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Elkins HS ProGrad Youth Hosts Event as Part of Communities Talk: Town Hall Meeting to Prevent Underage Drinking

When Communities Talk, Prevention Is Possible

Missouri City, TX—May 16, 2016. Elkins High School ProGrad Youth (FBISD) and Fort Bend Community Prevention Coalition (FBCPC) hosted a Town Hall Meeting to Prevent Underage Drinking ” as an initiative for the Elkins HS Zero Alcohol for Youth Campaign. The purpose of the event was to raise awareness about the impact of underage drinking and mobilize the community to take action.

The event brought together over 30 individuals concerned about underage drinking consequences and ways to prevent them. Councilmember Chris Preston, Missouri City, Lt. Michael Harvey, FBISD PD, Sgt. Jazton Heard, Missouri City PD, Deputy Charles Sonnier, FB Sheriff’s Office, Lifeway International, Milan Walker, Marshall HS Student, Frank Perkins, FBRC, and Elkins HS Youth were part of the panel. Speakers and participants reiterated the importance of talking about underage drinking prevention in order to develop strategies that can be effective on a community level. Together, speakers and participants collaboratively explored tangible measures to prevent underage drinking.

“Underage drinking is threatening the future of our children. We must act now to educate them about the many, and sometimes deadly, consequences of early alcohol use,” said Payal Patani, FBCPC Coalition Coordinator.

Underage drinkers are at risk for negative consequences, including lowered academic performance, involvement with law enforcement, risk of violence and sexual assault, and death. Illegal use of alcohol can result in severe, even deadly, harm to themselves and others. In 2013, underage drinking cost the citizens of Texas \$5.5 billion, Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE). Thirty six percent of Houston high school students report using alcohol in the past 30 days in Region 6, as reported by 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Research by Texas

A&M University indicates that 22.10% of teens report parties as the most common access point for alcohol in Region 6. Texas School Survey of Drug and Alcohol Use: 2014.

According to the national data, parents' voices *do* count when it comes to underage drinking. This approach, along with other environmental strategies, has proven to reduce the incidence of underage drinking. FBCPC has also launched a campaign, "Don't Serve My Child," to remind that it is illegal to provide alcohol to a minor.

Visit www.fortbendcpc.org to learn more about underage drinking prevention.

And join the online conversation, #fortbendtalks #communitiestalk

About the Fort Bend Community Prevention Coalition

The FBCPC is a coalition for youth substance abuse prevention, a program of the Department of State Health Services and the Fort Bend Regional Council. The FBCPC also receives funding from the national Drug Free Communities program. The FBCPC seeks to build capacity for community-level changes that result in fewer young people becoming addicted to drugs and alcohol.

About Elkins HS Project GRADuation (PROGRAD)

Project Graduation (ProGrad) is a supervised, all night, drug and alcohol free, celebration for Elkins High School graduating seniors that is held on the night of graduation. Project Graduation is intended to provide a safe way for the graduates to celebrate their accomplishments together after graduation.

About Zero Alcohol for Youth Campaign

The Zero Alcohol for Youth Campaign is a youth-led, adult-supported, community-wide campaign to promote strategies that increase awareness and implementation of the Texas Zero Tolerance Law on youth alcohol use.

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