

All-night parties help keep kids alcohol free

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All night high school graduation parties are a way to have fun and keep safe, say parent organizers at North Farmington

and Harrison High Schools. Some parents plan their all-night party on prom night. Farmington high schools will target graduation night, June 9, when they lock students in from 11 p.m.-5 a.m. Parents spend a

year planning for the event, raising thousands of dollars and organizing entertainment. "We want to keep kids safe so kids won't go out and celebrate, to keep them from drinking and driving," said Barb Shumer, a

North Farmington parent. "We get 90 percent of the kids to come."

It's also a way for everyone to shed those last tears and have closure for time which will never return.

Most parents of the 314 seniors graduating are working on the party, Shumer said. Tickets which were \$50 at the beginning of the year have increased to \$75 and are available at the door.

"This is our gift to our children," said Shumer who co-chairs the event with her husband, Steve. The gift has a \$20,000 price tag and Shumer says it's worth it.

As parents of Jeffrey, the senior class president, the Shumers were asked - as is tradition - to organize the myriad volunteers. Parents of the juniors do cleanup at the party.

The Shumers have experience. They worked on the all-night party for their son Daniel, now a sophomore at Northwestern University. Their youngest son, Greg, is a sophomore at NPHS.

Following a year of preparation with monthly meetings, the parents will set up from 2:30-11 p.m. Friday, June 7.

"The theme is a secret and a surprise for the kids," Shumer said, adding activities will include a bungee run and climbing wall.

"Parents run a casino at the party," she said. "They also act as security guards because the students can't leave until the end of the party."

The money was raised through a variety of fundraisers including a lottery. For the second year, parents obtained a special license from the Michigan Lottery reserved for non-profit, charitable fundraising, according to Ronny Teub, a parent. The all-night party is supported by local merchants.

Harrison's 'last hurrah'

Janet Schrock, a Harrison High School parent, also has experience when it comes to the all-night graduation parties. She worked on daughter Leslie's

party three years ago and is doing the same for daughter, Kristin. She volunteered to help with ticket sales and publicity. Husband, Rob, will also help that night.

"We have been through this before and we have a basic understanding," Schrock said. "This is my last hurrah. This is the last time all of the kids will come together as a group and have a good time. It's important that they go. I remember my graduation party."

Parents volunteer for various committees: gift and donations, food, decoration, entertainment, and security. Alexis and Ron Dukes are the chairs. Daughter, Adrian, is the senior class president.

"Survivor 2002" is the theme of Harrison's party, named after the reality-based television show. There will be a survivor competition, gladiator jousting, sumo wrestling, a massage, and Euchre Alley.

"Kids will be assigned a number for the night," Schrock said. That will make them eligible for prizes.

Schrock expects that two-thirds of the 250-student class will attend the party. Ticket prizes which were \$45 at the beginning of the year, increased to \$50 and will be \$50 at the door. "This is not a profit-making venture," Schrock said.

Some Oakland County high schools, like Laker High School in Bloomfield Hills, charges \$50-\$100, she said.

The cost for the party is about \$10-15,000, she said.

With building improvements generated from the voter-approved bonds now completed this class will be able to enjoy the entire facility this year, Schrock said.

Personal letters were sent to students to explain party details. "We have a lot of people who haven't grown up in this country," Schrock said.

Fundraisers included selling Krispy Creme donuts and Purple Rose Productions' special showing of "Escapade in the Moonlight" at the Civic Theatre.

If students leave the party they can't return, Schrock said. On the other hand, some students who are already 18 are legally adults. Parents are notified that their child wants to leave. "If we can't contact their parents they can't leave, Schrock said. "They can have a good time without substance abuse."

Fun, safe alternative

Farmington High School seniors will start partying at the all-night graduation party at 10 p.m. on graduation night, June 9.

The all-night graduation party is a fun, safe alternative for seniors, said parent Patty Kimmel.

"The kids are in a restricted area, but they're still having a lot of fun. It's good, clean fun. There's no drugs or alcohol," she said.

A team of security staff will monitor the perimeter of the building throughout the night, to ensure students don't wander in or out of the school, she noted. Students are required to arrive by 10:45 p.m. and are not allowed to leave the party before it ends at 5 a.m., unless his or her parent authorizes it.

The strict rules are for the safety of the students, noted Kimmel.

"We all know how dangerous alcohol is," she said. "One bad decision can ruin the rest of their life."

The party is sure to be a blast for students and parents.

"It's a fun thing," Kimmel said. "The parents (volunteers) have just as much fun."

Clarenceville High School parents have held a number of fundraisers to raise the \$10,000 needed for their school's June 7 party - including a Saturday afternoon baby-sitting service, bake sales and selling Little Caesar's pizza kits. Students have had the opportunity to sign up as volunteers for the events, which is new this year.

The School Board recently approved a \$2,000 donation to the party, which will be taken out of funds from Coca-Cola vending machines.

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CLARIFICATION

An article regarding the Farmington Community Library's volunteer appreciation luncheon should have said that each volunteer had a library book dedicated in his or her name in their area of interest. The volunteers did not keep the books.

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