

## Prom and Graduation Season Substance Abuse Prevention Strategies and Activities

### **Name of strategy or activity: Media Campaign**

**Description:** To engage students, parent, and the community to support and participate in the Pre-Prom Red Carpet Reception coordinated by Riverhead Community Coalition for Safe and Drug-Free Youth in partnership with Riverhead Central School District and Peconic Bay Medical Center. To ensure summer safety and the prevention of underage drinking during prom, graduation and summer party season.

**How to get started:** Using the designated prom theme, we developed a print advertisement/invitation for the community to attend the Pre-Prom Red Carpet Reception, including date, time, and location including event sponsors. Coalition staff and/or volunteers wrote a press release advertising the event highlighting that the purpose of the event is to ensure safe prom and graduation celebrations by not allowing underage drinking. The press release also included the Suffolk County Social Host Law to educate parents about the criminal penalties associated with providing alcohol to minors. We also posted parent resources on our website (RiverheadCAP.org) and included a link to those resources in our press release and ad.

### **People to get on board:**

Coalition staff/volunteers

Sponsors

Hospital public relations manager  
(they were the major sponsor)

Local print, online, and radio media

School public relations manager

**Resources needed:** Coalition staff and/or volunteers developed the advertisement/invitation and sent it to media contacts. Funding or in-kind donations of advertising space were used for local print, online, and radio media. Our local newspapers ran our press releases for free. The school district's public relations manager advertised the event on the school website and posted a post-event synopsis with pictures. The hospital public relations manager also ran the ad in their media outlets.

**Steps to Success:** The purpose of having a media strategy is to garner public support for the policy change, highlight sponsor support, and invite students and their families. Most importantly, an effective media strategy educates the community about the risks and consequences of underage drinking and the legal penalties for providing alcohol to minors. Finally, the media campaign also helps parents by providing links to valuable resources to help them provide safe environments for their graduating teens.

At our Pre-Prom Red Carpet Reception, Coalition staff and volunteers act as "paparazzi" taking candid pictures of students as they walk the red carpet to board the busses and in front of the Step and Repeat backdrop that advertises our sponsors. All of these photos are posted online so that students can download and print their favorite photos.

**For more information, contact:** Riverhead Community Awareness Program, Inc. (CAP) at (631) 727-3722 or visit us at [RiverheadCAP.org](http://RiverheadCAP.org).