



# In Our Hands Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 1, Summer 2010

[www.burlingtonpartnership.org](http://www.burlingtonpartnership.org)

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

~Margaret Mead

### OUR MISSION:

The Burlington Partnership for a Healthy Community is a coalition of thoughtful, committed adults and youth whose mission is to positively impact Burlington by addressing the causes and consequences of substance abuse for the Burlington community.

If you are interested in learning more about how to help, call us at

324-3867 or email: [mariah@burlingtonpartnership.org](mailto:mariah@burlingtonpartnership.org).

Come to our next coalition meeting:

Friday, July 23

8:30-10:30am

@ Turning Point Recovery Center (191 Bank Street)

All are welcome!

## Alcohol and Teens Don't Mix! Stay Informed and Keep in Touch

By Mariah Sanderson, Coordinator

School's out for the summer! We are all excited for the opportunities that summer brings, however, it is also a time where fewer responsibilities combined with more time for social gatherings increases the likelihood that teens will experiment with alcohol and make other risky decisions. We thought parents might appreciate a little extra information in your pockets to support you in the role you play in guiding and supporting your teens to make safe and healthy choices this summer.

The human brain is not fully developed until the mid-20's, which helps explain why teens are more prone to engage in risky behaviors. Teens and adults do not think the same way. Adults make decisions using the frontal cortex region of the brain, the part that controls rational functions. The frontal cortex of a teen's brain is not developed (it is the last part of the brain to develop). Teens rely most heavily on the back part of their brains, which controls instinctual and emotional functions. This is why teens often act impulsively and with strong emotion. It also ex-

plains why as a parent it is important to let your teens know you respect and love them, but that they do not always have the ability to make healthy decisions and you will set the expectations and rules for their behavior.

Children who begin drinking alcohol before the age of 15 are 5 times more likely than those who start after 21 to develop alcohol problems. Here are a few tips for parents to support your teens to make safe decisions:

Tip #1: **Stay Involved** - Penetrating the teen code of secrecy can be challenging as a parent, but maintaining an active presence in your child's life will put you in the best position to ward off potential harm. Keeping the lines of communication open are key to discussing concerns before things escalate. Know who your child is with, where they are going and how they are getting there and back.

Tip #2: **State Your Rules & Hold Your Ground** - If your child is trustworthy there is nothing wrong with giving extra privileges for a special occasion - an extended curfew, use of the nice car, etc. But just because it is summer and they have less responsibilities does not mean

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you are obligated to permit things you find questionable. Be fair, be firm and be consistent. And just so you know "everyone else's parents" are NOT letting them [insert forbidden behavior]! **68%** of Burlington teens in grades 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> report not drinking in the past 30 days (based on 2009 Burlington School District Youth Risk Behavior Survey data).

Tip #3: **Talk About It** - If you haven't talked to your teen about drinking and drug use yet, there is no time like right now! And even if you are sure your teenager knows where you stand, talk about it again anyway. Repetition is important. Teenagers need to know there is no excuse for ignoring your rules.

Tip #4: **Role model responsible alcohol use** - Do not tell drinking stories or talk about drinking as a way to relax. Drinking is frequently glamorized in today's popular media and navigating those messages is challenging for a developing teen. It is important for them to have healthy role models in their life that can model responsible drinking.

The National "Monitoring the Future" survey found that the key reason kids give for not drinking is they don't want to disappoint their parents. Your opinion, values and behavior do matter - so make sure your kids know where you stand!



Because We Care! VT kids and adults support substance abuse prevention at Prevention Day in April 2010.

## **Youth Spotlight:: 4 Questions with...Merima Omanovic**

17 year-old-Junior nominated by her peers as one of 25 "Natural Helpers" at BHS.

### **1. What is the most meaningful prevention activity you've been involved in at BHS?**

This year I helped organize a Wellness Day in April. We brought in speakers and workshops on a variety of different projects. It was fun to put it together, but I also got something out of listening to the speakers

and that made it more meaningful.

### **2. What do you see as the biggest problem for Burlington teens related to substance abuse?**

Within our school-drinking. Drugs are right up there next to it. Pot is the biggest. It is easier for a teen to get than alcohol. People are not themselves when they are on it.

### **3. If you could tell other Burlington residents 1 thing related to substance abuse or prevention what would it be?**

Parents, don't hesitate to talk to your kids

about it. My parents have never been hesitant to tell me they don't want me to use substances and even though I act irritated when they say it again, I hear their voices in my head when the opportunity presents itself.

To teens, "You only have one life-don't waste it!"

### **4. What is your favorite thing about Burlington?**

Everyone knows everyone. It feels welcoming. I like the restaurants and the community.

## **WARNING! It is Illegal...**

"Project Sticker Shock" events were held for alcohol awareness month in April and again in June during Burlington High School graduation week with the help of BHS students and community volunteers. Teams of young people, accompanied by adult chaperones, placed stickers on alcoholic beverages and/or on cooler windows at participating Burlington stores.

The stickers read, "WARNING. It is illegal to provide alcohol to a person under age 21.

Fines are up to \$10,000 and/or up to 5 years in jail." According to the 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 38% of teens in Burlington who drank in the last month report obtaining alcohol by having someone else buy it for them! The goal of this project is to discourage adults from providing alcohol to minors.

A very special thank you to the amazing youth from BHS and adults who donated their time including: Officer Jason Lawson, Danielle Spaulding and Fritz Senteleber.



**Please help us thank the following businesses for their participation in Sticker Shock:**

**Champlain/Cumberland Farms on North Ave., Dot's Market, JR's Corner Store, Pine St. Deli, Mobil Short Stop and Pearl St. Beverage.**

## **We held our 2nd Annual 2010 "Roots of Prevention" Award Ceremony**

on April 12, 2010. The Roots of Prevention Awards are given to community members who go above and beyond in their work or lives to make Burlington a healthier community.

Award winners and speakers are pictured from left to right, (Front Row) Mariah Sanders-BPHC Coordinator, Larry Walters, Community Volunteer and Advocate-Community Prevention Award, Kathy



Olwell, Sara Holbrook Center- Youth and Families Award, Jason Lorber, Emcee- VT

State Representative, Back Row: Matt Young, Howard Center-Organization and Individual Program Award, Henri Sparks, Burlington School District-DG Weaver Award, Mayor Bob Kiss, Guest Speaker. If you would like to nominate someone for the 2011 awards, forms can be downloaded at [www.burlingtonpartnership.org](http://www.burlingtonpartnership.org) or contact Patti Gannon at 324-3841 for more information.

Thank you to this year's amazing winners for all that you do!

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