking

Recognize and Prevent

Overview of Lesson	National Standards for Civics and Government	National Standards for English	National Standards for Health
<p>Students learn the dangers of underage drinking and consider strategies used in other communities that have reduced this activity among youth.</p>	<p>Personal responsibilities (NSCG V.C.1)</p>	<p>None</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention. (NHES 1) • Demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and reduce health risks. (NHES 3) • Demonstrate the influence of culture, media, technology, and other factors on health. (NHES 4)



SESSION

UNDERAGE DRINKING RECOGNIZE AND PREVENT

In this session, teens will explore the problem of underage drinking. They will learn about the risks, the extent of the problem, and the impact on individuals and society. They will also discover strategies for reducing underage drinking and learn about steps that communities are taking to deal with the problem. Teens will then work to identify ways in which they can help prevent underage drinking.

TEENS WILL LEARN

- To identify the dangers of underage drinking
- To understand the nature and extent of the problem
- To explore cultural attitudes about alcohol and underage drinking
- To identify strategies that effectively address the problem
- To learn how other communities are dealing with underage drinking
- To generate ideas and strategies for responding to underage drinking
- To play a vital role in underage drinking prevention

TEACHING STRATEGIES

The following teaching strategies are used in this session:

- Small-group Discussion
- Whole-group Discussion
- Puzzle Game
- Journal Writing

MATERIALS NEEDED

- *Handling Difficult Situations* poster (from *Community Works* kit)
- Handout 1: *What Do You Know About Underage Drinking?*
- Handout 2: *What's the Problem With Underage Drinking?*
- Handout 3: *Underage Drinking: Discussion Questions*
- Handout 4: *What Can We Do About Underage Drinking?*
- Handout 5: *Service-learning Project Idea Generator*
- Paper and pens or pencils for each student
- Newsprint and marker
- Tape, chalk and chalkboard, or marker and paper to create puzzle game in Step D
- Timer
- Prizes
- Journal for Session 19

RESOURCES ON THE WEB

Research scientists at The George Washington University Medical Center created a new tool designed to help parents, teachers, and lawmakers calculate the toll of alcohol problems in their community. The Alcohol Cost Calculator for Kids, a web-based application, allows communities to arm themselves with locally relevant data by immediately generating a report on the extent of serious drinking problems and alcoholism among adolescents. Visit www.alcoholcostcalculator.org/kids/.



This session could be greatly enhanced by the involvement of an alcohol/drug counselor, police officer, or emergency room physician who has witnessed the impact of underage drinking.

SUMMARY OF STEPS

PART 1

Step A. Warm-up

Step B. What Do You Know About Underage Drinking?

Step C. Gathering Information About Underage Drinking



70 Minutes

PART 2**Step D. What Can We Do About Underage Drinking?****Step E. Service-learning Project Ideas****Step F. Reflection****55 Minutes****BEFORE THE SESSION**

1. Consider arranging for a community resource person to come to the class and discuss the nature of underage drinking problem and how it affects the community. This person could also relate personal experiences that illustrate the dangers of underage drinking. Contact your local MADD chapter, school resource officer, or Alcoholics Anonymous office to request a guest speaker.
2. Read the session plan.
3. Review Session 8: *Conflict, Communicating, and Working Together* to help guide teens through the session; hang the *Handling Difficult Situations* poster.
4. Decide how you will involve teens in the session as helpers, leaders, readers, etc. Consult the Introduction in Volume One for more information about facilitating teen involvement.
5. Decide how groups will be divided for Step B.
6. Make copies of all of the handouts for each teen.
7. Write each statistics from Step C—Handout 2: *What's the Problem With Underage Drinking?* on a separate three-by five-inch card.
8. Create the puzzle game for Step D. On a chalkboard or sheet of paper, create columns for each of the following headings for the four major pieces of the prevention puzzle:
 - Limitations on Access to Alcohol
 - Expressions of Community Norms Against Underage Use
 - Strategies To Reduce Underage Drinking and Driving
 - Strategies Based in Schools or Youth Organizations
9. Using a marker and separate sheets of paper, prepare pieces of the puzzle from Handout 4. Write one example per page (these will be handed out to individual teens in Step D).
10. Make copies of journal page for this session.
11. Post the teen-created guidelines from Session 1.
12. Gather the materials you will need.

P A R T

1

STEP A

TEACHING STRATEGY

■ Icebreaker



10 MINUTES

Warm-up

1. Review the purpose of *Community Works*.
 - Ask teens to think for a moment about the purpose of the *Community Works* program. Ask them to tell what they remember.
 - Invite the group to update newcomers and those who missed the last session. Assign this task on a rotating basis. Explain that doing so helps build public-speaking skills.
 - Remind teens that the program is designed to provide information and build skills so that they will be better equipped to keep themselves, their friends and families, and their communities safer.
 - Return their journals from the previous session with your comments.
2. Explain the purpose of this session.
 - Explain how this session is designed to enable students to make informed choices about the use of alcohol. They will learn about health and safety risks associated with underage drinking. They will come to see that the costs to the community are high and far-reaching. Despite certain cultural attitudes that suggest that underage drinking is common and acceptable, it is a crime that carries stiff penalties. Underage drinking has serious consequences for users, their families, and their friends, as well as the communities in which the users live, but it's a problem that can be prevented with tested, effective strategies. Students will gain an understanding of the problem, see how some communities are responding, and explore ways that they can help prevent underage drinking.
3. Remind teens of the guidelines they developed during Session 1. Be sure these guidelines are posted on the wall.
 - Rotate the responsibility for explaining the guidelines to the group.
 - Have a volunteer recap what the group learned during the previous session.
 - Ask teens to lead class discussions.
 - Enlist teens' help with preparation tasks.
4. To warm up the group, choose an icebreaker (optional) from the Introduction in Volume One. (Allow additional time for this activity.)

STEP B**TEACHING STRATEGIES**

- Small-group Discussion
- Whole-group Discussion



15 MINUTES

What Do You Know About Underage Drinking?

1. Pass out copies of Handout 1 to each teen.
2. Divide teens into small groups (three to five per group), and explain that the group with the most correct answers wins a prize.
3. Ask teens to work together as a group to choose the best answer to each question.
4. When teens have finished completing the survey, hand out three- by five-inch cards with statistics. (There may be more or fewer teens than cards; if this is the case, some may not get cards or may get multiple cards.)
5. Lead teens through the survey. Read each question, then have teens with corresponding cards read the statistic. Ask for a show of hands to see how many students answered the question correctly. Encourage whole-group discussion so that members of each group have the opportunity to share their reasoning.
6. Determine the winners and hand out the prizes.
7. Give each participant a copy of Handout 2: *What's the Problem With Underage Drinking?* Ask teens how they might use the information (e.g., share it with family and friends; use as the basis for a research paper, as a starting place for finding out more about underage drinking, to help make a case for taking action to prevent underage drinking).

STEP C**TEACHING STRATEGIES**

- Small-group Discussion
- Whole-group Discussion



45 MINUTES

Gathering Information About Underage Drinking

1. Ask teens to remain in their small groups. Explain that during the next part of the session, participants will have a chance to discuss how underage drinking has affected their own lives and what community resources are available to help them deal with the problem. Suggest that each group select a reporter and a recorder. The recorder should take notes of the group discussion. The reporter will present the information at the appropriate time. Explain that the participants have 15 minutes for discussion and 30 minutes for everyone to report to the whole group.
2. Give each person a copy of Handout 3: *Underage Drinking Discussion Questions*, set the timer, and get started.
3. Each group's reporter reports on the group's responses to the questions.
4. Take notes on the chalkboard or newsprint so students can refer to their responses. Be sure to keep the notes from the group responses to the final question. These responses will help with the beginning of Step D.

Wrap-up for Part 1

Ask group members to brainstorm some of the daily influences that shape their opinions on alcohol. How often do we encounter references to alcohol? What is the impact of advertising on our opinion about alcohol? How can we make ourselves smarter about these influences?

Part 2 of Session 19 will continue discussions about alcohol. Participants will work together to understand the factors that contribute to underage drinking and some possible strategies for dealing with it.

P A R T

2

REVIEW AND PREVIEW

Begin Part 2 by reviewing Part 1. Be sure to remind participants about the objectives for these sessions and give them an overview of what will be accomplished during this session. (Hint: Use the objectives set out at the beginning of this session.)

STEP D

TEACHING STRATEGY

- Puzzle Game



30 MINUTES

What Can We Do About Underage Drinking?

1. Recap Steps B and C, where teens learned about the costs of underage drinking and discussed their own experiences related to the problem. Hang up the newsprint displaying the ideas that were generated by the group in answer to the final questions (from Handout 3) during Step C: “If you were given the opportunity to develop a program to teach young people about underage drinking, what would the program look like? With what age group would you want to begin a discussion about underage drinking?”
2. Explain that in this part of the session, teens will discover how to prevent underage drinking using tested, effective strategies.
3. Describe the puzzle game. You have already posted the four main pieces of the prevention puzzle (point them out). Now you will hand out all of the pieces, and teens will need to figure out which heading they go under to complete the puzzle.
4. Hand out puzzle pieces affixed with tape. Tell students to take a moment to read their piece.
5. Set the timer and invite teens to place their piece under the correct heading.
6. Pass out Handout 4 and enlist two teens to review the group’s work and make any necessary changes.
7. Ask the two teens how the group did as a whole, and have teens congratulate themselves on doing a good job.

STEP E

TEACHING STRATEGY

- Whole-group Discussion



15 MINUTES

Service-learning Project Ideas

1. Post the list of ideas that the group has already generated in the previous steps. Pass out Handout 5 and ask students to review it.
2. Ask students which strategies they think would work well to address the underage-drinking problem in the community.
3. Take notes—these ideas could serve as the basis for service-learning projects.

STEP F**TEACHING STRATEGY**

■ Journal Writing



10 MINUTES

Reflection

1. Relate the session to teens' lives.
 - Ask teens what other information they might need to carry out a service-learning project to help prevent alcohol abuse. For example, they could take a survey of their community's attitudes about alcohol. What information do they want to publicize? What groups might they target? With whom in their community might they work to expand on or create solutions?
 - Ask teens what they think would be the most effective ways of sharing this information with these groups. Tell teens that they could use what they have learned about drug abuse and present their findings to their local prevention coalition. Other suggestions could include holding a panel discussion, writing and presenting skits, designing and exhibiting posters, and writing and distributing a brochure about drug abuse.
 - Have teens consider what organizations are already working in their community and how they could work with them on this problem.
2. Turn learning into action.
 - Consult the service-learning projects Sessions 9–11 for additional ideas.
 - If this session has sparked special interest among teens and they are interested in carrying out a short service-learning project (of approximately two hours or less) related to this session, consult "Easy Steps to a Service-learning Project" in the Introduction in Volume One.
 - Ask for volunteers for the next session's tasks, such as making posters, contacting community resource people, and setting up the room.
3. Distribute the journal for Session 19.
 - Explain, remind, or ask teens the purpose of the journal. Be sure they know it is intended to help them reflect on what they learned and for you to read and respond to what they write. Be clear that you will not be correcting what they write, just reading and responding.
 - Ask teens to write their answers to the journal questions.
 - Have teens share what they learned in this session.
 - Collect their journals. Review them after the session and write short comments. Tell teens you will return the journals with your comments at the next session. This gives teens something tangible and provides them with a connection to previous sessions.



H A N D O U T 1

What Do You Know About Underage Drinking?

1. Despite the fact that underage drinking is illegal, many young people choose to do it. How many teens admit that they drink alcohol?
 (A) 1 million (B) 50,000 (C) 5 million (D) more than 10 million
2. A binge drinker is someone who drinks at least five drinks in a row. How many teens are binge drinkers?
 (A) 10,000 (B) over 7 million (C) 500,000 (D) 1 million
3. Of the teens who are heavy drinkers, how many also use illegal drugs and regularly smoke cigarettes?
 (A) 25 percent (B) more than half (C) 95 percent (D) 75 percent
4. Which substance is most likely to increase aggression?
 (A) cocaine (B) methamphetamines (C) alcohol (D) LSD
5. Crime victims report that the person who committed the crime had been drinking in how many cases?
 (A) 1 million (B) 55,000 (C) nearly 10 million (D) 3 million
6. Alcohol plays a role in how many violent crimes against an intimate (boyfriend or girlfriend or current or former spouse)?
 (A) almost half (B) two-thirds (C) one-fourth (D) all
7. Alcohol use is a leading risk factor for unintentional injuries, suicides, and homicides among youth.
 (A) False (B) True

8. When boys and girls drink alcohol, they are more likely to engage in unprotected sex.

(A) False (B) True

9. How much do we as a society pay per year for problems related to underage drinking?

(A) \$50 million (B) \$1 million (C) \$7.3 billion (D) \$52 billion

10. Impaired driving is a leading cause of death for young people ages 15 to 20. How many of the drivers who died in 2000 had been drinking alcohol?

(A) 86 percent (B) 53 percent (C) 30 percent (D) 16 percent



HANDOUT 2

What's the Problem With Underage Drinking?

Is underage drinking a problem in the United States? The research concludes the following:

1. **D**—Although it is against the law for anyone under 21 to purchase and possess alcoholic beverages, the law is commonly broken. In 2004, about 10.8 million people ages 12 to 20 years reported current use of alcohol.
2. **B**—Over seven million people (7.4 million) ages 12 to 20 are binge drinkers. (A binge drinker is a person who has drunk five or more drinks on the same occasion on at least one day in the past 30 days.)
3. There is a link between alcohol use and the use of cigarettes and illicit drugs. Approximately 66 percent of youths who drank alcohol heavily within the past month were also past-month users of illicit drugs. Approximately 52 percent of youths ages 12 to 17 who were daily cigarette smokers, and 66 percent of youths who were heavy drinkers, were also past-month users of illicit drugs.

(From the 2004 *National Household Survey on Drug Abuse* (NHSDA), conducted by the Office of Applied Studies (OAS) in the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

4. **C**—So what's the big deal? For one thing, alcohol use can lead to aggression and violence, even against loved ones and children. Alcohol is the one substance the use of which has been most clearly shown to increase aggression.

(Boyum, D., and M. Kleiman. Alcohol and other drugs. In Wilson, J.Q., and J. Petersilia, eds. *Crime*. San Francisco: ICS Press, 1995)

5. **A**—About one million violent crimes occur each year in which victims perceive the offender to have been drinking at the time of the offense.

(*National Crime Victimization Survey*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2004)

6. **B**—Of victims who suffered violence by an intimate (a current or former spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend), two-thirds reported that alcohol had been a factor.

(National Crime Victimization Survey. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2004)

7. **True.** Alcohol use is a leading risk factor in the three leading causes of death among youth:

- Unintentional injuries (including motor vehicle crashes and drownings)
- Suicides, and
- Homicides.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2004). Surveillance summaries: Youth risk behavior surveillance, United States, 2003. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, 53 (No. SS-2).

8. Boys and girls who drink are taking chances with long-term consequences. They are more likely to have sex that results in pregnancy.

(Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System. Atlanta: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2003)

9. **D**—The costs of underage drinking are high. Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) estimates that problems related to underage drinking cost society \$52 billion annually.

10. **C**—Underage drinking and driving carry serious risks, according to MADD:

- Impaired driving is a leading cause of death for young people between the ages of 15 and 20.
- In 2002, 34 percent of teen drivers ages 15 to 20 who died in motor vehicle crashes had been drinking alcohol.

(National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation. Traffic Safety Facts 2002: Young Drivers. Washington, DC)

Violation of Zero Tolerance laws for drinking and driving may result not only in an accident and loss of life but also in loss of your driver's license, significant fines, and extended community service.



H A N D O U T 3

Underage Drinking Discussion Questions

Think about a personal experience related to underage drinking. Maybe it involves you, a friend, a relative, or a neighbor. Then answer the following questions:

1. Why do you think the young people involved chose to use alcohol? What situations contributed to their use of alcohol?
2. What were the consequences of their using alcohol?
3. What were the physical consequences of using alcohol?
4. How did the person's parents/family/friends react when they learned of the drinking?
5. How does the community suffer from underage drinking?
6. Who benefits when people (including teens) use and abuse alcohol?
7. What strategies could a young person use to avoid underage drinking?
8. What is going on in your community and in your school to educate people about alcohol-related injuries and deaths?
9. Where could someone in your community turn to get help with situations involving underage drinking?
10. If you were given the opportunity to develop a program to teach young people about underage drinking, what would the program look like? With what age group would you want to begin a discussion about underage drinking?



HANDOUT 4

What Can We Do About Underage Drinking?

There is no doubt that underage alcohol use is an extremely serious problem. But it is also a problem that we know how to deal with. Many effective strategies can be adopted to prevent underage alcohol use and related problems. Most fall into four main types, which can be seen as interrelated pieces of the prevention puzzle. These include the following:

Limitations on Access to Alcohol

Strategies that limit access to alcohol by young people are some of the most powerful and well-documented approaches to reducing underage drinking and related problems. Most of these strategies are based in law and include measures to strengthen or improve enforcement of existing minimum age purchase laws.

EXAMPLES:

- Special police “party patrols” to contain underage parties and ticket both minors and any adults who provide alcohol to them
- Penalties applied to the use of false identification
- “Cops in Shops” and similar programs that allow police to ticket minors attempting to purchase alcohol
- Laws that allow alcohol vendors to be sued if they serve alcohol to a minor who later causes injury
- Laws that allow for the suspension of the offender’s driver’s license even when the offense did not involve driving (e.g., a minor in possession of alcohol)

Expressions of Community Norms Against Underage Use

Strategies designed to express a community norm against underage use are considered useful, especially when combined with other efforts.

EXAMPLES:

- Prohibitions or controls on alcohol use at community events or in public areas
- Prohibition of alcohol sponsorship of public events (e.g., a beer company sponsoring a boat race)
- Media campaigns, media advocacy, and counter-advertising

Strategies Designed To Reduce Underage Drinking and Driving

Traffic accidents are one of the most serious and immediate consequences of underage drinking. Young drivers are especially vulnerable to the effects of even low levels of alcohol. The combination of drinking and driving for this group is often fatal.

EXAMPLES:

“Zero tolerance” laws for drivers under 21, with vigorous enforcement such as sobriety checkpoints, can make a big difference in changing outcomes for underage drinker-drivers and the community.

Strategies Based in Schools or Youth Organizations

Prevention strategies usually applied in schools have been shown to have a positive effect on underage drinking.

EXAMPLES:

- School policies regarding alcohol use on school property or at school-sponsored events are especially important in colleges and universities, as well as in junior high and high schools.
- Media literacy programs make youth more sophisticated about the manipulative techniques of advertisers
- Prevention curricula (like *Community Works*) help young people develop the knowledge and skills necessary to resist alcohol and drugs. Use of such curricula doesn't need to be limited to schools; many clubs and organizations for youth are interested in engaging young people in healthy activities that will help them become responsible adults.



HANDOUT 5

Service-learning Project Idea Generation

Across the country, many communities are working to reduce underage drinking. To support these efforts, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention has established an Enforcing the Underage Drinking Laws Program. This program helps community organizations, enforcement agencies, youth, and other concerned citizens work collaboratively to change local ordinances and enforcement practices. Some of the initiative's success stories follow. These are provided in order to spark your imagination about what you can do to address the problem in your own community.

For more information about how to combat underage drinking, visit www.udetc.org. There you'll find out how to contact your state's coordinator for the OJJDP Enforcing the Underage Drinking Laws Program along with other helpful resources. Or write to Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation, Underage Drinking Enforcement Training Center, 11710 Beltsville Drive, Suite 300, Calverton, MD 20705. Call 301-755-2700 or 877-335-1287 or fax 301-755-2799.

Massachusetts Youth In Action

The Greater Boston Area Youth In Action (YIA) team saw its alcohol purchase surveys make a big difference in two Massachusetts communities, Marlborough and Cambridge.

Under the guidance of Amy Fradette of Mothers Against Drunk Driving, the team conducted alcohol purchase surveys in Marlborough in March 2000, using adult decoys to attempt purchases without identification. Marlborough is a town of approximately 35,000 people located west of Boston.

Of the seven outlets initially surveyed, five did not ask for age identification. Publicizing these results through a media event the following May, the YIA team drew the attention of local law enforcement personnel, who then conducted compliance checks using minors. Of 21 outlets checked in Marlborough, nine were subsequently cited for selling alcohol to a minor.

Following these checks, the Youth In Action team conducted follow-up surveys to assess any change in selling patterns. In December 2000, the team surveyed outlets and found only two that failed to ask for age identification. "Our team's efforts made the difference," says Fradette. "Now the local police department is coming to us when it needs information about underage sales."

A similar pattern emerged when the Youth In Action team conducted alcohol purchase surveys in the Cambridge the same year. Cambridge, home to Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, sits just across the Charles River from Boston. In April 2000, the team surveyed 12 alcohol outlets and discovered that half failed to ask for age identification. The local Cambridge License Commission was initially skeptical when informed of these results. "They just didn't believe us at first," says Fradette, who encouraged the commission to conduct independent compliance checks. Again, the result was 50 percent noncompliance. The commission was no longer skeptical.

Following these compliance checks, the Youth in Action team and the Cambridge License Commission held a well-attended news conference to draw public support for enforcing underage drinking laws in Cambridge. Youth activists from the team addressed city commissioners and several owners of alcohol outlets who were present to offer their support. To determine if the compliance checks and the public awareness event had changed selling patterns, the Youth In Action team conducted follow-up alcohol purchase surveys in February 2001. This time, only one in ten failed to ask for identification. Says Fradette, "Our opinion is that these surveys helped begin a strong relationship, increase enforcement, and create an environment with better compliance."

For more information, contact Amy Whitney, MADD Massachusetts, at 508-836-9923 or awhitney@gis.net.

Playing It Straight: Athletes and Alcohol in Nevada

The Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association is introducing a new policy to address drinking and other drug use by high school athletes. In Nevada, as in other states, underage drinking is a problem for high school athletic programs. The culture of drinking and sports infuses everything from celebrations to hazing and initiation rituals. The problem is not limited to athletes but is strongly associated with athletics and competition. The patchwork of authority across the state made it difficult to apply a single standard; every county in Nevada is a separate school district, with autonomy to set its own policy on alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

Nearly 90 percent of Nevada's school-age youth live in just two counties, Clark and Washoe, while the rest are scattered across smaller or rural communities. In these communities, for lack of ready replacements, small schools were unwilling to punish star athletes, and so enforcement of alcohol and drug rules tended to be lax.

Prevention advocates saw the need for a uniform policy for high-school athletics as part of wider efforts to prevent underage drinking. Working with the Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association, with support from the Nevada Division of Child and Family Services, advocates from "Stand Tall, Don't Fall: United Against Underage Drinking" began developing a policy that could be applied statewide. They developed the policy with three key goals: that it be educational, corrective, and restorative.

The policy begins with the educational, when all would-be athletes and their parents attend an informational session on alcohol and other drug use and its consequences. When that session is complete, athletes are bound to the policy for the rest of their time in school. Should they violate the policy, sanctions become increasingly severe with each offense. For the first offense, a student will receive a six-week suspension from play; this can be reduced to two weeks if the student and parents take part in a further educational session on underage drinking. Students also have to complete an eight- to ten-hour service project.

A second offense earns the student a three-month suspension from play and a mandatory alcohol assessment. While suspended, students are expected to dress out and participate in practice but are not allowed to compete.

The third offense triggers full expulsion from athletics for the rest of the student's high school career. It may seem harsh but, says Kathy Bartosz of Stand Tall, "If they haven't gotten the message after the second time, they're not going to get the message."

The program is being pilot-tested in Washoe County under the guidance of Eddie Bonine, Washoe County Schools Director of Student Services. With support from across Nevada, the program was slated to go statewide in the 2003–2004 school year. Says Bonine, "I feel it's going to be successful—I feel it *is* successful."

For more information, contact Eddie Bonine of Washoe County Schools at 775-348-0375 or Kathy Bartosz of Stand Tall, Don't Fall at 775-684-7294.

Alabama Youth P.A.S.S. on Drinking

In Autauga County, AL, Peers Are Staying Straight (PASS) has grown from a school organization into a community-wide coalition of youth, parents, merchants, and officials. In the past several years, the coalition has achieved remarkable success in transforming their alcohol environment.

PASS began in 1988 as a response to the tragic death of a local student at the hands of a drunk driver. His classmates decided that an organization dedicated to reducing drunk driving would be a fitting memorial to the student, so they established PASS. It continued as a school organization—similar to SADD—until being "adopted" by the local Chamber of Commerce. With the chamber's backing, the organization hit its stride in 1996 and began expanding its scope and membership. Although still primarily a youth organization, PASS became the center of a community coalition of students, parents, business leaders, and elected officials.

One of the program's most significant activities has been the "Don't Let Your Business Go Up in Smoke" seminars offered quarterly or semiannually to local merchants of alcohol, tobacco, and other restricted products. The seminars cover youth-access laws, fake ID detection, and other issues relating to sales to minors. Youth lead the seminars, assisted by representatives from the local police and sheriff's departments, the State Alcoholic Beverage Control office, and the mayor.

The seminars are not the only effort to reduce underage drinking. PASS also works with local law enforcement, conducting and tracking compliance checks to ensure that merchants are obeying the laws. This two-pronged approach—education with strict enforcement—has seen dramatic results. Since the program began, compliance checks failure rates have dropped from 33 percent in 1997 to less than 13 percent in 2000. Martha Ellis, executive director of PASS, calls the reductions "tremendous." She estimates that only 10 percent of local establishments are currently failing compliance checks.

Their success in drunk-driving and underage-drinking issues has led PASS members to pursue other forms of involvement in the community. For example, they have up to 100 volunteers working on a teen and truancy court. The organization also has been working with a local supermarket to implement a "Designated Lanes" program, which would allow alcohol purchases only at certain "designated" checkout stations. As PASS continues its work, finding new ways of encouraging youth in Autauga County to stay sober, the group serves as an example of the effectiveness of youth organizations in reducing underage drinking.

For more information, contact Martha Ellis, executive director of PASS, at 334-358-4900.

Minnesota Youth Press for Penalties

In Brainerd, MN, the Youth In Action and MADD chapters persuaded the city council to enact stiff penalties for outlets that sell alcohol to minors. The ordinance was passed over the vocal opposition of local merchants. In the spring of 2000, the Brainerd City Council decided to revisit ordinances concerning sales of alcohol to minors and make them stronger. However, the penalties proposed by the council, though stronger than

those already on the books, were actually weaker than those in state guidelines. Under the proposed ordinance, the first offense would be met by nothing more severe than a warning letter from the chief of police. The second offense would warrant a three-day license suspension, and the third would warrant only a 30-day suspension.

Upon learning of the council's plans, the Crow Wing County Chapter of MADD leapt into action. MADD Coordinator Pat Bluth began attending subsequent council meetings, and she was joined by the Brainerd Youth In Action team. According to Bluth, ten to 12 members attended several meetings, with some of the members speaking in favor of the tougher ordinances. Says Bluth of their presence, "Just being there really affected the council." Megan Kohls, now a student at Hamline University, spoke at two of the meetings. Megan joined YIA as a sophomore in high school, having lost her best friend to a drunk driver several years earlier. According to Kohls, approaching the council about its ordinance was the first big thing their chapter did, and they faced "a lot of barriers" from bar and liquor store owners. But, says Kohls, "Most of the city council took me seriously. [Having youth speak] actually worked better, and the whole group was there to support me."

The rest of the group attended the meetings in their "Brainerd-Crow Wing County Youth In Action" T-shirts, sending a clear message to the council about their support for the tougher ordinance. MADD and Youth In Action were joined in their efforts by local law enforcement, dozens of whom signed a letter to the mayor and city council. The letter read in part, "Common sense dictates that serious sanctions are needed to anyone who gains a profit from the sale of liquor to underage persons," and affirmed the officers' support for their local MADD chapter. Under the new ordinance, the first offense nets a \$500 fine. The second offense in a three-year period earns the retailer a \$1,000 fine, and the third offense costs \$2,000. After the fourth offense, the city can revoke the retailer's license altogether. By pushing for stricter laws concerning sales to minors, the MADD and Youth In Action chapters in Crow Wing County have demonstrated the effectiveness of youth advocacy in reducing underage drinking.

For more information, contact Pat Bluth of the Crow Wing County Chapter of MADD at 218-828-5055.



JOURNAL

Session 19

NAME _____ DATE _____

I learned

I plan to discuss this topic with

One thing that I can do to prevent underage drinking is
