



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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March 18, 2008

**Protecting Our Youth:
A Town Hall Meeting to Keep Students Alcohol-Free**

The Northeast Seattle Coalition to Prevent Underage Drinking is providing an opportunity for the community to learn more about underage drinking in our community and to develop ways to reduce alcohol use among our young people.

"Underage drinking rates in northeast Seattle are higher than the city, county and state averages," said Chris Kinsey, Coalition chair.

The public is invited to participate in this forum on our community's significant problem on Tuesday, March 25, from 7:00-8:30 p.m. at Eckstein Middle School's auditorium, 3003 NE 75th Street. At the meeting experts will discuss how underage drinking harms young people and the community and share what parents and others can do to help young people stay healthy and safe.

According to the American Medical Association, alcohol kills more youth than tobacco and illicit drugs combined. It also damages developing brains. Young drinkers score lower on vocabulary, general information, and memory recall.

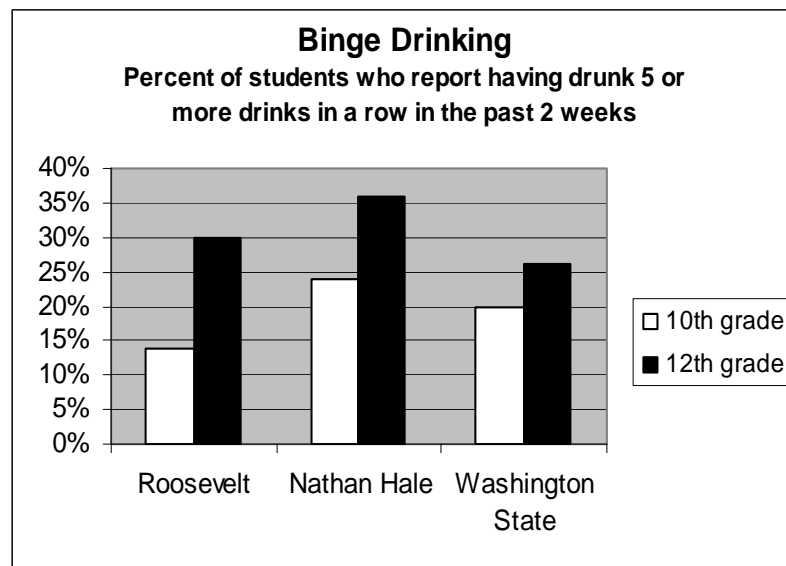
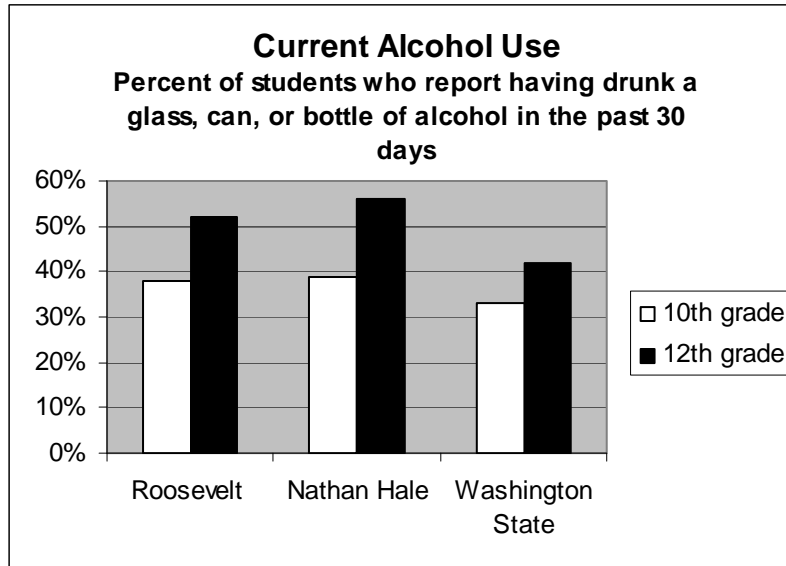
"Kids are enticed to drink just about everywhere they go in our community, through billboards, store displays, sports events, the movies, television, video games, and the Internet," said Dr. Ray C. Hsiao, a Coalition member and co-director, The Adolescent Center for Substance Use, Intervention, Treatment, Education and Research (SUITER) Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center. "It's vital that parents talk with their children about the dangers of underage drinking to counteract all the alcohol ads. The Coalition will give parents the tools to help them have these important conversations."

The Town Hall Meeting will feature a panel, including:

- Victoria Tennant, author of *Healthy Beginnings – Nurturing Children's Growing Minds*, will discuss the effects of alcohol on adolescent brain development
- Officer Kipp Strong, Seattle Police Department, North Precinct, will describe how underage drinking contributes to vandalism, injuries, and sexual assaults
- Youth who operate Washington State Drug & Alcohol Clearinghouse's TeenLine, will share what they hear when staffing the hotline for youth with drug and alcohol problems

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Underage Drinking in Northeast Seattle From the 2006 *Healthy Youth Survey*



Our community is:

- Northeast Seattle
- Zip codes 98105, 98115, 98125
- Geographically: from Lake Washington to I-5, from the ship canal to NE 145th
- Schools include: Eckstein, Nathan Hale, Roosevelt