



## A Social Host Ordinance for Fort Bragg A Tool for Reducing Underage Drinking at Home Parties

### What is a Social Host Ordinance?

A Social Host Ordinance is designed to prevent underage drinking by holding individuals responsible for providing a location where underage drinking takes place. Social Host Ordinances focus on *where* the drinking takes place rather than who provided the alcohol. Such ordinances encourage hosts to be vigilant and proactive in preventing underage drinking on private property, encourage parents to prevent underage drinking parties while away, and reinforce a clear and consistent community-wide message that underage drinking is unhealthy, unsafe and unacceptable.

## What's the Problem?

### OUR COMMUNITY FACES A CHALLENGE

**REGARDING UNDERAGE DRINKING.** In Fort Bragg, 28 % of last school year's high school juniors reported that they had been binge drinking in the past 30 days (from the CA Healthy Kids Survey). That means about 30 kids had recently consumed at least 5 or more drinks in a single drinking occurrence. Among high school freshmen, 20% had been binge drinking sometime in the past month.

Heavy underage drinking is "more likely to occur in private residences where three or more people are present" (2011 report to Congress by the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services). In casual conversations with FBHS students after school in the Teen Lounge at Safe Passage, the number of kids at these parties is reported to be "10 - 20," "8 - 24", "25 - 30." Most say that such parties occur every week-end, and most say that they have witnessed a peer out of control on alcohol or other drugs. Alcohol is always available and other drugs seen at these parties that were mentioned include cigarettes, marijuana, LSD, mushrooms, meth, coke, crack, and heroin.



At their September 2014 meeting, CGAP, the Coalition for Gang Awareness and Prevention, adopted the following statement: *The Fort Bragg City Council will pass a civil Social Host Ordinance holding accountable those who host a gathering where alcohol is served and consumed by minors, reducing the occurrence of teen home parties.*

Many communities are adopting local social host ordinances to address the problems associated with home parties in the interest of safer and quieter neighborhoods.

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### FORT BRAGG TEENS DO BINGE DRINK

What's Binge Drinking?

- 5 or more drinks in a single drinking occurrence for males, 4 for females

How many are Binge Drinking?

- In the past 30 days, 28% of the 2013/14 FBHS juniors and 20% of the freshman

Source: FBUSD CA Healthy Kids Survey, used in our school district every other year to measure student attitudes & behaviors regarding their mental & physical health.



### Fort Bragg Youth are Saying:

"We get our alcohol from our parents, 9 out of 10 times."

"I have heard of situations where adults will sponsor parties as long as kids stay there."

"They get alcohol from friends or family who are of age or they steal it from stores or from cabinets."

"People who are drinking aren't getting caught. Everyone knows it's against the law, but there is no punishment for it."

"We guys go to parties sober and wait for the girls to get drunk."

**"Shelby made poor choices that night, but as adults it's our responsibility to help teens survive poor choices."**

*Debbie Allen of Redding, CA, mother of 17 year-old Shelby who died of alcohol poisoning on the bathroom floor at her friend's house after consuming 16 shots of vodka*



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## What can parents do?

- Do not provide alcohol to minors
- Secure your liquor cabinet
- Host parties that celebrate your children that do not include alcohol
- Spread the word about a Social Host Ordinance for Fort Bragg
- Attend a CGAP meeting to find out more about this issue  
(Contact Amanda at [cgapfb@gmail.com](mailto:cgapfb@gmail.com))

To report  
**LOUD PARTIES**  
**CALL**  
**964-0200**

### Why are home parties occurring in Fort Bragg?

- Parents believe the myth that alcohol is relatively harmless. But large parties tend to lead to excessive alcohol consumption, with the chance for all of those detrimental, life-altering consequences mentioned on page 4.
- Parents who host make a decision that underage drinking is acceptable, therefore making that decision for *all* the parents whose teens attend.
- Parents are known to say that drinking is a rite of passage, forgetting that there are many meaningful transitions that growing, maturing youth experience that don't include alcohol consumption.
- Parents who allow parties where teens drink choose to ignore the facts: underage drinking is illegal and dangerous, especially in large party settings.





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## BINGE DRINKING HAPPENS AT BIG PARTIES

As the crowd grows,  
the likelihood of  
excessive drinking  
aka binge drinking  
increases, and with  
that the chance for:

- ♦ fights
- ♦ injuries
- ♦ sexual assault
- ♦ rape
- ♦ DUI's
- ♦ car crashes
- ♦ vandalism
- ♦ excessive noise
- ♦ damage to  
normal brain  
development
- ♦ and alcohol  
poisoning

*These parties pose  
great risk to our  
youth.*

## FORT BRAGG'S

### Proposed Social Host Ordinance - Key Points:

- ♦ Allows law enforcement to cite the individual – of any age – who hosts an underage drinking party
- ♦ Violation of the Social Host Ordinance results in a civil citation similar to a speeding ticket
- ♦ First violation of the ordinance results in a fine of \$300, second violation \$500, third violation \$750
- ♦ In addition, persons who violate this ordinance are responsible for expenses to cover police service costs

More than 150 cities or counties and 24 states have adopted social host ordinances. These cities include Napa, Petaluma, Cloverdale, Sebastopol, Willits, and Eureka.

