

WHEN THE MUSIC'S OVER . . .

Justin's Story

It was Justin's senior year of high school, and he had a lot to celebrate. He was about to turn 18. He played tenor sax in his high school band, and he had just received a music scholarship to a prestigious university – a full ride.

A week before graduation, Justin's friend Ron threw a big pool party. Ron's parents had gone all out – there was a DJ, tons of food and they'd even rented a margarita machine for the occasion. When the party started, Ron's mother went around the house taking everyone's car keys – that way, she said, nobody could get into a drunk-driving accident.

Justin drank four margaritas that night – he didn't usually drink, but he was in the mood to celebrate. He was just starting his fifth drink when someone dared him to dive into the pool from the second-floor balcony. He didn't usually do stupid stuff like that, but he was feeling especially confident – and it didn't look that hard. A few friends cheered him on. Some got out their phones to take pictures.

Justin jumped – and missed. He landed on the concrete a few feet away from the pool's edge and broke his neck. He was in the hospital for over a month and he had to have three separate surgeries.

Justin's parents took Ron's parents to court after the accident. Because they were the ones who served the alcohol, the judge held Ron's parents responsible – they had to pay all of Justin's medical bills, and they're both on probation now. If they get caught serving alcohol to minors again, they'll go to jail.

In some ways, Justin was lucky – the fall didn't kill him, and the doctors think that if he keeps working hard, he might be able to use his arms and legs again someday. For now, though, Justin is paralyzed from the neck down. He's confined mostly to his bed – but he's working on using an electric wheelchair that he can control with his breath. He won't be going to college any time soon, and he won't be playing the saxophone again, either.



WORK IT OUT!

Test your knowledge about social hosting by answering the questions below.

1. When adults serve or purchase alcohol for underage drinkers, it's called:
A. "Social Hosting" B. "Socialization"
C. "Supervised Consumption" D. "Adult Hosting"
2. It's legal for adults to serve alcohol to minors.
A. True B. False
3. An adult can be a "social host" even if he or she is out of town.
A. True B. False
4. Teens who drink alcohol are more likely to engage in risky behavior, such as:
A. Drunk driving B. Having unprotected sex
C. Binge drinking D. All of the above
5. Social hosting is a responsible way to prevent things like binge drinking and drunk driving accidents.
A. True B. False

Answers: 1. A; 2. B; 3. A; 4. D; 5. B



Printed on 30% Post-Consumer Recycled Paper

STAY SAFE SERIES

© 2014 PRIMO PREVENTION, LLC • PO Box 371 • Reserve, LA 70084
985-359-7848 • www.primoprevention.com • PSS-DA-31

SOCIAL HOSTING



WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR UNDERAGE DRINKING?

NOTHING “COOL” ABOUT IT?

Teens, Parents and Social Hosting

Everyone at the local high school knows about Heather’s parents. They’re the “cool” parents. They let Heather throw parties every weekend and they even buy beer for Heather and her friends.

“If Heather’s going to drink, we’d rather have her drink at home,” they say.

Chances are that you’ve heard a line like this before from parents like Heather’s. Some parents mistakenly believe that by letting teens drink at their homes or on their property (a practice that’s known as **“social hosting”**) they’re giving kids a safe place to drink and are preventing alcohol-related problems.

But when it comes to teens and drinking, there’s no such thing as “safe.” Social hosting is actually dangerous for everyone involved. Supervised or not, teens that drink are more likely to engage in risky behavior. Adults who provide alcohol to underage teens can be held responsible for the results of that risky behavior. If a teen gets into an alcohol-related car accident or ends up in the hospital with alcohol poisoning, the adult who bought the beer may wind up in jail or on probation.

WHAT IS SOCIAL HOSTING?

“Social hosting” is the term used to describe any situation where an adult lets underage teens drink alcohol. Social hosting can involve providing three kegs of beer for your teen’s prom or graduation party – but it can also involve buying a six pack for your teen and a couple of his friends. In some cases, social hosting can be as simple as going on vacation and allowing your teen to throw a party where alcohol is served.

That’s right: You can be a “social host” even if you’re out of town. In fact, it doesn’t even matter if you knew about the party. It’s your house. It’s your property. It’s your responsibility.



SOCIAL HOSTING AND THE LAW

Several states – including Oklahoma, Wisconsin, Arizona, Utah and Florida – have laws in place aimed specifically at social hosts. More recently, individual cities have passed ordinances that make social hosting illegal. Adults who provide alcohol to underage teens are facing serious consequences, including:

- Revoked/suspended driver’s license
- Heavy fines
- Jail time
- Probation

That’s not all: An adult who lets a teen drink can be held legally responsible if that teen gets hurt or dies as a result of drinking. A social host may end up paying medical bills or being sued for pain and suffering or property damage.

PARTY SOBER

Keeping Alcohol Off of the Guest List

Planning a party? Here are a few ways that adults and teens can make sure that gatherings stay safe and sober.

For Parents:

- Keep the guest list small and manageable.
- Have a “zero-tolerance” alcohol policy – make it clear that anyone who brings alcohol will be sent home.
- Talk to your teen about your expectations for the evening.
- Lock up your liquor cabinet and make sure there’s no beer or wine in the refrigerator.
- Stock up on plenty of snacks and non-alcoholic drinks.
- Stay at home the night of the party.

For Teens:

- Send or hand out written invitations instead of announcing the party on Facebook or other social media sites.
- Tell your friends that the party is alcohol-free.
- If someone shows up with alcohol, show them the door.
- Don’t let guests bring people you don’t know.

A “SAFE” PLACE TO DRINK?

There’s No Such Thing

One of the most common misconceptions about social hosting is that allowing teens to drink at home helps keep them safe. Adults who let their teens drink often say that they’re trying to prevent tragedies, like accidents caused by drunk driving.

These adults mean well, but they’re forgetting about the other consequences of teenage drinking. Alcohol is a **depressant**, which means that it slows down your body’s ability to communicate and receive signals from your brain. Alcohol also impairs your judgment and lowers your inhibitions – that’s why people who are drunk are more likely to make bad decisions than sober people.

This is especially true of teens. Teenagers’ brains – particularly the parts that control decisions and impulse control – are still developing. When teens drink, they’re even more likely to engage in risky behavior – like unprotected sex, fight, or do dumb stunts. Teens and young adults are also more likely to **binge drink**. People who binge drink can end up with alcohol poisoning – and if they don’t get medical attention in time, they can end up in a coma or dead.

There’s only one way to keep teens safe from alcohol-related injuries and accidents: Don’t let teens drink.

JUST THE FACTS

Sobering Statistics About Teen Drinking

Teens may not be able to legally purchase beer, wine, or liquor, but according to a survey conducted by the American Medical Association, many teens get access to alcohol from adults they know:

- One out of three teens said they could easily get alcohol from their parents.
- Two out of five teens said they could get alcohol from a friend’s parents.
- One out of four teens have been to a party where adults allowed underage drinking.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) report that in 2010 alone, nearly 200,000 teens went to emergency rooms for drinking-related injuries and illnesses. The CDC also reported that almost 10 percent of teens said they’d gotten behind the wheel of a car after drinking. Nearly 30 percent of teens reported riding in a car with a drunk driver.

That’s not all: The U.S. Surgeon General says that **alcohol is responsible for nearly 5,000 teen deaths every year**. That’s 5,000 teens that would be alive today if they hadn’t had access to alcohol.

The numbers don’t lie. Teens and drinking don’t mix. Period.

