

Facts About Underage Drinking:

- **In a survey of Americans age 12-17, the average person took their first drink before age 13** (*National Household Survey on Drug Abuse: Main Findings 1996; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1998*).
- **Youth who use alcohol before 15 are four times more likely to be alcohol dependent than adults whose first drink is at the legal age of 21** (*Grant & Dawson, Age at Onset of Alcohol Use and its Association with DSM-IV Alcohol Abuse and Dependence, Journal of Substance Abuse, Volume 9, pages 103-110, 1997*).
- **The consequences of underage drinking are a tremendous expense to the U.S. economy and total more than \$53 billion per year, by far the most costly of all drug problems** (*Institute of Medicine, Reducing Underage Drinking - A Collective Responsibility, September 2003*).
- **Alcohol plays a key role in accidents, homicides and suicides, the leading causes of death among youth** (*American Academy of Pediatrics, information related to planning and promoting October 1998 Child Health Month, May 1998*).
- **Alcohol kills six times more young people than all illicit drugs combined** (*Healthy Kentuckians 2010, Cabinet for Health Services*).
- **Alcohol is linked to as many as two-thirds of all sexual assaults and date rapes of teens and college students** (*Youth and Alcohol: Dangerous and Deadly Consequences, Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, April 1992*).
- **Studies reveal that alcohol consumption by adolescents results in brain damage - possibly permanent - and impairs intellectual development** (*Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research, Volume 24, Number 2*).
- **More than 67% of young people who start drinking before the age of 15 will try an illicit drug. Children who drink are 7.5 times more likely to use any illicit drug, more than 22 times more likely to use marijuana, and 50 times more likely to use cocaine than children who never drank** (*Cigarettes, Alcohol, Marijuana: Gateways to Illicit Drug Use, Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, Columbia University, 1994*).
- **Of the estimated 5.4 million junior and high school students who have ever consumed five or more drinks in a row, 39% say they drink alone; 58% say they drink when they are upset; 30% say they drink when they are bored; and 37% say they drink to feel high** (*Office of Inspector General, Youth and Alcohol: A National Survey: Drinking Habits, Access, Attitudes, and Knowledge, Washington, DC: US Department of Health and Human Services; June 1991*).
- **Approximately 88% of 10th graders and 75% of 8th graders report that it's very easy or fairly easy to get alcohol** (*Johnston LD, O'Malley PM, Bachman JG; National Survey Results on Drug Use from the Monitoring the Future Study, 1975-1998; Volume I: Secondary School Students, Rockville, MD: National Institute on Drug Abuse; in preparation*).
- **The typical American young person will see 100,000 beer commercials before he or she turns 18** (*Center for Substance Abuse Prevention. Jam: The Performance Magazine, Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration; n.d.*).

**Let's Keep Our Future Growing:
End Underage Drinking.**