

## Submissions

All Lynbrook students and alumni are eligible to submit stories to *Aletheia*. We publish every submission that adheres to our guidelines, which may be found on the website. The Aletheia staff is committed to preserving the integrity of your submission and will not make any changes, with exception to certain profanity (which will be asterisked-out). We do not edit stories for spelling, grammar or syntax.

The May topic will be Parents. Submissions are due by April 16. If you are interested in sharing your experiences, a submission form may be found online at [www.lhsaletheia.org/submit](http://www.lhsaletheia.org/submit).

## Mission

Aletheia is a student outreach publication that strives to provide a voice for all students at Lynbrook High School. Inspired by Los Gatos High's *Reality Check* and Monta Vista's *Verdadera*, Aletheia was created to facilitate communication and overcome stigmas concerning prevalent and taboo issues within the Lynbrook community. At the beginning of the school year, the staff designates a list of monthly topics pertaining to the realities of high school. Each issue of the publication comprises of firsthand experiences submitted anonymously by Lynbrook students and alumni, professional articles relating to that month's theme, and resources compiled by the student staff. Finalized newsletters are published into a PDF format and distributed on our website. Back issues may be found on our website, under Archives.

The content in Aletheia is composed by the students at Lynbrook High School in San Jose, California. Ideas and thoughts expressed within the publication are not necessarily reflected by the school administration or staff.

This is the third issue of Aletheia. Due to environmental concerns, it was not published in paper form.

Disclaimer: Please note that not all submissions were published because they did not adhere to the guidelines. Also, some submissions expressed content that would be illegal to reveal. Please understand that we did not mean to silence any one's voice by not publishing a story.

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I feel that peer pressure takes a big part in consuming alcohol at parties. Although everyone says that you can just say no, after the 10th time of people asking you to only take a bit, it really starts to wear you down. In all honesty, I don't feel drinking alcohol is that bad, especially if you know when to stop. I can have a good time without alcohol, but sometimes drinking a bit can also be exciting, because after all, it IS high school, and teenagers like to experiment, even if it isn't always the best thing to do. I was once put in a situation where I did drink too much, and I feel that after that time, I learned my lesson, and now if I do drink, I make sure it's not too much and that I can think clearly, and I won't do something that I will regret later.

Basically what I'm getting at is, everything is alright in moderation.

*"Hear no evil, speak no evil - and you'll never be invited to a party."*

*~Oscar Wilde*

My ex boyfriend told me that he hated drinking because it makes everyone love everyone when in reality they don't. I didn't really get it; in fact I thought to myself "well maybe that's because you are just unlovable you stupid dumb@\$\$." But very recently, I guess I've realized the stupid ex boyfriend might have a point. I party, and I get drunk and I get attention- lots of it. I feel surrounded by all of these things that feel so easy and with the alcohol, everything is blurry- a blur of laughter and dancing and kissing and feeling alive. And then the next morning it's all over. We've stopped dancing, no one to cuddle with and if anything, a bit of an awkward transition back to reality. What I realized is that all of this leaves me feeling broken as soon as it is over. When the lights go down I am surrounded by love, and when the sun rises, it is all gone. Loving, kissing, dancing, comes so much easier with some liquid courage, but as soon as it is gone, I feel all empty inside. Last night I was dancing on a table with two guys and last night I cuddled with four more guys and last night I had guys whispering in my ears about how much they wanted to kiss me. Last night I was in my friend's lap and he was stroking my hair and

singing me a lullaby which he didn't really even know the words to. But this morning. This morning I woke up a stranger. I woke up and there were no guys, there was no one. My friend was gone- he remembered he had a girlfriend, and I remembered, all I had was me.

Most people who consume alcohol do it to lose control. As a college student, I often hear talk about getting wasted, getting s\*\*\*faced, getting smashed, blacking out...etc. These feelings of losing control are generally unhealthy for these kids.

I party occasionally, and I use illicit substances along with alcohol to relax. I do it for the very same reason the aforementioned students do : to lose control.

But I don't lose control. Not total control at least. I always make sure I have a reliable safe driver, or a place to crash for the night. I always make sure my partying does not get in the way of my academic studies. When I wake up the next day, hungover or not, I continue on with my life.

There are many different types of people who are against partying/drinking, which I understand. Some don't do it because it just isn't their thing. They're more of a stay at home and watch a movie with friends. Some just think alcohol is plain disgusting. Some don't like losing control. But in my opinion, most of those who are against it just think its "morally bad" as well as illegal.

I won't deny that its illegal (for those of us under-age), but there is nothing morally wrong with consuming alcohol. The drinking age was set mainly to prevent young and immature kids from getting into trouble such as drunk driving and creating dangers. But this law has not necessarily decreased any drunk driving incidents; it has merely criminalized the act of drinking as well as placing a negative connotation upon it within society. This forces many of the kids of this generation to believe that it is "bad." Whats worse is that many kids who were taught their whole life that its bad, go to college, and lose control. They actually put themselves in positions that endanger themselves and others, because they never learned how to or were never able to embrace and understand how alcohol works.

Laws without morals are useless. Therefore, I am perfectly happy with consuming alcohol, and will not hesitate for a second to think about its legality. I

won't steal because its wrong, not because its illegal. I won't kill someone because its wrong, not because its illegal. But I will drink, because I think its fine, and I don't care that its illegal. There are obviously other examples where legality trumps morals. For example, there is nothing morally wrong with speeding. I would drive 100 mph if I could, but the law prevents me from doing so for safety reasons.

For people like myself, I know I will not put myself in a position of endangering myself or others. For me, a night of partying consists of drinking copious amounts of s\*\*\*ty liquor, dancing with and f\*\*\*ing chicks with the ugliness directly proportional to the amount of liquor I consumed. Then I wake up hungover, regret having sex with an ugly girl, and study for finals that are coming next week.

See you next week Lynbrook.

*"Worthless people live only to eat and drink; people of worth eat and drink only to live."*

~Socrates

To me, drinking is just a social thing that people do not because it's necessarily fun, or tastes good, just that everyone does it (and apparently it's amusing to watch people get drunk). Seriously though, alcohol tastes like s\*\*\* and anyone who says otherwise is probably lying just to cover up the fact that they have drinks that taste horrible just for the sake of seeming cool. That pisses me off the most, people seeing drinking as some sort of thing that's exclusive, and only the coolest people do it. What they don't realize is that any f\*\*\*ing moron could just go to their parents' liquor cabinet and do the exact same thing. In fact, this one former friend of mine recently went to a party, and now he just can't seem to get over himself and the fact that he actually went and drank. On and on I have to hear this idiot ramble about how he drank a ton and did shots and played beer pong and then went home drunk. Now every time the topic of alcohol comes up in the slightest, he'll be the first to chime in on the conversation as if he's suddenly become an expert in all things drinking related. For f\*\*\*'s sake, when will this d\*\*\*\*\*bag shut the f\*\*\* up?? While I have had a few drinks myself, I really don't like the taste of alcohol and just do it whenever my friends decide they want to. We, however, don't go publicizing it to the world.

It isn't "cool". After all, what's cool about losing control of your mind and actions? And, for the most part, it doesn't taste good either. If I had to guess what alcohol is used for more than anything, I'd guess it's to numb things. In this environment, it's hard to work out the balancing act between obedient student and wild child. All around us, there's competition and the unrelenting pressure to not only succeed, but excel. Meanwhile, we're growing in our new-found freedom as young adults. It's surprising that anyone should be shocked that there is drinking and partying involving Lynbrook students.

When so much effort and time is spent on maintaining a good appearance, there are few offers of help to people who are hurting. Lynbrook is a good school, full of great educators and pupils all the same. It's safe to assume that no one looks at our school and instantly thinks, "These are some troubled children." But there are just as many people here who are suffering from issues that are easily overlooked as there are in any other school.

Noone can guess the difficult family situations, health conditions, and other problems each Lynbrook attendee has to deal with. And, because we've been trained to hide flaws so well, no one asks about it.

I think that's why there is drinking and partying amongst Lynbrook students. The stress from hidden dilemmas, the pressure from friends to fit in, the curiosity that alcohol strikes up, and the grueling workload which comes with the privilege of going to one of the best high schools in the nation all add up to empty bottles and a throbbing aftermath.

*"The Three Jack Osbournes: The one my parents knew was the funny, facetious, nice, loving son my parents know, who is truly caring. With my friends it was a crazy, insane, drinking, using, party animal who knew how to have a good time. And with the public, it was the one they wanted to vote out of the house."*

~Jack Osbourne

I surround myself with the type of people that I do, so drinking and partying is not a part of my world at all. I hear about it, occasionally. But for all I know, it's happening in another universe because my close friends and I are never involved in it ourselves. And I like it that way. I don't see any reason to drink or "party". I don't see how it could alleviate stress in the long run or solve any problems. It will only be a fleeting, meaningless escape. If I need to let out steam, then I just talk to someone (friends/sister/etc) and share my burdens. Teens speak of independence and growing up and finding themselves-by themselves. If they buy whatever the media tells them, they're conforming. I don't see why I should follow what media claims is the only way to "loosen up".

I will do it my way- I don't care if it's not cool or whatever. I'll be smart about how I deal with stress/ have fun- and take care of myself while I'm at it. I don't care if people scoff and claim I'm not "exploring the world" or whatever. Honestly, I don't think I would become a more mature, experienced, and developed person just because I drink and party.

*"Always remember that I have taken more out of alcohol than alcohol has taken out of me."*

*-Sir Winston Churchill*

Honestly, I think drinking at this age is a somewhat normal experience, and, as teenagers, we are prone to experimentation. My motivation for alcohol is not really for any physical or mental purposes, but rather as sort of a passtime when I'm with friends who happen to be drinking, but I don't seek it out compulsively. Before I drink, I think about two things; Do I trust who I am with? And how am I going to get home? While drinking can be fun, it is also dangerous, and I will only drink around trusted friends and if there is going to be a designated driver. There are times however when I choose not to drink, and these are usually times when I'm with strangers, or people are getting out of control, but I don't avoid parties due to liquor. I believe you can have a good time without alcohol, and I've done it many times before. Honestly, my relationships haven't been affected by my choices, because I don't allow them

to. I leave my party life when the party is over and return to my normal rituals. Alcohol dependency can ruin not only your relationship with others, but with yourself too, and that can be a very dark and lonely road to travel. Obviously I can't condone anyone to drink underage, but if you are going to drink, be responsible and trust the people you are with, and always, ALWAYS, have a sober person driving. You can have fun, but just be responsible.

*"Drinking is a way of ending the day."*

*-Ernest Hemingway*

February Break

"What happened last night?"

The question is spiraling through my brain while no answer seems to appear. I am familiar with where I am and yet, it is not home, it is not even San Jose for that matter. There are bodies surrounding me, lost in a drunken slumber soon to awaken to clench at their heads and search for that soothing clear liquid while others begin to release tension with those magical greens.

I remember walking, waiting, walking some more, waiting some more, and then plopping down on a couch. The night has been stolen from under me and with nothing to show for it.

"Where's the camera?"

The only evidence that I truly went out last night, but these pictures do not help me remember. Despite the humor found in some, I still am lost as to what happened. I can remember the last few days, the week while all full of drinking, it peeves me that this one night has been "lost" ...

Wasting away the days, recovering from the previous night, the events would begin between 8 and 9 where we would meet up and find our way to Safeway. Throwing down \$6 for our signature deep blue bottle and then about \$2 for our individual chasers- the night was ready to begin. Once inside the designated party we would uncup and begin letting the bottle make it's rounds; one, two, three, four, five, alright let's save some for later. A few minutes pass, let's continue; six, seven, we're almost done. Finishing off the bottle, nerves are no longer accessible, time to meet people. Indulging in petty conversations, only to talk about mutual friends, dislikes, likes, and



random gossip the night seems to go along without incident besides teen drinking and a puker here or there. A casual touch on the back, faces closer than soberly comfortable, we've lost our knowledge of one's insecurities, awkwardness, sometimes right from wrong. And yet, we're having a blast!

What seems to be a pathetic night to someone of drinking age is put down in the books for us. The craziness that arouses when the liquid taints our blood sets off this alarm in our minds that makes us crave more. With school classifying our weekdays, we search for the escape of the weekend in order to let loose and simply, drink. Although what happens when we go to far? Those nights we don't remember, those night that we regret.

Is it better to forget than regret?

I still haven't made my decision on that one, for this break has been both a trial and learning period in many ways. Drinking has been a part of my life for the last 3 to 4 years, some may say I've gone to far. But there are still those who have been along my side the whole time doing what I'm doing. We have not reached the point of dependence while others may find that hard to believe, we are still "normal" high schoolers (whatever that means) who can have a good-sober-time and maintain our Lynbrook 4.0s. Despite the ridicule we receive for our ways, I personally think drinking is not the devil's gift, but has prepared me for the future in so many ways. I've made my mistakes, and yet learned so much, and still have quite some ways to go. With college around the corner it is only about to get crazier to which I do applaud those who have managed to stay sober throughout high school but I wish the best on those who begin to experiment shortly. It's those "lost" nights that tell me to be careful, but it's those "half-lost" nights that keep me going. The most interesting stories have come from alcohol-based decisions and I do not intend to stop any time soon, maybe just slow down.

I've never found alcohol attractive. It never looked like something fun to do in my eyes. I don't know; I've never had it. I guess I shouldn't knock it if I've never tried it, but I don't think I will anytime soon. At any party or event serving alcohol, I'd probably be the person looking for some water or a soda while avoiding the trademark red cups. I have friends who've had alcohol before, and I know some of the hazards of drinking, especially when

the drinker is underage. I suppose that's why I'm so discouraged by alcohol in general. In my opinion, it turns people into monsters when handled poorly, and that's nothing a teenager should have to experience. Please, drink responsibly.

I don't think people party or drink. Honestly, I've never been exposed to that sort of thing, and I like it that way. We study and get good grades, we don't have time to party or drink.

*Always do sober what you said  
you'd do drunk. That will teach you  
to keep your mouth shut.  
~ Ernest Hemingway*

Sometimes I really wish I went to some different, trashy school where partying, drinking, and doing drugs were normal. And I wouldn't be judged for letting go a little bit.

*"I know people that have blacked  
out that I party with that don't do  
anything irresponsible. They just  
act drunk, ... I don't think people  
should ever drink by themselves  
because they need to have friends  
around that can keep them in line in  
case they do blackout."*

*~Ryan Reynolds*

Drinking and Partying has changed so much over these past years. I remember freshmen year, when we were all so innocent. Now it's senior year and I am shocked. Every single senior has drank at least once. Including me. I'm not saying it's bad. But just looking back it's eye opening. I love drinking. I mean I'm so stressed about college and all of this bulls\*\*\*. And Lynbrook is just worse. People are so competitive in this school which sets the standards high for people. A little too high for people like me. So partying and Drinking over the weekend helps me relieve some of my stress. It's the only way I can escape and be carefree.

*Never be the first to arrive at a party or the last to go home and never, never be both.*

~David Brow

If people think that their alcoholic adventures at parties are secrets, they must be insane. Stories circulate around school about drunk girls getting felt up by drunk guys, drunk make-out sessions, drunk drivers, drunk people passing out and leaving their shoes at parties. Respect is lost all around. It's not just about having fun. We all get caught up in the moment. What harm can two more shots do?

But it's high school. Everyone is judged. If a girl gets wasted, she's labelled as easy. If a guy gets wasted, he gets labelled as a dumbass. Both have no self-control.

I see people who I hear stories about around school, and I honestly feel nothing but contempt. Do you really not have enough self-restraint to keep from downing more alcohol? Do you really not know your limits? Are you stupid?

I know it's fun. I know that everything is funnier when you're drunk. But it's just sad when someone is stumbling around, hardly knowing what's happening. They just have no ability to keep themselves from harm and be independent.

I don't think people party or drink. Honestly, I've never been exposed to that sort of thing, and I like it that way. We study and get good grades, we don't have time to party or drink.

Alcohol, definitely an acquired taste. Honestly I wouldn't go to a party that didn't have alcohol--- I wouldn't be able to relax and enjoy myself. I do have a little problem with beer....don't like the cheap stuff, and it's not like people bring German beer to parties. That's perfectly fine, I feel at home with hard liquor. ...Man I sound like an alcoholic, but I swear-- I'm not.

I am not looking to fly-- that feeling you get when you smoke. A drifting feeling is what I'm looking for, and it's what I get from alcohol. I wish American teens had a better reputation with responsible drinking...then maybe we'd have a chance of lowering the drinking age, but no luck there. Most parties I've been to were filled with sloppy drunks. It bothers me just the tiniest bit when I lie to my parents about what I've been doing, but hey, I always come home sober, so it's all good.

*"I feel sorry for people who don't drink. When they wake up in the morning, that's as good as they're going to feel all day."*

~Frank Sinatra

Drinking is horrible. Even if you take a few sips, it can affect other people when you're driving. When my uncle was a young adult, he was at a party one night. He was drinking with his friends, and they drank a lot, about two or three bottles a person. At night, they decided to go home from the party. My uncle was the one driving with his four other friends in the car. He started driving and as he was, his head started to get all woozy. The lights became into a million blurs and he didn't now which way he was going. His friends didn't notice his horrible driving either because they were also extremely woozy. Then, the car slammed into another on the highway and they all blacked out. My uncle woke up in a hospital with his family by his side, streaming in tears. They told him that all four of his friends were killed in the impact. He had to go to court, and he was charged with the crime of

murder. That day hit him hard. He was never going to see them again. They could've all been married, raising kids, and keeping in touch with each other. They could've had many more parties, many more memories. Many more years to live. Instead, they died because of a stupid accident from drinking, costing their lives. He never felt the same way again, knowing that he killed his own friends.

*Beer makes you feel the way you ought to feel without it."*

*~Henry Lawson*

I'm getting tired of working so hard, receiving those grades that don't even make up to a 4.0. I'm tired of hearing from my parents that if I "try my best" they will "always be happy." I'm tired of that bulls\*\*\*. I know i'm acting like a spoiled brat here, but i'm tired of everything that makes me so stressed and emotionally depressed. Alcohol isn't something I drink, I hear it's something that gets your mind off of things and even for a split second, gives you some time off to relax. I want to drink it, I want to party, and just ditch this school life of mine that makes me stressed to the point where I pull my hairs off.

I'm just real tired. I can't do this anymore. I want to just drink alcohol and forget about everything. I don't want to be a goody two shoes that everyone thinks is a "hard working nerd."

I can't compete with anyone, 1 hour of work to them is equivalent to 3 hours of hard work to me...

I just stare at the sky sometimes drinking soda instead of beer pretending i'm in space far away from school, family, friends, and everything. Just far away..

I'll admit it: I drink everyday. No, I don't mean I water. I mean drink. It's just something to do, I suppose, every time I come home after school. It'll be around 3'o clock when I got back, and I'll pour myself a cup or two—not enough to get me crazy

or high or whatever it is that others drink for, but just enough so that I can calm down and the world seems like a better place again. It might seem weird, but drinking keeps me awake. I don't drink to make friends, and I don't drink because of peer pressure—hell, nobody's told me to drink, and I've gotten more raised eyebrows than anything else.

When I drink, I drink properly. No fruit extracts or additives—just the pure, unadulterated liquid in a nice porcelain cup. The taste grows on you after a while, and you can start to really appreciate the different layers of flavor hidden behind the bitterness. It's a wonder how something fermented can taste this good. (I've heard that some people drink it with sugar, and even milk, to cover up the bitterness. That just sounds nasty to me.)

Plus, it's healthy, too—hasn't many studies shown that drinking is good for your heart?

Perhaps my drinking is not justified, but everyday, at three-o'clock in the afternoon (besides maybe weekends when my parents are watching), I still do it anyway.

*"I am, indeed, a king, because I know how to rule myself."*

*~Pietro Aretino*

Everyone loves parties. Who doesn't like having a great time, and forget about stress? Some may say they don't, because they don't get invited to any. GET SOME. I'm not saying that you HAVE to drink to have a good time. But everything is so much more fun when your either drunk or tipsy. There isn't JUST alcohol at parties, there's other substances ;) At parties, I usually drink at because I have a high tolerance, and also because the drinking games are unbelievably fun! Because I have a high tolerance, I can last longer during Shot Chess or Kings Cup and get the satisfaction of winning :) The only parties I don't drink a lot at are with the nerds, because they can't handle it. So many good memories with Mr. X while we were getting it on! Before I take a shot, in my mind I am thinking "Hell yeah! Bring it on! I love the taste of

whiskey!” And after taking a shot I think “Damn. That felt good.” I feel like drinking makes me even MORE outgoing than I already am. But after being to so many parties, I have decided that I’d rather just drink till I get tipsy. The best memory that I have was how I jumped my friend Mr. Mary and Jane in the shower, and then went pole dancing on the street. Wacky, but good times. Being drunk makes me a slut. A very fun slut to be around.

*“Alcohol removes inhibitions - like that scared little mouse who got drunk and shook his whiskers and shouted: “Now bring on that damn cat!”*

*~Eleanor Early*

**D**rinking. Hm. Where do I begin? How about a personal experience.

The thing you should know about me is I’m a guy who appreciates fine food. Unlike most Americans, who will put absolute crap in their mouths, I actually want to enjoy eating. Oreos? You must be kidding. Costco pizza? I’d rather die of cancer. And just as food is important, the beverage that one drinks is important. It’s just plain stupid to have high-quality food, and then drink it with something like mango juice, or milk. It’s like putting a \$50 lens on a \$2000 camera. Don’t do it.

But, I digress. The story. I was at the grocery store, buying good, pure food. Belgian chocolate, 60%. Ripe, sweet, and juicy strawberries. Incontrovertibly, they make the perfect combination of two basic foods. However, I wanted to go beyond the textbook combination of chocolate and fruit. I saw a bottle of Muscat de Beamus de Venise, a prestigious dessert wine. Of course, I grabbed it and proceeded to the register.

The clerk pulled items out of my basket. First the chocolate, then the berries, and finally the wine. The clerk said to me, “What’s this doing in here?” I told him, “Oh, the Muscat? You see, it complements the sweetness of the fruit, while contrasting the bitterness of the chocolate.” The clerk said, “Um, if you want to buy this you’re gonna need a parent or some ID.” I rebutted, “Look, I’m not gonna drink it on the

way home. I just want to pair it with my food.” The clerk finally said, “Sorry kid. It’s illegal.”

With nothing to do, I regrettably returned the Muscat to the shelf and bought the other two items. When I got home, I had the strawberries and the chocolate and they were wonderful. But, I began to feel thirsty. I thought of the wine, but all I had available was apple cider. I thought to myself, It’s worth a shot. I had a bite of the Belgian and then a sip of cider. F\*\*\*, I thought, as the citrus of the cider hit my tongue like fingers on a chalkboard. Pardon my colorful language, but chocolate with cider is just f\*\*\*ing stupid.

I have strong opinions about alcohol. The reason that alcohol is such a big deal in the United States is that, in a nutshell, American teenagers are just s\*\*\* stupid. Alcohol exists for a reason. In some forms, like wine, champagne, and beer, it simply tastes good. In the case of wine, it is sometimes even necessary. Food and wine pairing is what makes great food stand out as even better. Even the best food, like a soufflé from the best restaurant in Paris, cannot be completely satisfying without an appropriately matched drink. Eating a quiche? Try it with some Pinot grigio. Enjoying a hearty beef stew? Pair with a glass of Cabernet Sauvignon. Pairing a food with a good wine can completely enhance the dining experience.

The benefits of food and wine pairing are the reason why people drink so much in Europe. Children of all ages enjoy glasses of reds, whites, and bubbly along with their elders. Restaurants do not hesitate to serve alcohol to minors in countries like France, Italy, and Spain. When I was in Barcelona during part of my summer, the concierge at my hotel handed me a complimentary glass of champagne. I graciously accepted, and my somewhat European mother didn’t mind. Why are Europeans so lax about alcohol? Because they view alcohol as a principle part of eating that ought to be enjoyed by everyone.

Unfortunately, the United States is not like Europe. Americans don’t drink in order to enhance the subtle flavours of their food. Rather, they drink for a variety of s\*\*\* stupid reasons. These reasons include: to increase probability of coitus, to make oneself more sociable, to make oneself less nervous, and to make oneself more fun and outgoing. Although sociability, fun, and coitus all sound great, the truth is that Americans usually end up



drinking until they get completely s\*\*\*faced. This means heads in toilets, puke in back seats of cars, and friends sobbing in an alcoholic rage as you try not to be seen in public. Even worse, drinking in the US can lead to pregnancy, rape, car accident mortality, fatal alcohol intoxication, and more. Lovely.

It doesn't stop there. Because Americans drink to get s\*\*\*faced, not because it tastes good, they completely disregard the taste factor. Instead of enjoying great alcoholic drinks like traditional Bavarian beer, New World Oak Chardonnay, and Cabernet Merlot, Americans invent their own ways of ingesting alcohol. These include bad-tasting canned beers, hard liquors, and cheap wine coolers. Recently, they've outdone themselves with a toxic chemical branded "Four Loco." These drinks are proof of Americans' stupidity with alcoholic drinks. I mean, seriously, Four Loco? As in the words of College Humor, what the f\*\*\*, America?

The only reason that Americans have to be so strict about giving alcohol to teenagers is that they're so s\*\*\* stupid. Fierce restriction on alcohol in the US is the result of the stupidity of American teenagers regarding the consumption of said alcohol. I can't enjoy a dessert wine with my dessert because American kids love getting s\*\*\*faced. My request is this: I want stupid people to stop drinking. If you don't have a high enough IQ to know that five bottles of Bud Light is a bad idea, you don't deserve to drink. I want stupid people to not literally kill themselves with alcohol and make the people who want to actually enjoy alcohol suffer. Wine, champagne, and beer can be a great thing. But please, stupid teenagers, don't ruin it for the rest of us. Please, put down that can of Four Loco so I can have my Muscot de Beamus de Venise in peace.

*Wine is bottled poetry.*

*~Robert Louis Stevenson*

Drinking and parting is the bread and butter of high school. Drinking just makes everything better and more relaxed. Sure you may do some stupid s\*\*\* but it's worth it. I went to a party, had around 7 shots some jungle juice and couple jello shots. I was pretty gone but remember the whole

night. It was probably the best night of my life. I don't understand why people are so uptight about it. As long as you're smart about it and know what your maximum capacity is, it's all good. I guarantee if you have some alcohol and go to a party, you'll have a lot of fun. Of course you could go to a sober party but it's a different kind of fun. At sober party's, you don't have guts. Your conscious is more aware and you don't take as many risks and with many risks comes great reward. It's just fun and stress relieving to get wasted one night, and just let loose.

*There's always some amount of gradual, slow burning destruction over the course of partying.*

*~Gavin DeGraw*

N- They called you what? And they tried to play it off as a joke? What kind of sick ignorant people think that's funny? Here's what's funny, they did that to stop me from making a drunken mistake with you, but they themselves were drunk when they said that. I never meant to see you that night, but I happened to stumble into that house and when you saw me and picked me up and twirled me around the sober part of my conscious whispered to me we weren't getting out of here unscathed. You put your hands on my waist and led me around; you gave me a drink (and then a few more), and whispered cute things in my ear. My friends frowned at us and yours did too. But when you put your arms around me and kissed me I pulled you in closer, even though you have a girl, even though I know your reputation as a player. That night, for a few hours I let the liquor take control of my imagination and I pretended that life was actually as easy as this and it wasn't wrong and you could maybe be mine. Is it bad that I nearly don't remember that kiss, or bits of that night at all, the walk home was a blur, all I really remember is holding your hand and thinking how easily it fit with mine. Of course now we don't talk, not nearly as much as we use to, and attempts to see each other always seem to be dead ends. I miss you, maybe some drunken Saturday I will see you again. -K

I've had spiked coke before, and it tasted good. Mostly because I was in middle school when I got my first taste of alcohol and I felt bad to the bone. I felt cooler than my friends. Hell, I felt cooler than the whole school! Now, I look at others who go to parties and get drunk and pass out and get in trouble, and I think to myself: What was I thinking that night, when I had my first taste? Was I even thinking? What if I had continued to drink...and drink...and drink? Where would I have ended up?

To me, alcohol is disgusting. It stings your tongue. Its smell is comparable to that of rotten potatoes. Why would people drink that stuff? Why would my dad drink one tall glass of said vile concoction every single night, giving my concerned mother the excuse "work was tough today"? Frankly, my dad under the influence of alcohol scares me. Without his daily margarita/brandy/whiskey, he magnifies the tiniest issues and makes them seem like the start of the next World War. With alcohol, he skips the lecture stage and goes straight to the scream-at-the-top-of-his-lungs-so-loud-that-everyone-on-our-street-knows-he-has-had-his-daily-drink stage.

If offered alcohol, I know that I will have the nerve to say no. According to a conversation between my parents [which I shamelessly overheard], my dad started drinking when he was a junior in high school, my age. My stomach sank out of shame because I had my first drink four years before. If only I could "un-drink" it...

*The first thing in the human personality that dissolves in alcohol is dignity. ~Author Unknown*

It's illegal for an under-21 minor to consume alcohol in the u.s- not that it stops some people. i had alcohol once, in a different country, with different rules. pretty sure it was still illegal though. someone poured me a glass, and i hesitated at first. no one would get me into trouble or anything, because it was just the norm- underage drinking was not uncommon. and why did i hesitate? i felt that once i took a sip, all of my innocence would be gone. childhood, officially far beyond reach, no going back. adulthood, lurking closer and closer. but i took

a sip, and then just drank the rest in one breath. alcohol tastes bad, really bad. but i guess those regular consumers of alcohol just choose something better tasting, or just ignore it, or just drink the alcohol faster to reach that point where you can't taste your tongue anymore. and so that's what i did, drinking until my brain got fuzzy without realizing it, and until the taste from my numb tongue was gone. but the escape that i was hoping to find never came. instead of being drunk to the point where nothing mattered, suddenly everything that had mattered to me crashed down on my alcoholated brain. everything that i had lost, mistakes i had made, regrets, the impossible. down down down down. the mask i had constructed for myself broke down, and it hasn't been as good as it was before ever since. though. i have to say, people do look many times more attractive than they usually do under the influence of alcohol. experimentation with that for me though, will have to wait until after 21. i'd like to think that i can get myself a significant other without the influence of drugs, thanks.

*"I envy people who drink - at least they know what to blame everything on."*

*~Oscar Levant*

Okay, let's admit that writing a story for Aletheia is lame. And yeah, some of the submissions are seriously cringe-worthy. But the rape victim stories, real or not, made me realize how ignorant I really am about what goes on at Lynbrook. So here goes my entry for "Drinking and Partying":

...Yeah. I don't drink, don't party. I didn't know a lot of students did that. Besides, I think alcohol is DOWNRIGHT NASTY, and not because I see it as taboo or anything. When I see all those beer ads I truly wish I could enjoy an ice cold beer too. My parents even offer me the stuff at parties. But seriously, I think it's disgusting, and I thought it was just me but my coach attested, and I quote: "Alcohol is GROSS. Anyone who says they enjoy it is lying and trying to fit in." Hey, that makes a lot of sense. I hear about partying and booze-drinking at colleges, and quite

frankly, if it's part of the experience, I want to try it sometime too. Hopefully I won't be a complete idiot and binge-drink because "everyone else is doing it". Another downside? Seeing my parents and relatives drink, I'd probably turn a similar shade of bright pink if I overindulged on the alcohol. And parties sound sweaty and crowded. So I'll just chill in my house on Friday nights and weekends, or whenever my fellow classmates are partying hard or something.

*"Resist peer pressure. Everyone else is doing it." -Anonymous*

I've never drunk alcohol before. Actually, I take that back. I might have had a sip of white wine once. The thing is, my parents were very careful about what they fed me while I was growing up. They didn't even let me have coffee ice cream because of the caffeine content-- there was no way they would let me drink alcohol. And I guess that mentality kind of carried over to me.

I've been told countless times before about addiction and its consequences, and I'm going to be firm and protect myself. I'm not going to start. Period. If I can, I'll avoid drinking until I'm like, 30. Haha, call me prudish, I don't care. I'm going to take care of myself.

I have this theory that a lot of people who drink at a young age drink to escape something, to distract some kind of pain in their life for a momentary burst of happiness. But that feeling just fades.. and quite frankly, I'd rather find a source of joy that lasts longer than that...

I hear that apparently drinking and partying is really common among the upperclassmen, but I've never directly experienced anyone even telling me about it. That'll probably change, which I think is so sad.

I was talking to an upperclassman friend the other day, and she was talking about a friend who used to be so innocent, but now he was doing drugs during school and partying over the weekend. Listening to this, I can't help but hope that my classmates don't turn like that... my classmates who I went to Miller with, my classmates who I watched shoot up in height, my classmates who I made fun of certain teachers (we all know who) with. I don't want to watch them struggling with school or family prob-

lems or peer pressure to a point where they waste away and party/ drink over the weekend just to deal with the stress, just to have that momentary happiness.

Everyone's talking about alcohol. You should drink, it feels good. Don't drink son, it's s\*\*\*. First of all, don't talk if you don't drink. I read this whole page and it says "include a personal experience." Second of all, the people who say feels good don't drink. Their liars. I didnt know that then. I'm telling you now.

You should... Good stuff... Scared... Man up.. for me I heard more good stuff about beer. I tried it. Not just me. Beer was just like red bull, like a coke. For us It's another drink that does stuff. Sure everyone says it does stuff. In PE they say it kills your liver. They say everyone think they're stronger then addiction. They say we think we can stop whenever. They say our bros made us. F\*\*\* that. Why I drank? It felt good. I said everyone says it does stuff. S\*\*\*, up down left right f\*\*\*ing everyone says it does stuff. You know what though. Nobody ever told me what happens when it stops doing stuff. It's like cutting class. It feels good. I'm with my girl and were smiling. Then bam. Next day. I have homework i don't know how to do. I got test to take. I got in trouble because the teacher reports me. What do I do. Cut class. I'm with my girl and were smiling. Sure. drinking feels good. You know what though. Stopping drinking feels like s\*\*\*. Man up and clean that s\*\*\* up. Go to Mrs. Marsh and settle it because sure you feel good when you drink. But every second you don't drink feels like sh\*\*. You know what though. I stopped and look back. And i go over to rainbow in the rain. And feel it drizzle with my girl on the grass. That's f\*\*\*ing happiness.

Yeah sure. Beer's cool. It kills your liver it's addicting feels f\*\*\*ing good does s\*\*\* and makes you broke. What's to complain about?

*"A drink a day keeps the shrink away." -Edward Abbey*

When I look back on that night, I don't know why I did it. It was a dumb decision, and, I hope that by reading this, you'll never make it yourself. It was Friday night. My parents were gone for the weekend. I was bored. So, naturally, I opened the fridge. Ok, come on. Be honest. We all do this, right? At least so far, this could have happened to anybody. Like I said, I opened the fridge and lazily scanned the contents. Bread. Milk. Eggs. Leftovers. My mom's ready-made soy smoothies. Nothing too appealing. I was losing my appetite just looking at it. As I was about to shut the door, the beer bottles in the bottom side drawer rattled against each other. They were my dad's. He must have had at least two packs in there. I don't know what possessed me to do it. I will never. Ever. Do it again. It's something I will always regret. But I stooped down low and grabbed a New Castle from the pyramid shaped stack in the clear plastic drawer. I didn't even think about. Just flipped off the cap on the corner of the granite counter and took a sip before taking with me as I headed out into my backyard.

I don't remember drinking it. One second the bottle was filled right to the neck. Next thing I know, I look down and there's not a drop left. I don't know how long it was. Hours? Maybe I drank it all in one sip? Doubt it. I didn't really have time to think about it as I ran for the agapanthus bushes, clutching my stomach. I remember crying and lying back in the sun on the hot pavement. I didn't care. It was my backyard. No one could see me. I spent the whole afternoon out there. Slipping in and out of consciousness. It was the worst day of my life. By the time I came back inside, it was 11:00 at night. I slipped into a much-needed bubble bath after brushing my teeth several times to get the taste of beer and vomit out of my mouth. I didn't dare look in the mirror. When my parents came home the next morning, I faked a sore throat and a fever and managed to convince them I had the flu. I was never a particularly bad kid. I grew up in good neighborhood. My parents were responsible. This can happen to anyone. So next time you feel tempted, for whatever reason, resist. Please. You won't regret it. clutching my stomach. I remember crying and lying back in the sun on the hot pavement. I didn't care. It was my backyard. No one could see me. I spent the whole afternoon out there. Slipping in and out of consciousness. It was the worst day of my life. By the time I came back inside, it was 11:00 at night. I slipped into a much-

needed bubble bath after brushing my teeth several times to get the taste of beer and vomit out of my mouth. I didn't dare look in the mirror. When my parents came home the next morning, I faked a sore throat and a fever and managed to convince them I had the flu. I was never a particularly bad kid. I grew up in good neighborhood. My parents were responsible. This can happen to anyone. So next time you feel tempted, for whatever reason, resist. Please. You won't regret it.

*When the wine goes in, strange things come out.*

*~Johann Christopher Friedrich von Schiller*

Today's intoxicated actions are merely an exploration of yesterday's sober desires.

Guzzle down that sadness down with some alcohol, smoke out the fear inside of yourself, put on that party smile and run away momentarily. Run away? Run away from what exactly? If only such a metaphor could be more literal and we could all simply run away from ourselves and create an alternate persona. No, you can't just run away from yourself. Even if you're lost in the adrenaline, in the flurry, or in the madness, your sadness is still your sadness, your fears are still your fears, and your character is still your character. You are still you. Let yourself run wild, and afterwards veil your regrets with the cloak of alcohol one more time. Tell everyone it wasn't you. Tell everyone it wasn't you. It wasn't you. You never would have. You swear, you never would have even considered it. Only you know, though. Only you know about that flash of deliberation, that fleeting curiosity, that guilty wonder.

Boom. Now you're set up with the opportunity. Alcohol pulsing through your veins, smoke ventilating out of your nose, seize the moment. Grab it. Now! You've lost most of your senses anyway, who is even to blame? Not you, certainly not you. You never would have. You swore, you wouldn't have even considered it...



What's the first thing that comes to mind when you read or hear "red cup"? Years ago, for me, it would have been little more than just another sort of cup. Even after entering college, it wasn't until the end of Winter Quarter that I understood exactly what Beer Pong was.

Call me sheltered or whatever you want, but the fact of the matter is that I have absolutely no interest in alcohol at all. Maybe it's the part of me that adamantly refuses to buy into mainstream things like Disneyland passes or coffee. Maybe it's my secret fear that alcohol has the power to consume someone like me who can be obsessive of certain foodstuffs. Maybe it's from all the stories about drunk drivers ruining lives.

But when it comes down to it, what's so great about loud music I know I won't like, atmosphere stuffy with smoke, and drinks that are typically an acquired taste? Go ahead and accuse me of hating on change, but you know what? That can of coca cola can make me just as amusing as a drunk person. In fact, I don't even need the soda.

For some reason, college students seem bent on the idea that you need to have alcohol around in order to have fun, but I don't buy it. Sure, everyone has their own definition of fun, and sure, the whole, "As long as my friends are with me, it's fun!" idea isn't always true. But the way I see it is that we already have so little control in our lives. Why give up control of our body?

That's not to say I look down upon partying and drinking. I just prefer to keep away from such things myself, but if happens it happens. My best friends drink, and I trust that they drink responsibly. If I'm with them, I trust that I'll be the sober factor that will keep them from doing anything stupid.

To those of you who drink: Go ahead. But don't be that drunk driver. Drink responsibly.

*"First we make our habits, then our habits make us."*

*-Charles C. Noble*

Hmm alcohol, my best friend yet my worst enemy. I started drinking freshmen year, just occasionally when we could somehow manage to get someone older to buy it for us, which wasn't very often. Now, drinking has become an every week kind of thing. I wouldn't call myself an alcoholic... but I do drink to get drunk. Which I guess comes with the consequences. I frequently black and on occasion, puke. But come the next week, I'm doing the same thing over and over again. I enjoy drinking and even though I feel like s\*\*\* once I have hit the point of no return, I regret nothing. I have made the worst decisions while drinking and it still affects me to this day. Letting guys take advantage of me is the frequent offender. I forget all my morals and respect for myself. I let go of who I am just to please this guy for the night. Way too many one night stands already. And as a girl, one night stands always come back to bite me in the ass. I always question myself after it and my self-esteem goes way down since I'm left wondering why this guy hasn't texted or called me. But girls, just a heads up, don't believe everything a guy says to you because they WILL say anything, ANYTHING, just to try to control you or get in your pants. Alcohol has also made me feel even worse when I was already at my lowest point. It made me turn my thoughts into a reality. My thoughts about my existent were intensified so much that I had prepared all the steps necessary to end it all by my own hand. You may be thinking... does this girl not realize that if she didn't drink none of these things would have happened to her?! Yeah I realize that, but I enjoy living life. Making mistakes is the only way to learn. And now I'm learning how to gain back that respect for myself and I guess I can say thank you alcohol. I have experienced so many situations that I believe have made me stronger. I have a hard time sharing my feelings to others and yes sometimes the emotional drunk comes out in me. But it isn't always a bad thing, it saved me from doing those stupid things. I plan to keep on living my life how it is. Drinking with friends has made some of the best memories... even if some of those nights were a definite blur. The "what the f\*\*\* happened last night" are some of the best nights! You only have one high school experience, so take full advantage of it. And another piece of advice, have a little bit of experience with alcohol/partying before your senior year starts. You gotta show those underclassmen how it's really done. So party on Lynbrook kids, party on.

I love alcohol. It helps me forget about my f\*\*\*ing parents and my f\*\*\*ing school. I sometimes think about the effect it could have on my health, but then I am like f\*\*\* it. I don't think I can live without alcohol. I would probably end up dying from the stress in my life. My parents drink, and they seem to be fine. So if they can, that means I can do it too right? No one knows I drink, and it is hard to keep it a secret. At school I am kind of a good kid, but as soon as I leave the campus I am a changed person.

*I tend to stay up late, not because I'm partying but because it's the only time of the day when I'm alone and don't have to be performing.*

*~Jim Carrey*

I seriously don't understand why anyone would need drinks for a better party experience. Seriously. Why the f\*\*\* are there people who f\*\*\*ing need to get drinks illegally to f\*\*\*ing party? Granted the alcohol does make you feel more relaxed, but wasn't the party supposed to f\*\*\*ing already make you do that? Does the f\*\*\*ing 4% alcohol drink really make you feel that much better about yourself? To be honest, I don't think most of the people there do f\*\*\*ing drink for relaxation. I believe that they do it for the f\*\*\*ing acceptance in their social world. I did something f\*\*\*ing like that once. A bunch of my friends bought f\*\*\*ing beer for a party. They offered me some, and because I didn't want to feel left out, I said, "Fine f\*\*\*ers." and took the drink. Although I didn't get drunk at the time, I still felt bad about myself for not f\*\*\*ing having the self respect for declining the drink. In addition, I don't know why every f\*\*\*ing person in the f\*\*\*ing world has to think that a f\*\*\*ing high school party has to have f\*\*\*ing alcohol involved. The closest thing that the parties I go to is the f\*\*\*ing hand sanitizer, and no one would want to get drunk off of that. What's wrong with these f\*\*\*ing people?

## Maureen Johnston, MFT

Maureen R. Johnston is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. She provides psychotherapy and counseling for teens, children, and parents in her private practice at Associated Counselors in San Jose. She is the mother of a student at one of the Cupertino high schools and has been involved with the local schools for many years. She can be reached for information or consultation at 408-871-9180 or [mj\\_therapist@yahoo.com](mailto:mj_therapist@yahoo.com). For more information, go to [www.maureenjohnston.com](http://www.maureenjohnston.com) or [www.AssociatedCounselors.com](http://www.AssociatedCounselors.com).

Just a cursory glance through the students' submissions for this issue makes it very clear that there is a significant number of Lynbrook students who are drinking alcohol, and many are not just "experimenting", but frequently drinking to excess. Many of us whose children attend high achieving schools don't want to believe our teens are drinking, or that drug use is a problem at our kids' schools. We like to think this is something that happens at other, less "successful", high schools. We especially don't want to believe that our son or daughter is one of "those" kids. However, according to the 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Survey of high school students, during the past 30 days:

42% drank some amount of alcohol.

24% binge drank.

10% drove after drinking alcohol.

28% rode with a driver who had been drinking alcohol.

These are scary statistics, especially when we consider how people tend to under-report bad behavior on these types of surveys. Extrapolating from this data, we can estimate that almost half of all our high schoolers drank some alcohol in the last month, and a quarter of them drank several alcoholic beverages in one sitting. What's even more frightening is how many teens either drive a car or are a passenger in a car whose driver has consumed alcohol. (If you're interested in more statistics about teen drinking and use of other drugs, check out the links at the end of this article.)

Since so many of the students' submissions focused primarily on alcohol, throughout most of this article I will also mainly discuss their substance use as "drinking". This is not to minimize the use and abuse of other drugs such as marijuana, cocaine, prescription drugs, ecstasy, inhalants, etc. Just because these substances were not specifically mentioned by this sample of students, please do not be lulled into thinking it is not happening at the high school.

Something that I sometimes hear from the parents of the teens who have been caught drinking is a sense of relief that it is "only alcohol". It is important to remember that alcohol is a drug, and it is a very powerful, addictive drug that is widely available. It is possible to misuse and abuse alcohol, and even to develop alcoholism as a teenager. This is doubly unfortunate since the use of alcohol is particularly destructive to young brains which, since they are still developing, are more vulnerable to many of its negative effects.

Why?

As is suggested by some of the students' stories, there's a number of different reasons why teenagers drink or use other drugs. Some of the most common are ...

To fit in. Since being a part of the peer group is so important for teens (this is a normal developmental stage they go through), many adolescents will drink when they're in a social situation and their friends are drinking. They don't want to appear like they're scared, a loser, or somehow different.

To forget about stress and relax. Just as many adults turn to alcohol to unwind after a stressful day, teens have learned that they can – at least temporarily – forget about how stressed they are after a couple of drinks.

To act like a different person. Alcohol is a central nervous system depressant which lowers our inhibitions, and this can help us loosen up and do things we normally would not do. We feel more confident, able to talk more easily, and more adventurous.

Because it's socially acceptable fun. In our society, the use of alcohol at parties, sports events, and restaurants is considered normal, and even expected. We are all bombarded with advertising that shows beautiful exciting people drinking beer and having a great time. The companies that spend that much money selling their product know what people want to see. None of us are totally immune to the messages within these commercials.

They live with it. Alcoholism and other drug addictions are rampant in our society. According to Alcoholism Statistics.com ( <http://alcoholism-statistics.com/families.php>) "an estimated 6.6 million children under 18 live in households with at least one alcoholic parent." We know there is a genetic link that can make us predisposed or more vulnerable to the risks of substance abuse.

To self-medicate. While we may not like to think about it, many adolescents are struggling with depression, anxiety, and other psychological problems. Unfortunately, there are far too many teens who have already experienced some form of trauma and/or have been the victims of some form of abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect). Alcohol and other drugs help them forget their pain for awhile.

### Consequences of Underage Drinking

According the CDC, youth who drink alcohol are more likely to experience:

School problems, such as higher absences and poor or failing grades.

Social problems, such as fighting and lack of participation in youth activities.

Legal problems, such as arrest for driving or physically hurting someone while drunk.

Physical problems, such as hangovers or illnesses.

Unwanted, unplanned, and unprotected sexual activity.

Disruption of normal growth and sexual development.

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.

Death from alcohol poisoning.

In general, the risk of youth experiencing these problems is greater for those who binge drink than for those who do not binge drink.

### Some Warning Signs That Your Teen may be Drinking or Using Other Drugs

A drop in grades.

Withdrawing from family activities.

Breaking family rules about curfews, where they go, who they hang out with.

Skipping classes.

Becoming more defiant, resistant to authority, belligerent.

Moodier than is normal for them.

Dramatic shifts in mood and/or behaviors.

Strange smells. Using breath mints, gum, or perfumes to mask odors.

Bloodshot eyes.

Lying about their behaviors, who they're with, where they go.



### What Can You Do?

As a parent....

The best thing you can do is stay in contact with your teen. Talk with them everyday, but even more important - listen to them. Give them time and space to tell you what's important to them.

Pay attention to them. Know what's going on in their life, who they're hanging out with, what's going on in their classes. Stay aware of how much stress they're experiencing and how they're handling it.

Set a good example. If you drink or use other drugs, think seriously about the overt and covert messages you are sending. If you are overusing or abusing substances, get yourself help. You cannot help your child if you can't take care of yourself.

Talk with your kids about drinking and its effects. Openly discuss your values and beliefs about alcohol and other drugs. Share your fears about them getting hurt in a car accident or engaging in risky behavior if they drink. Try to get them to make a commitment to you that if they or their friends do drink, they won't get behind the wheel of a car. Make yourself open to picking them up at any time if they find themselves in that situation. Give them a card with the phone number of a taxi service and promise to pay the charges if they need to use it.

If you know or suspect your teen is using drugs and/or drinking alcohol, do not despair, you're not alone. Seek professional assistance, get you and your child into therapy, take them to an AA meeting, find what other resources are available at the school. Get yourself to an Al-Anon meeting where you can talk with other parents who are struggling with the same issues.

As a teen....

If you're worried about friends who use alcohol or other drugs, tell them you're worried about them. Never let a friend who's been drinking or taking other drugs drive. If they absolutely insist on driving, do not get in the car with them. If you're really worried, call the police. It's better for them to be angry at you for "snitching" than for them to end up seriously injured or dead from a drunk driving accident.

Hang out with friends who don't drink or take other drugs. There's plenty of teens who are not using.

While I in no way condone underage drinking or other drug use, it is clear that many adolescents are doing it. So, in the interest of risk management: if you are drinking, think about what you are doing and make good decisions. If you are going to use substances that are illegal, effect your brain, and alter your mood, behavior, and judgment, then exercise caution. Limit your consumption. Drink a big glass of water before every alcoholic beverage. Eat a good meal first. Never try to drive anywhere. Only use alcohol or other drugs with people you know well and can trust. Remember you are much more vulnerable when you're under the influence of these substances. Tell someone you trust where you're going to be and who you'll be with. Know that it is possible to become an alcoholic even if you are an adolescent.

Seek help if you think you might have a problem. Talk with an adult you trust. If you don't feel you know anyone that well – go to the school counselors, or call the teen hotline at 1-800-527-5344.

## Additional Resources

*Ten Best Gifts for Your Teen*  
Steve Saso

*Surviving Your Adolescents:  
How to Manage and Let Go  
of Your 13-18 Year Olds*  
Thomas Phelan, Ph.D.