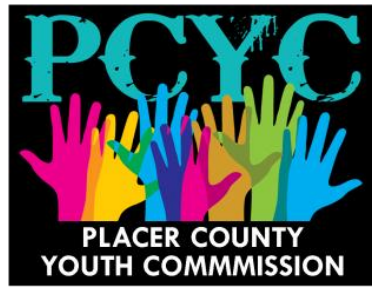


PRESS RELEASE
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The students of the Placer County Youth Commission (PCYC) will host a press conference at 11 am on Friday, April 15 at Whitney High School that highlights how Placer's young people are spearheading efforts to shift underage drinking norms. April is National Alcohol Awareness Month, and appropriately, 2016's core message is the importance of preventing underage drinking. Chief Ron Lawrence of the Rocklin Police Department, Tammy Moss Chandler, Assistant Director of Placer County Health & Human Services, Shelly Rogers and Christina Ivazes, both coordinators of local Drug Free Community Coalitions, will be present to support of the work of the teens and their projects. Says Ivazes, "Youth are powerful. People often respond better to youth messages than to adult driven messages."

Last fall, PCYC was awarded a grant to support Friday Night Live (FNL) youth leaders in implementing a variety of strategies to combat underage drinking in their communities. The grant is provided through the California Friday Night Live Partnership, with funding from the California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. PCYC reached out to high school FNL clubs to support projects that would actively engage their peers, family members and community members in reducing underage drinking and the health and social problems that result from the behavior.

Students in FNL chapters at Whitney and Rocklin High Schools are creating underage drinking focused videos that target both students and parents. Del Oro High School FNL is using a social norms approach, focusing on the positive fact that most students are not drinking alcohol. Del Oro created a survey to assess student perceptions and behaviors and used the results to create posters that emphasized the factual positive norms and countered prevalent student misperceptions that overestimated use. In the Tahoe region, Athlete Committed student leaders at Truckee and at North Tahoe High School advocate for students to adopt healthy lifestyles and not to use drugs or alcohol as both a personal commitment to excellence and to ensure their highest performance as a duty to team, school and community.

The Placer County Youth Commission is working to reduce youth access to alcohol and change community behaviors. PCYC member and Woodcreek student, Kathryn Sbozack, said she was nervous last fall when she stepped up to speak in front of the Roseville City Council and advocate for the passage of a local social host ordinance. "It was pretty formal and I didn't realize there would be television cameras there." Kathryn and her peers on the Placer County Youth Commission shared examples of how underage drinking regularly impacts young lives and why an ordinance to hold hosts of underage drinking parties responsible could both help educate the community and reduce teen drinking parties which are the number one way teens report accessing alcohol. PCYC's leadership contributed to both Rocklin and Roseville passing social host ordinances in 2015. This spring the students met with community representatives from all Placer jurisdictions and presented to Lincoln City Council.

Nationally, prevention efforts seem to be making an impact and there has been a steady decrease in use of alcohol amongst 12-17 year olds since 2004. "However, states Robin Boparai, PCYC member and senior at Granite Bay High School "it is really exciting to see a greater decrease in the local communities where a social host ordinance was passed," District wide student surveys are conducted every other year and this year's Roseville and Rocklin data showed a very significant decrease, a 8% drop, in the number of 11th grade students reporting using alcohol in the last 30 days. Reflects Bopari, "I think students and parents are moving past the old belief that underage drinking needs to be a rite of passage. Besides the immediate risks such as drunk driving we now know how substances impact the developing adolescent brain. By reducing teen use now, by postponing drinking, society could see less adult alcohol-related problems in the future as well".

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