

Police, Call to Action get tough on underage drinking



Farmington Superintendent of Schools Bob Maxfield drives home the point that the entire community is getting tough on underage drinking.

BY PAUL R. PACE
STAFF WRITER

A \$1 million home filled with more than 100 unsupervised 15-year-olds getting drunk and doing drugs ended up giving Farmington Hills a black eye in the national news last year, when the party turned ugly.

The home was noted and set on fire. Farmington and Farmington Hills leaders don't want a repeat performance and are taking a stand to keep alcohol out of the hands of area teens, especially with prom season and the summer months approaching.

From now on, parents will be held more accountable if their underage kids get caught with alcohol in Farmington and Farmington Hills, says Hills Police Chief William Dwyer.

A joint effort by Farmington Public Schools, the two cities' police departments and the Call to Action Coalition are driving home a message this year that underage drinking will be viewed with strict eyes.

At a press conference held outside the Hills Police Department Thursday, members of the Call to Action Coalition said a recent survey of middle-school-aged children

showed alcohol is even easier to obtain today than it was based on a survey done four years ago.

"We're doing this because we care about our community," said Dwyer.

Dwyer said a three-prong plan of attack is already underway.

Parents who allow under-age drinking parties in their homes or who rent a hotel room will be ticketed with a misdemeanor for allowing an open house party, a violation of the city ordinance and punishable by up to 90 days in jail.

Also the underage decoy program will be on-going all year rather than just in a few set 48-hour periods to crack down on the sale of alcohol to minors.

"We will hold the minors responsible as well," Dwyer said.

From now on kids caught with alcohol will be processed at the police department and kept until a parent arrives. Previously, in most cases teens were issued a ticket and driven home.

Teens might even be detained at Children's Village.

"I hope people are aware of the seriousness of the effort and we will be working together to prevent alcohol abuse," Dwyer said.

Farmington Public Safety Director Gary Gooss said while the city's last decoy sting proved 100-percent compliance, "we need to do more. With your help we hope to kick it up a notch and show we need to be intolerant of underage drinking."

Estimote Michaelson, director of Safe and Drug Free schools and student services for Farmington schools, said, "It's time to break the 'no talk' rule. We need to stop easy access to alcohol."

Call to Action member Cheryl McGee said kids most often get alcohol right in their own homes. Alcohol stored in refrigerators or garages appear to be the easiest and most consistent access point.

She said locking up alcohol is one way to stop the pattern.

Cathy Webb, school board and Call to Action member, said it's important that community leaders work together to spread the message about being tough on underage drinking.

She said if parents do keep beer in their refrigerators, they should count the bottles if they can't keep them locked away.

The Call to Action Coalition can be reached at (248) 489-3408.

Vagnozzi, House Dems oppose Toronto sewage deal

State Representative Aldo Vagnozzi (D-Farmington Hills) and other House Democrats are fighting a plan by the city of Toronto to ship up to 65,000 tons of sewage sludge into Michigan.

A letter signed by Democratic House members has been sent to Toronto Mayor Mel Lastman and members of the Toronto City Council, urging them to reject a proposed contract with Republique Services to send partially treated human waste to a

landfill in Wayne County's Sumpter Township.

"Along with many of my colleagues in the Michigan Legislature, I was shocked and appalled to learn that your city is poised to finalize a four-year deal to send dried and partially treated human waste from your sewage system to a landfill in close proximity to our state's most populated city," Vagnozzi wrote.

The lawmakers told the Canadians that it is not credible to argue that Ontario, with

a land mass of 345,000 square miles - six times larger than Michigan, cannot find somewhere in its own back yard to bury its sludge.

"Please don't depend upon Michigan to dispose of your Canadian waste," the letter said.

The Works Committee of the Toronto City Council is poised to give its approval to the deal today. The contract still requires approval of the full 45-member City Council. They are scheduled to consider the matter later this month.

Bright House offers international channels

Bright House Networks has launched four international services that are available through cable television service, offering the following channels:

- ART (Arabic) ART's goal is to link Arab communities to their homeland with programming in their own language. This channel is committed to delivering positive cultural messages to Arab Americans
- RAI (Italian) RAI is one of the most respected broadcasters in Europe, promoting the rich cultures of Italy through a unique blend of festivals, concerts, movies, cooking shows,

games shows, documentaries and news.

- TV5 (French) TV5, The international French language channel with programming from France, Switzerland, Belgium, Quebec, Canada and French-speaking Africa, promotes the rich diversity of the French-speaking world. TV5 airs a wide array of news, movies, documentaries, entertainment and cultural programs
- Zee TV (South Asian) Zee TV is the most popular satellite channel in India. Aimed at serving the needs of South Asians living abroad, Zee TV's

USAs programming from India and Pakistan includes news, movies, dramas, children's programming and talk shows.

"The launch of these channels are part of Bright House Networks commitment to serve our diverse customers and offer them the best programming that will allow them to keep in touch with their languages, cultures and homelands," said Dan Dinsmore, Vice President of Marketing.

Services became available June 2.

For additional information call (866) 898-9101.

Botsford 'Doctor Chicks' join Relay for Life

BY PAUL R. PACE
STAFF WRITER



The Doctor Chicks are: (in alphabetical order) Talene Balekian, MSIII; Marsha Billes, D.O.; Sarina Brar, D.O. Intern; Lisa Finkelstein, D.O.; Angela Fleming, D.O.; Judy Joslin-Page, D.O.; Kristin Kameneck, D.O.; Nafisa Kapadia, D.O.; Maribeth Knight, D.O.; Susan Knoll-Vlachy, D.O.; Karin Perry, medical student; Michelle Zuba, D.O.

Being called a chick may be offensive to some women, but a group of female staffers at Botsford General Hospital think otherwise.

In fact, they call themselves the Doctor Chicks and again this year they will be doing something good for others as about 70 active members of the group will participate as a team in the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life at West Bloomfield High School on June 14.

The group was started several years ago as a way to get together for coffee, conversation and support.

Now the group has grown to include female students, interns and other female staff. Even guys are welcome to come along, said original founding member Lisa Finkelstein, D.O., a urologist at Botsford.

But the group took on a special meaning when one of its members, radiologist Marni Grossfeld-Kurjan, D.O., was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer.

Grossfeld-Kurjan chose to keep her social circle close by as she fought for her life. Though she lost her battle against her disease, her friends the Doctor Chicks keep her memory alive by continuing the group.

The participation in Relay for Life was a way to honor of her and another close friend who had cancer, Ann Darmon, D.O., who later died.

"We thought this would be a neat thing to do. It's something we can give back and it's a wonderful idea that we can give back the two," she said.

Kenneth Kurjan, D.O., a Botsford internal medicine specialist, plans to participate with the Doctor Chicks team as an honorary member during the Relay for Life. He was

Grossfeld-Kurjan's husband.

"He's the co-captain of the team. So we made him an honorary Doctor Chick," said Finkelstein with a laugh.

So it looks as though the Doctor Chicks are here to stay even if the term isn't the most popular.

"It's a fun and good thing to do," said Finkelstein.

Botsford General Hospital is a sponsor of this Relay for Life event.

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