



M E L R O S E
S U B S T A N C E A B U S E
P R E V E N T I O N C O A L I T I O N

City of Melrose Health Department
562 Main Street ■ Melrose, MA ■ 02176
t. 781 979 4128 ■ f. 781 979 7696
www.cityofmelrose.org

Environmental Scanning Project

One way Melrose teens are combating underage drinking

You may remember that in 2008, Melrose passed its own local *Social Host Liability law*. This law essentially gives our Police Department the ability to hold homeowners civilly liable if, *knowingly or not*, an underage drinking party occurs on their property. The burning question remains: as more and more parents and youth realize this is in place....will we see an increase in public parties??

After consulting with the Reading Coalition Against Substance Abuse, Melrose youth responded. Twice in 2009, the Melrose Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition's Youth Action Team, led by Youth Advisor Charlie Ciccone, conducted environmental scans at 14 popular public party locations. Beforehand, teens talked to police officers about their primary concerns. At each party "hotspot", youth leaders noted if there were rules/regulations posted, if substances were found and what they were, and any general observations about the site.

Studies show that when you clean-up and otherwise physically alter the environment that creates a party spot, the incidence of parties there decreases.

In April 2010, Coalition Teen Leader and Melrose High School (MHS) senior Joe Singer gave a presentation to the Conservation Commission about what teens found when they scanned the Swains Pond/Towners Pond area. After discussing improvement ideas, the Commission plans to post rules/regulations, clean up the muddy entrance, and add trash or recycling barrels to make the area more family-friendly. The Coalition will be working with the Commission to assist with upcoming area clean-ups as well.

In May 2010, Youth Action Team members and MHS sophomores Anna Tramontozzi and Emma Svoboda presented to the Park Commission about what was found at Mt. Hood and Mary Foley (St. Mary's) areas. To make these particular spots less prone to underage drinking, the Park Commission is planning to: 1) make sure Mt. Hood by the Tower is locked after hours and 2) at Mary Foley Park, add a trash barrel, install lights, and post rules/regulations about its use.

Thank you Park Department, Park Commission, and Conservation Commission for being active community partners and assisting our teens with this endeavor!

If you'd like to get involved with the Melrose Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition or to obtain more information on our initiatives, contact Kara Showers (kshowers@cityofmelrose.org, 781-979-4128) or Janet Nevin (jnevin@cityofmelrose.org, 781-979-4130) or visit our website at www.cityofmelrose.org/departments/health/substanceabuse.htm.