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Spring 2017

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I am privileged to write to you as the Executive Director of the Manhasset Coalition Against Substance Abuse. Many generous and caring people before me have created and developed CASA for the past sixteen years. As a parent of teenage boys, I appreciate what CASA offers and am energized to help it continue.

We live in a beautiful community during a challenging time. We are bombarded with news, fake news, threats, and explicit pictures and videos. We are connected digitally, but experts warn we are losing human connection. We see friends online but experience social isolation and distraction through our many devices that cause fatigue, anxiety, and depression. Our children may be similarly affected; they reported increased depressive symptoms in our 2017 Bach Harrison Prevention Needs Assessment Survey.

When it comes to safety we speak up – we would do anything for our children! We should not stop when it comes to underage drinking. These days our teens are exposed to dangers – highly addictive prescription and other drugs and risky online social behavior – that we never knew. Being a parent of a teenager is more challenging and we need to increase our protection of them.

When science has taught us how to be safer – with car seats, seatbelts and sunscreen – we listened. Science has proven that the teenage brain is damaged by alcohol or other drug consumption. Our legislatures have responded with an increased drinking age of 21, which also has saved lives. “But all my friends are doing it” doesn’t work for jumping off the Brooklyn Bridge, and it shouldn’t when it comes to children drinking.

If our teens say there is social pressure to drink, we need to help them. If they are unable to avoid a beer in the basement, will they be able to avoid the next drug that is offered to them? When a teen says YES to alcohol, he or she is more likely to say YES to marijuana, nicotine and more. In May and June, a brave Manhasset graduate will explain to parents and twelfth grade students how addiction happened to him; early high school drinking progressed and he lost control when his college roommate offered him oxycontin. His addiction caused his family

Prevention

Through

Connection

tremendous suffering and he almost lost his life before choosing recovery. In 2016, 500 people died on Long Island from opioid overdoses (Newsday, 4.9.17). Whether teens or adults, their tragic path to overdose often began with underage drinking. Manhasset is not immune to the tragedy of addiction. Thankfully, Manhasset also knows of recovery.

This January in response to our prevention needs assessment survey, 46.6 percent of tenth grade students reported having at least one drink in the past 30 days and 10.9 percent reported using marijuana. Of 10th graders (15 and 16 years old) who drank in the past 30 days, 28.6 percent reported binge drinking or having 5 or more drinks in a row during the prior two weeks.

Children simply cannot be their best – socially, academically, or athletically – under these conditions. Substance use not only affects the child's brain, it puts him or her at risk of injury from physical accidents, embarrassing behavior, and addiction. Posting pictures of drinking may affect their future pre and post college as well as our younger children watching them. Drinking early does not lead to moderate drinking - in fact it's the opposite; 65.8 percent of twelfth graders reported having at least one drink in the past 30 days and 41.6 percent of these students reported binge drinking in the prior 2 weeks.

Teens already are vulnerable because of increasing academic and social pressure. Some have addiction in their families or are pre-disposed risk takers. Some will experience unforeseen turmoil from a sports injury, illness, divorce, or other loss in their family. We need to help our children: TALK about saying NO to underage drinking, PREVENT access to alcohol and drugs, and HELP develop safe social activities for them.

Eighth grade parents: your children just reported the LOWEST amount of underage drinking ever recorded in Manhasset! Please continue to talk to your children and your adult friends to keep this going and prevent that first drink.

No one can do this alone. Please read CASA's e-newsletters and find additional resources at www.manhassetcasa.org and New York State's www.Talk2Prevent.NY.org. Please support CASA by becoming a member and attending our fundraisers. Please tell other community members and the Board of Education that you support funding prevention education, as CASA's federal funding ends next year. Finally, please share your ideas for protecting our children.

Very Truly Yours,

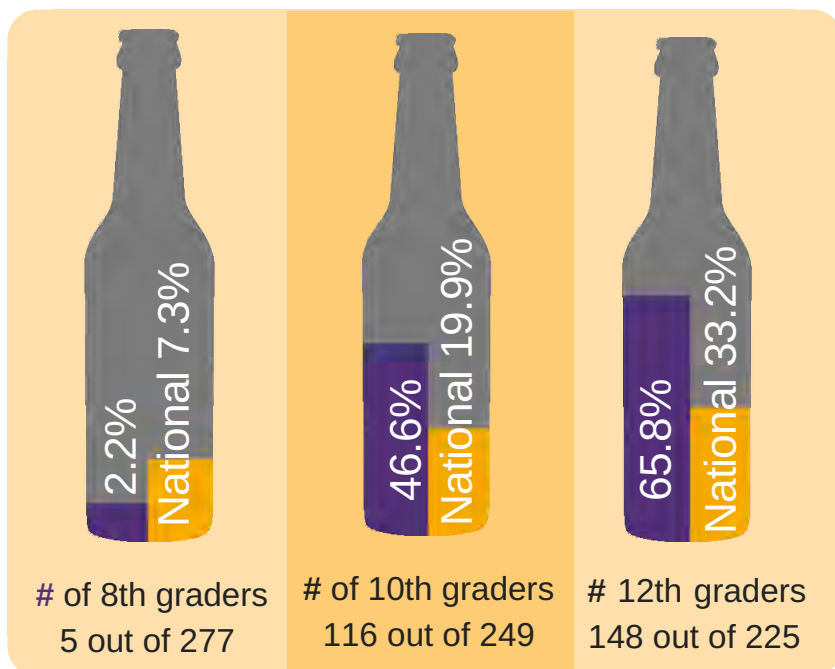
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer DeSena". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jennifer" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "DeSena".

Jennifer DeSena

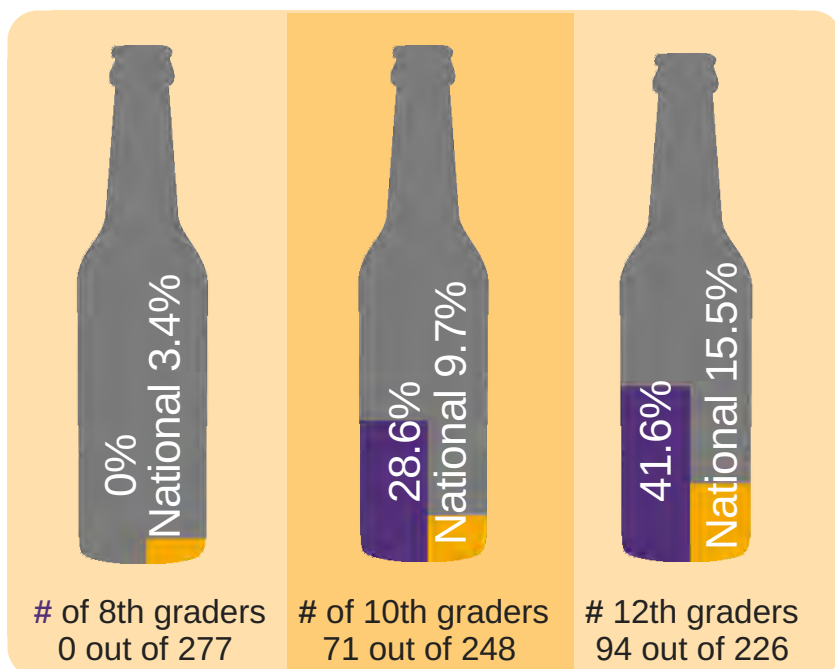
TALK2PREVENT

Manhasset Youth Self-Report

Underage & Binge Drinking Above National Norms (Grades 10/12)



Manhasset students who reported drinking alcohol in the Past 30 Days - NOT just a sip or taste



Manhasset students who reported binge drinking (5 or more alcoholic drinks in a row in the past 2 weeks - one or more times)



UNDERAGE DRINKING STARTS WITH PARENT PERMISSION

They're safer if they drink in my home, under my supervision

I drank when I was their age and I turned out just fine

It's okay my kid knows the limit

I want my kid and their friend to think I'm cool so they'll open up to me

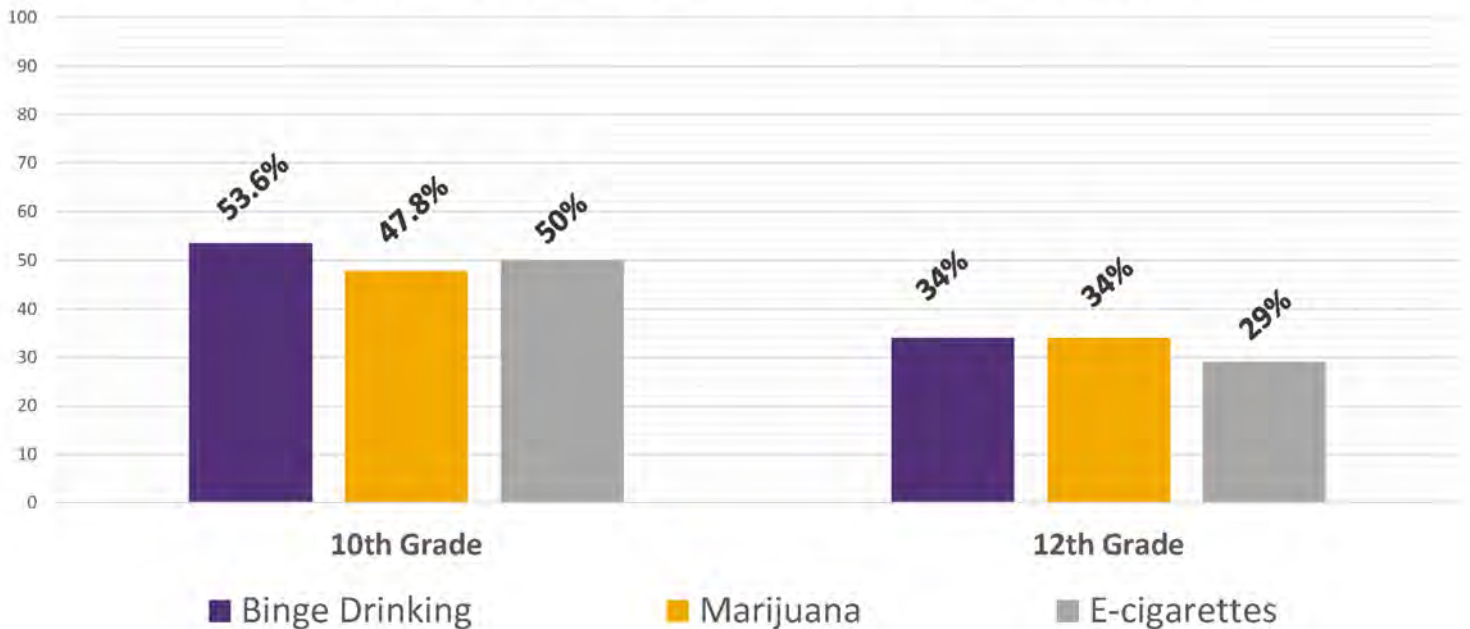
It's just a few drinks... at least they're not doing drugs

TALK2PREVENT and Protect Your Child's Future.

Just the facts

**YES to Alcohol is permission
for teens to use other substances**

Manhasset Students Who Reported Drinking Alcohol in Past 30 Days were X MORE LIKELY to Binge Drink, Smoke Marijuana & Vape E-cigarettes



There's no place like home

Drank alcohol at my home or someone else's home **WITHOUT** any parent permission

66.5%
10th Grade
Students



62.8%
12th Grade
Students



Drank alcohol at my home or someone else's home **WITH** any parent's permission

40.3%
10th Grade
Students



59.1%
12th Grade
Students



Talk2Prevent. WE Can Make A Difference.

TALK2PREVENT

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Talk Today, Tomorrow & Always - Don't Ever Stop Talking

“Sitting down” for the “big talk” about alcohol can be intimidating for both you & your child. Try using everyday opportunities to talk, such as in the car, during dinner, or watching TV together.

- **Use real world examples** that your kids would know about. Celebrities, sport figures and musicians are too often in the news for their substance use. “Hey I heard about... What do you think about that?”
- **Be honest.** If there is a history of alcoholism or drug abuse in your family, tell them about it. If you can, tell them all the details about who is struggling and how it impacts everyone in the family. If it is you, tell your kids your experience and treat it as you would any other disease. “I worry because we aren’t like everyone else, and you have a higher risk for developing a drug or alcohol problem.”
- **Be real and let them know** just how dangerous it really is. “Did you know it only takes [this much] alcohol before you are too impaired to drive?”
- **Empower your child.** Ask them what they think and what they think you should know. “What do you think is the biggest issue facing teens today? How do you face it?”
- **Know what you are talking about!** “I read that x in 10 kids your age are drinking. I know it might not be you, but it’s probably happening with your friends and with people you know. Do you want to talk about it?”
- **Stay strong.** Your kids may answer with a yes or no, may be defensive or angry. Don’t stop the conversation. Take a breath and start again. “Did my question upset you? Why, help me understand what you are feeling.”
- **Be aware of and sensitive to their transitions** such as starting middle school or high school, a break-up, the loss of a friend, or graduation. “This is a different time for you – are you scared, curious or concerned? I went through all this too. Let me tell you how it affected me.”

For information about how to talk with your child to prevent underage drinking, go to manhassetcasa.org or talk2prevent.ny.gov



Office of Alcoholism and
Substance Abuse Services



Nassau County Social Host Law

- You and anyone over the age of 18 are breaking the law if you give alcohol to your teen's friends who are under the age of 21, under any circumstance. You and anyone over the age of 18 are subject to prosecution under the Social Host Law if you knowingly allow a person under 21 to remain in your home or on your property while consuming or possessing alcoholic beverages.
- A Social Host Law violation is a misdemeanor - a criminal conviction punishable by progressive fines and penalties:
 - 1st offense is subject to a fine of \$250;
 - 2nd offense is subject to a fine of \$500; and the
 - 3rd offense and future offenses are subject to a fine of \$1000 and/or up to a year in jail.

NYS Leandra's Law

- **In New York State**, it is a Class E Felony to operate a motor vehicle under the influence of alcohol or drugs while a child who is 15 years of age or younger is a passenger in the vehicle. If convicted, the court requires the installation and use of an ignition interlock device.

NYS General Obligation Law

- **In New York State**, any person injured by a minor who is intoxicated, or whose ability is impaired may sue for the resulting damage against whoever knowingly provided the alcohol to the minor (Stop DWI New York).

NYS Good Samaritan Law

- **In New York State**, a person who in good faith seeks care for himself or someone experiencing a life threatening emergency will not be charged or prosecuted for a drug or alcohol related offense including possession of drug paraphernalia, with some exceptions.
- Protection does not extend to offenses involving drug trafficking and sale, obstruction or interference with law enforcement, and possession of felony amounts of controlled substances or marijuana.

**Always CALL 911 in a
life-threatening emergency**

**Call 1.866.UNDER21 to
ANONYMOUSLY report
illegal purchase or consumption
of alcohol by minors.**