

Party Time!

or is it?

Going to the party Saturday night?

No, I'm afraid I'll get caught.

Yep! I'm bringing Holly. Who's gettin' the beer and cigs?

Reporters Courtney Brown, Molly Cox, Jaime Melton, Blaine Richter, and Taylor Ruppert explore the fascination with partying and the consequences that so many teens overlook.

Teens Feel Pressured

by 2nd-Year Reporter Courtney Brown

"Hey, do you want to go to a party with me tonight? There's going to be a bunch of people there and a lot of alcohol."

When someone influences another's life, it usually isn't by moral choice of the one giving in. That person is being pressured.

Teens in today's world see it everyday. People running other peoples' lives, high school students trying to convince the "good kid" to drink, smoke, use tobacco, even cheat on an assignment. This pressure being put on one teen and coming from another teen is often referred to as peer pressure.

In today's society teens find it important to give into others. Fitting in by dressing "correctly," partying, drinking, smoking, buying expensive items, along with many other things, are things some teens find important in life to be able to fit in with their friends. All they want is to have friends and be accepted by people, and they are willing to do whatever it takes to be in that situation.

However, not all peer pressure is always negative. Sometimes, teens may try to influence others in a good way, by pressuring them to stay in school, go to church or youth group, or join an activity that will influence the teenager positively, according to *ThinkQuest*.

Teenagers can be pressured by a peer in many ways. Typically the peers are other children at school. However, that is not always the case. Sometimes the pressure comes from other people in the community, or from someone on television whom the children watch and adore.

According to *KidsHealth* the peer pressure

that children feel can affect them in a lot of different ways. Everyone has his/her own way of dealing with the pressure. The pressure can affect a person directly, indirectly, and or simply individually.

According to *reachout.com*, pressure can be created in one of three ways. When peer pressure affects a person directly, it means the pressure is coming from someone, pressuring another person to do something. This type of pressure may also be known as spoken pressure. Pressure like drinking and going to parties where there is alcohol, are examples of this type of pressure.

According to a recent survey conducted at Hayes Center High School, 43% of students in grades 9-12 feel the pressure to party where there is alcohol, and 38% of students feel the pressure to drink alcohol.

"I feel most pressured to drink because everyone does it around here and no one cares that it's wrong. However, I say no because it is illegal and just not cool," said sophomore Shannon Ridlen.

Indirect pressure, however, is when a person acts differently around different groups of people. Maybe without even realizing it. For example, the person may only use profanity around one group of friends, but when the person hangs out with another group of friends, he or she wouldn't even consider using vulgar language. With this type of pressure, according to the HCHS survey results show that 42% of the students feel peer pressure to do this.

"Partying is the way I feel most pressured because my friends encourage me to do it,"

said freshman Morgan Harouff.

Individual pressure is when the person puts the pressure on him- or herself. Feeling as if he/she doesn't "fit into" a group he/she would like to, so the teenager changes so he/she feels like he/she gets along with his/her friends in a "better" way. This type of pressure may also be known as unspoken pressure.

"The number one peer pressure we have in Hayes Center is conformity. Students find a group and they stick with them. At Hayes Center people will find the band, choir, sports, ag, and drama groups," said Hayes Center High School counselor Mr. Brian Hof.

Different ways of dealing with peer pressure are to just ignore the negative pressure, if the person is mentally strong enough. However, this can be challenging for some teens because the teen may not have many friends or may really want to be liked by specific people.

Parents can help their teenagers by offering open discussions and letting the child know they understand. They can be honest with their child, but they should not be blunt enough that it scares them. Trying to show the child that they are loved and showing the risks involved and the consequences of their actions.

Things that parents don't want to do are to threaten punishment and judgement. According to *Peer Pressure for Teens During High School*, doing this will scare the teenager even more, and make the teen more likely to be rebellious. Parents should not just tell them "no"

as this will have no effect on the teen because most teenagers like to have a good reason for not doing something.

"I deal with peer pressure by thinking about the consequences and how it will affect my future, before I go and do something my friends want me to do," said senior Kirsten Kressin.

The number one way of dealing with peer pressure, according to *How to Combat Peer Pressure*, is to feel comfortable with the choice made by him- or herself. No matter what the answer may be, the person needs to believe that he/she made the correct decision. That person should not let the pressure of another person liking or hating him/her come in the way of doing what he/she feels is right.

"Having people make up their own mind, and being strong enough to do it, is the number one way to deal with peer pressure. Finding out who you want to be with and stick with them is the first choice in dealing with the pressure," said Mr. Hof.

Peer pressure happens everywhere, all the time. There is no way of avoiding it. All the teenager can do is stick with what he/she believes and make wise decisions based upon his/her beliefs. No matter what, he or she should also always remember that he/she is not alone. Many people are going through the same thing as he or she is and with the help of friends and family, he/she will be able to make the choice that is right for him/her.



Sophomore students Shannon Ridlen and Matthew Christener work on Algebra homework. According to a recent survey not only do many HCHS students feel pressured to party where alcohol is present, but they also feel pressure to cheat on homework, dress a certain way, and have a boyfriend/girlfriend.

In what ways do HCHS teens feel most pressured?

Being at a party with alcohol 43%

Drinking Alcohol 38%

Being sexually active 20%

Smoking 17%

Why do you think teens are so attracted to drinking alcohol?



“I think most kids drink because they think they will look cool when they drink.”

--Sarah Cox, freshman



“Most teens I know drink because they feel like they need to fit in with the crowd.”

--Nicklas Mikkelsen, sophomore



“I think teens are pressured to drink alcohol because friends and family do it so they feel like they have to live up to that reputation.”

--Taylor Ruppert, junior



“I think teens drink as a way to escape their parents and to have fun with their friends.”

--Alex Wach, senior

Attraction to Alcohol

Teens Just Wanna Have Fun

by 2nd-Year Reporter Jaime Melton

“It won’t hurt you! You’re such a baby. Why do you always say ‘no’ to it? Try new things in life! Live a little! Everyone else is trying it, why won’t you? Nothing is going to happen, trust me.”

These words have been spoken at least once to almost every teenager in the United States at some point in their junior high or high school lives and is what usually starts a teenager to consume alcohol or any other kind of addictive drugs.

“Alcohol is the drug of choice among youth,” stated by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA). Thirty-two percent of teenagers in the United States have taken their first drink of an alcoholic beverage before the age of 13 according to *teens.lovetoknow.com*. Out of 100 students, that means about 32 have not only taken their first drink of alcohol, but they have also taken that first drink before the age of 13. At age 13, a typical American student isn’t even high school age yet!

Drinking at younger ages can cause many problems for teenagers. These problems can

occur socially in high school, or even later on in life in decision-making processes. According to the U.S. Surgeon General, close to 5,000 kids drinking under the age of 21 die from car accidents, homicides, and suicides each year.

Teens who begin drinking alcohol before the age of 15 are five times more likely to develop alcohol-related problems than those who wait to consume alcohol at age 21, according to Focus Adolescent Services. It has been found that the human brain not only develops in people’s younger years and through the teen years, but well into people’s early twenties. Starting to drink before the age of 21 raises the chance to have long-lasting effects on intellectual capabilities and an increase on alcohol addiction as stated by *Don’t Serve Teens.gov*. Brain defects, liver, and growth problems are all physical factors that come into play when a teen starts drinking alcohol at a young age. The brain can have damage of memory loss and critical thinking; the liver can grow cancerous cells or even shut down, resulting in death, and growth can be stunted by drinking alcohol during puberty. Normally during puberty, the body’s hor-

mones have skyrocketed, testosterone in boys and estrogen in girls. When alcohol comes into the mix, it can interfere with these hormones, sometimes stunting growth in a young person.

Due to peer pressure, some teens are taught by friends that drinking is “cool” and that “you won’t get hurt from it!” This is incorrect. It has been found by NIAAA that teenagers typically start their drinking because of peer pressure. Teens feel pressured because they want to “fit in” with their high school crowd.

Another reason is risk-taking. While teenagers are growing, they go through phases where their behavior will slightly change, sometimes making a young person more apt to seek out new and possibly dangerous situations. This explains why teens drive fast in new cars, jump off of rooftops, and experiment with alcohol.

Alcohol problems may be a drowning problem in the United States, but some ways it can curb the situation. According to the NIAAA, having family and school-based prevention programs can help teach young people about the dangers of consuming alcohol. Another way is to step up enforcement laws in some

areas. Some places in the United States are already strict, cracking down on minors regularly. Others sometimes fail to bust stuff up. According to a recent HCHS survey, “It’s easy to find alcohol around town. The cops never bust anyone for it around here,” said one student. If law enforcement all over the country were to step it up and hand out more MIPs to underage drinkers, it might bring a little bit of fright to teens who want to drink, making them second-guess those ideas.

The final ideas are keeping the minimal drinking age at 21, raising the price of alcohol, or enacting zero tolerancy laws, meaning that if anyone has had any alcohol at all, he/she is illegal to drive.

Most of all, statistics have found that just teaching students about the dangers of alcohol helps with decision-making. When a friend hands another friend that drink of death saying, “Hey man! It won’t hurt you. Just one drink and every problem you’ve ever had will be forgotten!” that friend will have more of an idea of the dangers of alcohol and be able to stand up and tell people, “No.”

Teens Smoking up Trouble

by 2nd-Year Reporter Molly Cox

It’s party time . . .

and everyone is getting ready for all the action. Teens are gathering up, and some of them are making sure they have their cigarettes for the night. Twenty percent of American teens today smoke, says *smoking-facts.net*.

Puffing on cigarettes is a very harmful thing to do to the body, and most people don’t know the facts. According to *smoking-facts.net*, each day 3,000 teenagers smoke their first cigarette, and out of those 3,000 teens, 1,000 will eventually die as a result from smoking. According to an HCHS survey, 65% of students said that they had smoked a cigarette before.

If teens think smoking makes them cool, they should think again. Smoking effects the body in many different ways from the lungs to the skin and fingernails. According to *quit-smoking-stop.com*, with every cigarette the heart rate and blood pressure are temporarily increased, straining the heart and blood vessels. Smoking also slows the blood flow, cutting off oxygen to the hands and feet. Some smokers even end up getting their limbs amputated. The lungs are also majorly affected by cigarette smoke. Lung cancer is also at high risk when it comes to smoking. According to *WebMD*, “Smoking causes about 90% of lung cancer deaths in men and almost 80% in women.”

A 20-a-day smoker breathes in up to a full cup of tar in a year, *smoking-facts.net* smoking is also very harmful for pregnant women. It increases the risk of low birth rate, prematu-

ity, and spontaneous abortion.

In the United States today, one must be 18 years of age in order to buy a pack of cigarettes, but this doesn’t always stop minors. “Just because you’re not 18 doesn’t mean it’s any harder to get cigarettes. One quick call to a friend and you have them,” said one teen from HCHS. According to an HCHS survey 22% of the people at a party will on average smoke at least one cigarette during a night of partying. Fifty-five percent of students confessed that they are pressured to smoke, and 95% of students said they have friends who smoke regularly.

Not only does smoking affect teens physically, but they are burdened financially too, especially when smoking becomes a habit. The average cost of a pack of cigarettes in Hayes Center is \$4.25.

Worldwide, approximately 10 million of the “cancer sticks” are purchased a minute, 15 billion are sold each day, and more than 5 trillion are produced and used on a yearly basis. According to *quitsmoking.about.com* hundreds of possible additives are used in manufactured cigarettes, one of which is amdergris, otherwise known as whale vomit.

Another harmful drug teens smoke is marijuana. Smoking it, however, is not the only way of administration. Marijuana can be brewed into tea or mixed in baked products such as cookies or brownies.

According to *American Council of Drug Educators* marijuana is, by far, the world’s most commonly used illicit drug.

Marijuana has many side effects, too. For

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smoking-facts.net

example, dry mouth and throat, increased heart rate, impaired coordination and balance, delayed reaction time, and diminished short-term memory. Marijuana also has some of alcohol’s depressant and disinhibiting properties. Most of marijuana’s short-term effects wear off within two or three hours, but two days after smoking marijuana, one-quarter of the THC content may still be retained. It will show up in urine tests three days after use, and traces may be picked up by sensitive blood tests two to four weeks later.

Marijuana also has an affect on the brain. It reduces learning ability and limits capability to absorb and retain information. Research of college students discovered that the “inability of heavy marijuana users to focus, sustain attention, and organize data persists for as long as 24 hours after their last use of the drug,” according to *American Council of Drug Educators*. Chronic marijuana smokers are also

higher risks to chest colds, bronchitis, emphysema, and bronchial asthma.

Although dangers exist for marijuana users of all ages, risk is greatest for younger people. For them, the impact of marijuana on learning is critical. Another concern is marijuana’s role as a “gateway drug,” which means it is the “starter drug” that introduces people to other drugs. The Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University found adolescents who smoke pot 85 times more likely to use cocaine than their non-pot smoking peers.

Smoking and the effects of smoking affect many people everyday, many of whom will die from smoking yearly. Teens at parties need to think twice before grabbing the cigarettes and puffing away. They are not only breaking the law, but they very well may be on their way to an addiction or even an attraction to marijuana and other drugs.

65% of HCHS students claimed that they have smoked a cigarette



Have Your Fairy Tale Ending Know the Dangers of Dating



by Advertising Editor Taylor Ruppert

It happens from the time we are in grade school and the cute boy in the third row asks you to be his girlfriend. So of course you say yes, and the next day you hold hands and tell everybody that you are dating. By the end of the week you have moved on to the boy in the first row and the boy in the third row is long forgotten.

In high school the relationship lasts longer and the couple actually knows what the word "relationship" means. They still hold hands and tell everyone they are dating. By college most people know the dating routine. Some are even thinking about becoming engaged or married.

This is the perfect picture of how one person's dating life could go, but this is never the whole story. Many dangers resolve around dating, and they range from getting one's heart broken to death.

The woes of dating have been compared to a bad cut. The first time a person falls in love and the other person breaks off the relationship. It is like someone cut a small gash in the arm of the one still in love. The cut never completely heals, so it oozes and scabs over a bit. The next time that person's heart is broken the scab is ripped off again and it bleeds for awhile but then it slows to an ooze. Every time this happens the original cut becomes deeper and longer and wider until it is a huge ugly gash. This gash can only be healed with time and the healing hands of faith, but the scar will be there forever. Being heartbroken may seem like nothing compared to death but it does take an affect on a person.

One danger of dating is date rape. Date rape is going out on a date, maybe to a party, with someone for the first time or even someone who the victim knows well, and then after or during the date the rapist forces the victim to sexual activities that the victim does not want to do. Date rape can even be talking them into these activities while the victim is under the influence of alcohol or date rape drugs. One HCHS teenager said, "Whenever I go out with someone I don't know very well and I start to

Approximately one in five high school girls has been physically or sexually abused by a dating partner.

about.com

feel like he is pressuring me into doing something I don't want, I text my friends or parents so they can come and get me." This girl protects herself from getting into a bad situation. According to the National Research Center for Women & Families in a survey of girls in public schools, one in five girls have been physically or sexually abused on a date or even both. These girls also reported heavy smoking, binge drinking, driving drunk, cocaine use, binge eating or use of diet pills, having three or more sexual partners in the last three months, sexual intercourse before age 15, not using a condom in the last intercourse, attempting suicide, or ever having been pregnant.

Another danger of dating is becoming pregnant. Face it, condoms and birth control do not always work. Condoms break and pills are forgotten. Even still, the person may have been coerced or forced into intercourse. This creates a modern problem for the dating world, unplanned pregnancies. In fact, according to *Childbirth Solutions, Inc.* 78% of teen pregnancies are unplanned, accounting for about one-fourth of all accidental pregnancies annually. However, there are many solutions to this which include keeping the baby, putting the baby up for adoption, and abortion.

Keeping the baby is difficult for a single

person or someone still going through school, but 468,988 babies are born to teenage mothers each year. It may be the hardest decision for a teen, especially if a baby is conceived through unwanted actions such as date rape. There are many groups and organizations to help out new teen mothers. These programs teach the mother how to take care of children, help them finish school, and show them how to balance their new lives.

Abortion is the killing of an unborn child and may seem like the easy way out, but this is misleading. According to *Pregnant Teen Help*, teenagers are accountable for 19 percent of all abortions. Most teens feel that a baby will ruin their plans of the future, and they do not want to take care of a baby by themselves. Some teens even feel suicidal after finding out they are pregnant.

Another danger of dating is physical abuse and death. According to *about.com*, approximately one in five high school girls has been physically or sexually abused by a dating partner. Some people do not know the person they are dating very well and get into difficult situations. If one person makes the other mad and the person chooses to fight back with his fists, the victim needs to tell the authorities at once. If the victim fails to do so, the victim may be

hit again or even killed. This is the worst ending to dating gone wrong.

Humans have a natural tendency to trust people more than is healthy. If the victims in all of these occasions would have followed a few simple guidelines, they might have had their fairy tale ending. Here are a few guidelines for teens to follow when dating:

1) Guard your heart.

Do not fall head over heels in love with someone you barely know. Go slow and take your time and really get to know your certain someone. Rushing only makes the relationship more difficult and the faster a couple gets physical, the more likely the relationship is to fail.

2) Keep contact with a friend or family member.

Calling or texting a friend or family member every hour or at designated times and letting them know where you are and when you should be home is a safeguard. It is like your mother calling every hour on your first date to make sure you are okay. Your parents may seem pushy, but they are only making sure you are going to make it home okay.

3) Sex is not the way to prove you love someone.

Sex was meant to be between a husband and wife, not because he says he loves you or because he says you are going to get married someday. If he really loves you he will wait until marriage. This way you do not have the chance of getting pregnant and be forced to make decisions you do not feel that you are ready to make.

4) Physical abuse is always stoppable.

If you are having issues with your certain someone, tell the police. He cannot hurt you from jail and no matter how much he says you deserve it, you do not. No one deserves to be hit or beaten and telling the police may save your life.

Following these simple guidelines can keep many teens out of danger and get them one step closer to their fairy tale ending.

What Happens at the Party Doesn't Always Stay at the Party

by 2nd-Year Reporter Blaine Richter



Hayes County Sheriff Tom Dow explains the consequences a teen faces if arrested for MIP or DUI.

both, but on the other hand there is no minimum punishment.

If a teen is consuming alcohol at a party and the cops show up, he or she will be breathalyzed. If the teen is over the limit, then that teen would be charged with both consumption and possession of alcohol.

In another situation, if a teen left the party drunk but before he or she arrives home is pulled over by a policeman for whatever reason and the officer suspects that the teen has been drinking, so the officer will test the him or her using a Breathalyzer. If that teen blows over a .02 he will be charged with a minimum of 60 days no driving and a \$400 fine. At the maximum he could serve 60 days in jail and a \$500 fine, but "commonly it's six months of his license being revoked," Sheriff Dow said.

Besides getting in trouble with the law, teens also face the consequences at school. Those could be anything from having to run extra at athletic practice because of rumors that the teen was seen at a party to the teen being suspended.

The student handbook policy at HCHS varies depending on how many times the offense has been committed. The first offense of being caught with alcohol with an admission is two weeks of suspension from extracurricular activities. If it's the second offense or the teen doesn't fess up to it, it's 18 weeks of suspension from extracurricular activities. The third offense is 36-week suspension and any subsequent offenses is a lifetime-suspension from extracurricular activities.

Out of all of the consequences, probably the worst of it comes from home. "Being grounded is pretty much like being sent to prison, except you don't get a trial and you can't see or talk to your friends," said an anonymous HCHS student.

Getting grounded, having one's cell phone taken away, or being forced to ride the bus to school because one's parents won't let him or her drive anymore are some common but extremely effective punishments that parents use to deter their children from drinking.

Even though the risks of getting caught are so extreme, many students still prefer to take their chances just to go out and party with their friends.

Kids always think that nothing bad can happen to them especially when they are drinking alcohol with their buddies, but those deeply feared red and blue lights can ruin everything.

"Never do what your friends tell you to do," said an anonymous HCHS student who recently saw those red and blue lights.

As if the hangover the next day isn't enough of a punishment, there is so much more that can happen. "A minor could be charged with possession and consumption of alcohol. Both are class III misdemeanors," said Hayes County Sheriff Tom Dow.

In Hayes Center High School 18% of high school students have been charged with an MIP or a DUI. "I think we run a higher percentage because we have less kids," said Sheriff Dow. He could be right. Hayes Center High School currently has 55 students enrolled in grades 9-12 and ten of them have MIP's or DUI's.

If high school students are at a party and are busted this is what could happen to them especially involving the law.

If a teen goes to a party and doesn't drink but the party is busted while he or she is there, that teen student could be charged with possession of alcohol. This has a maximum punishment of three months in jail, a \$500 fine, or

What happened when you were caught drinking?



"I hope it didn't mess up the rest of my life. I didn't know how much trouble I was really getting myself into at the time."



"It really disappointed people, and your family and friends don't respect you anymore. It stinks."



"I was really scared, especially of my parents. I didn't know how much trouble I was going to be in, and all I kept thinking was I wish I could go back in time and make some better choices."



"I was very embarrassed to talk to my parents and the teachers/administrators. I knew I had let everyone down and that it was going to be very difficult to regain the trust and respect that I had lost."

Editor's Note: To protect reputations of HCHS students who were willing to share their thoughts about partying, names have been kept anonymous.