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Where the Community Fund of Darien's 'Our Darien' Campaign Is Going in Year 3

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[Thriving Youth Initiative 2019](#)

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In the third year of the [Community Fund of Darien](#)'s "Our Darien" campaign against underage drinking and binge drinking in town, the organization has released this op-ed article, particularly for parents, describing the problem in town.

The CFD is presenting more research from experts on alcohol use and focusing on Darien's own problems with alcohol identified in its latest surveys of teens and parents, including lax parental views of teen partying with alcohol and how the behavior of parents strongly affects the behavior of teenagers.

The organization notes (as it has before) that Darien has significantly higher rates of teen drinking than the nation as a whole. It also notes the dangers of that for the long-term: Those who start drinking earlier are far

more likely to have alcohol abuse problems later in life.

This passage summarizes the whole:

- Entering its third year, the “Our Darien” campaign is aimed at providing teens and parents with the facts about underage drinking.
- The campaign aims to shine a spotlight on the impact of alcohol on the teen brain, the legal consequences of consuming alcohol underage or serving minors, and the growing body of research that shows an ongoing parent-child dialogue about risky behaviors, combined with clear rules and consequences, equips students to make healthy choices in the short and long term.
- This new campaign will also highlight compelling data on the importance of delaying teen alcohol use as long as possible, the negative outcomes associated with parent permissiveness and the power of parent-role modeling.
- This is an invitation to both teens and parents to self-reflect [...]

Here's the full text of the announcement:

Year 3 of '[Our Darien](#)'

In Darien, we aim to provide our children with every opportunity to grow up healthy and reach their full potential.

Our students' high “family support” scores on our 2018 Asset Survey indicate that they are growing up with an awareness that they are deeply loved and valued.

However, there is an important area where many of us are unwittingly stunting our kids' health and brain development. We allow them to drink alcohol, or turn a “blind eye” to their partying.

We allow them to drink under the assumption that it is relatively harmless “social” drinking or that they need to learn how to drink before they go to college.

The latest national survey data indicates that 41% of 12th graders have consumed alcohol in the past 30 days. Darien's 12th graders? 61%. (Source: Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey, 2018 Darien Student Survey)

Why aren't we as diligent about alcohol use as we are about their academics, eating and sleeping habits?

Alcohol is a neurotoxin. Early alcohol introduction causes profound damage to the teen brain. The legal

consequences of serving minors or failing to stop teen alcohol use are significant. As a parent, you have a key role in establishing the rules for your family. Let's start with some facts:

- 54% of 12th grade students (who report consuming alcohol) report at least one episode of binge drinking (4+ drinks in one sitting) in the past 30 days.
- 1 in 4 DHS 12th graders believe that an episode of binge drinking is “high risk” behavior.
- 1 in 4 DHS 12th graders believe their parents would “strongly disapprove” of them binge drinking.
- Key areas of the adolescent brain are not fully formed until the mid-twenties and damage done before the mid-twenties can be irreversible.
- 90% of adults with alcohol or drug addiction began using before age 18.

Rob Turisi, PhD at Penn State University has conducted extensive research on binge drinking. His research makes a compelling statement: Teens whose parents model heavy drinking and allow them to drink are 4 TIMES as likely to be in the 20% of college students causing over half of the on-campus problems.

National Institute of Alcoholism data shows that for every year the use of a substance is delayed, the risk of developing a substance use disorder is reduced. Teens that begin using alcohol by age 15, have a 40-50% change of developing addiction. If they are under 18? 32%. If a student has their first drink at the legal age of 21, the chance of them developing an addiction is less than 5%.

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This new campaign will also highlight compelling data on the importance of delaying teen alcohol use as long as possible, the negative outcomes associated with parent permissiveness and the power of parent-role modeling.

See also:

- [Letter: Come to the April 10 Discussion on Women and Alcohol \(April 1\)](#)
- [More Drinking, Alcoholism Among Women Now, and They Face Particular Risks \(April 1\)](#)

- [Psychologist to Speak at Darien High About Building Your Child's Resilience \(April 3\)](#)

This is an invitation to both teens and parents to self-reflect; students are challenged to consider the influence of their choices on their younger siblings, and parents are invited to consider the messages they send when they use alcohol as a coping mechanism or when they choose to serve minors in their homes.

Let's continue the conversation about teen binge drinking in Darien. Now is the time to re-examine your household rules, behaviors and attitudes about alcohol. What example are you setting?

We are committed to turning this trend around and giving parents and teens the information and resources they need to make an informed decision about underage drinking.

In the weeks to come you will see social media messages about these themes as well as posters and postcards around town and in your mailbox. Let's work together to keep our teens safe and healthy.

See more about the [The Community Fund of Darien](#)'s efforts on underage drinking and binge drinking:

- [Description of the Our Darien campaign](#)
- [Description of the Thriving Youth Task Force](#)
- [Darien Student Survey Results](#)