

Acting DA Works To Deter Underage Drinking

BY MANHASSET PRESS STAFF

MANHASSET@ANTONMEDIAGROUP.COM

Madeline Singas, Acting Nassau County District Attorney, met with the Manhasset Community Coalition Against Substance Abuse (CASA) to support CASA's "Talk. They Hear You." The annual campaign empowers parents and caregivers to talk to their children early about the dangers of underage drinking and highlights why underage drinking is unhealthy and against the law.

"Providing alcohol to a minor is not just ill-advised—it's dangerous and against the law. I'm grateful to Manhasset CASA for its leadership in raising awareness of this important issue, especially as we head into prom and graduation season," stated Acting DA Singas.

According to the Nassau County District Attorney's Office, Nassau County's Social Host law provides parents the security of knowing their children will not be served alcohol in another home and offers parents an "extra" reason to say no when their own children want them to be the "cool" parent and allow "just a little" alcohol. The law applies to anyone over the age of 18 who owns, rents or otherwise controls a private residence and knows or has reason to know alcoholic beverages are being consumed by a person under the age of 21 on the premises. A violation of Nassau County's Social Host Law is a misdemeanor – a criminal conviction and punishable by progressive fines and penalties: first offense is subject to a fine of \$250;



Madeline Singas (center), Acting Nassau District Attorney and Manhasset parent, supports CASA.

second offense is subject to a fine of \$500; and third offense and future offenses are subject to a fine of \$1,000 and/or up to a year in jail.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, youths who drink alcohol before the age of 21 are more likely to experience social problems, such as fighting and lack of participation in youth activities; legal problems, such as arrest for drunk driving or physically hurting someone while drunk; physical problems, such as hangovers or illnesses; unwanted, unplanned, and unprotected sexual activity;

physical and sexual assault; higher risk for suicide and homicide; alcohol-related car crashes and other unintentional injuries, such as burns, falls, and drowning; memory problems; abuse of other drugs; changes in brain development that may have life-long effects; as well as death from alcohol poisoning.

Manhasset CASA encourages parents and caregivers to address the dangers of underage drinking with their children by creating and maintaining open lines of communication that send a clear message that underage drinking is unhealthy and against the law. During prom and the upcoming graduation season, Manhasset CASA reminds parents, caregivers and residents to:

- Observe the Nassau County Social Host law and refuse to supply alcohol to anyone under 21.
- Be at home when your teen has a party.
- Make sure that alcohol is not brought into your home or property by your teen's friends.
- Talk to other parents about not providing alcohol at events your child will be attending.
- Create alcohol-free opportunities and activities in your home so teens will feel welcome.

Alcohol use by persons under age 21 years is responsible for more than 4,300 annual deaths. In 2011, nearly 188,000 alcohol related emergency department visits by patients age 12 to 20 resulted in a serious outcome including admission to the hospital, transfer to another health care facility or death.

For more info, visit www.manhassetcasa.org or www.underagedrinking.samhsa.gov.

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