

**FCPS and Fairfax County Support Initiative to Reduce Underage Drinking and Designation of May 2009 as Parents Who Host, Lose the Most Month**

The Fairfax County School Board and the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors support the Fairfax Countywide Initiative to Reduce Underage Drinking (CIRUD) as prom and graduation season approaches.

The School Board passed a resolution in support of the initiative at its business meeting on Thursday, April 23, and the Board of Supervisors issued a proclamation at its business meeting on Monday, April 27. Both Boards recognized the many accomplishments of the Countywide Initiative over its three year existence and designated the month of May 2009 as *Parents Who Host, Lose the Most: Don't Be a Party to Teenage Drinking*. This media campaign informs parents and other adults about Virginia underage drinking laws and the health and safety risks associated with underage drinking.

Sixty eight percent of underage youth say they get alcohol from family and friends, even though it is illegal in Virginia for a person under 21 years of age to consume or possess alcohol, and it is illegal for an adult to provide alcohol to a person under 21 years of age. Parents who knowingly allow a person under age 21, other than their own child, to remain on their property while consuming or possessing alcoholic beverages can be prosecuted and face jail time, fines, loss of a driver's license, and/or loss of property.

One in four high school seniors reported binge drinking in the last two weeks and almost two in four reported they had consumed alcohol in the last 30 days (2008 Fairfax County Youth Survey). Our young people tell us they drink alcohol to get drunk.

Know these facts –

- Regular alcohol consumption, especially heavy drinking, impairs learning and memory during critical academic years. Adolescent consumption of alcohol can affect the brain which continues to develop into the early 20's.
- Research shows that the earlier an adolescent begins drinking, the greater risk the person has of alcohol addiction later in life. Get stat
- Risks associated with underage drinking include death, alcohol poisoning, traffic crashes, risky sexual activity, assaults, accidents, and property damage.

Only by working together as a community can we save lives and provide a safe and alcohol free environment for our youth.

CIRUD operates as a Task Force under the Unified Prevention Coalition of Fairfax County Public Schools and is supported by over 45 organizations including nineteen FCPS school-community coalitions, school officials, county government agencies, local law enforcement groups, the Fairfax County Council of PTAs, Northern Virginia Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), the Fairfax Partnership for Youth, Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board, Faith Communities in Action, Inova HealthSource, Pediatrician Groups, and Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP).

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Parents Who Host, Lose the Most is a program of the Drug-Free Action Alliance. Visit [www.DrugFreeActionAlliance.org](http://www.DrugFreeActionAlliance.org) for more information.