



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
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Minutes 03-19-09



March 19, 2009
6:30-9:00PM

****In lieu of a March AYHSC meeting, Coalition members volunteered at the AYHSC 3rd Annual Community Forum**

Volunteer & Staff Attendance: Fred Ryan, Robert Bongiorno, Bryan Gallagher, Charlie Skidmore, Cindy Bouvier, Ellen Digby, Andrea Razi, Kathy Hirsch, Lucille Nicholson, Elizabeth Oppedisano, Cindy Sheridan Curran, John Scheft, Christine Schultz, Leon Cantor, Lynn Horgan, Annie LaCourt, Carlene Newell, Joan Axelrod, Lori Tallanian, Kevin Flood, Christine Sharkey, Natasha Thorne, Colleen Leger, Susan Svencer, Diane Coste, Joe Carabello

PRESS RELEASE

The Arlington Youth Health and Safety Coalition announces 3rd Annual Community Forum to be held Thursday, March 19th

On **Thursday, March 19th**, from 7-9pm at the Arlington Town Hall, The Arlington Youth Health and Safety Coalition (AYHSC) will host the 3rd annual Community Forum, featuring a presentation by Chris and Toren Volkmann, mother/son co-authors of the acclaimed book ***From Binge to Blackout: A Mother and Son Struggle with Teen Drinking.***

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), underage binge drinking persists as a major public health problem, and is associated with the 3 leading causes of death among youth. Alarmingly, 30 % of Arlington High School students report current binge drinking, a rate which is higher than both the state and national averages (28% and 26% respectively). In light of the recent tragic deaths of two Massachusetts teens, and amid growing concern about underage drinking and teen safety, the Arlington Youth Health and Safety Coalition has prepared a truly eye-opening program about teen drinking for this year's Community Forum.

The Volkmanns' powerful memoir exposes the devastating effects of binge drinking, and details the many warning signals their family missed as alcohol and drugs invaded the "perfect American family."~ Since 2004, the Volkmanns have traveled nationally to deliver informative, compelling and discussion-provoking presentations to young people, parents and other community members. They talk honestly to youth and families about alcohol choices and the consequences of heavy drinking, while detailing the secrecy, denial, and recovery process of Toren and his family. Together, they look at the power of alcohol in our alcohol-saturated culture, the mounting scientific evidence revealing the effects of alcohol on the vulnerable adolescent brain, and perhaps most importantly, parents' power to influence teen alcohol decision-making.~

The AYHSC Community Forum is open to all members of the community. However, it is strongly encouraged that middle school and high school students, as well as their parents, attend this timely and commanding presentation. Following their program, Chris and Toren Volkmann will be available to answer community members' questions. A panel of local prevention and intervention specialists will also be available to talk about local issues.

The Community Forum will be held on **Thursday, March 19th**, from **7-9pm**, at the **Arlington Town Hall**. Light refreshments will be served following the presentations.

For more information about the Community Forum, or for information about the Arlington Youth Health and Safety Coalition, contact Colleen Leger, the AYHSC Director, at cleger@town.arlington.ma.us, or by phone at 781-316-3179.

FROM BINGE TO BLACKOUT has been covered in *People Magazine*, *NY Times*, CBS Evening News, Naomi Judd's "New Morning," and on "The View" with Barbara Walters. Students and parents are encouraged to read about the book and presentations online at: ~bingetoblackout.com.

AYHSC members include: Health and Human Services, Schools, Police, Selectmen, Boy's & Girl's Club, Medical Community, Religious Organizations, Businesses, Parents, Youth

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