

Parents Networking Together Commonly Asked Questions

The Safe Homes Program offers an opportunity for parents to join together to help provide a safer environment for their children. It does not require a commitment of time or extra effort for already busy families. It is simply a public agreement between us to follow some simple principles that will provide a genuinely safer world for our children to grow in.

WHY DO WE NEED A SAFE HOMES PROGRAM?

Our young people are faced, almost daily, with pressures to use alcohol and illegal drugs. As if the over glamorized advertising of alcohol were not enough, there are endless social messages and pressures to use all kinds of intoxicants. Even those children who choose not to use, are frequently forced to socialize with those who are using, if they are to socialize at all.

No responsible and informed adult today can deny that the use of alcohol and illegal drugs pose a real and unacceptable danger for our teens. Yet, as individual parents, we frequently feel helpless to protect a "young adult" without standing in the way of all social opportunity. We are caught in a real dilemma. Safe Homes is a tool to addressing this problem.

WHAT IS REQUIRED IF I JOIN SAFE HOMES?

Read the pledge to your children and explain that, while they may not now understand the purpose, you have joined out of love for them. Then live up to the requirements of the pledge without fail.

WHAT IF I FEEL THAT YOUNG PEOPLE SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO DRINK ALCOHOL IF THEY ARE PROPERLY SUPERVISED?

You are perfectly free to choose not to sign the Safe Homes pledge. You should not feel pressure to join if you plan to serve alcohol to teens. We feel, however, that you should know several things:

1. Research shows that adults who were "taught to drink responsibly" as teens grow up to have as many alcohol related problems as adults who were allowed to do as they pleased as teens and adults who were not allowed to drink at all as teens... There is no advantage to "teaching" them to drink.
2. Physically and psychologically the adolescent is much more vulnerable to the effects of alcohol than the mature adults. Biological researchers have proven that young people who begin drinking before age 15 are 4 times more likely to develop alcohol dependence than those who began drinking at age 21. In fact, the risk of alcohol dependency decreases by 14% with each increasing year of age of drinking onset.
3. The law states unequivocally that IT IS ILLEGAL TO PROVIDE ALCOHOL TO ANYONE UNDER 21 YEARS OF AGE. The Safe Homes pledge does not intend to interfere with your choice in your own home with your own children. It hopes to eliminate drinking party situations where others are present.
4. Finally, we feel that adults who choose to allow groups of teens to drink are fostering a disrespect of the law in these young people, regardless of your own personal beliefs. We hope that you consider the possible consequences of this action.

WHAT ABOUT THE TEENS WHO CHOOSE TO DRINK ANYWAY REGARDLESS OF THE SAFEHOMES PROGRAM?

We cannot stop all kids from drinking. That is not the goal of Safe Homes. We wish to do three things:

1. Provide a safe social environment for teens in OUR OWN HOMES.
2. Send clear, unambiguous message to our children and all teens that we care enough for their safety to risk their displeasure to try to protect them.
3. To inform other parents that if their children come to our home, they will be supervised and that alcohol and other drugs use will not be tolerated.

The goals are proper, realistic, and can be achieved in our community.

WHAT IF A FAMILY SIGNS, THEN VIOLATES THE PLEDGE?

The SafeHomes Program is a voluntary program and those who sign it are pledging on their personal honor to abide by it. The Council cannot guarantee the behavior of, nor accept responsibility for, the behavior of anyone.

AFTER I SIGN, THEN WHAT?

Then simply supervise social gatherings at your home and restrict the use of alcohol and other drugs. The Safe Homes pledge will be renewed on an annual basis. You are not obligated to work, volunteer, attend meetings, or spend any of your time or effort. Just follow the pledge.