

# What Parents Can Do About Teen Drinking

BY VAL FARMER

Teenage drinking. Every parent's nightmare. What can parents do about it? Here is some advice.

**Don't drink.** Your own example is paramount. You undercut your credibility when modeling a behavior you don't want them to try. Your determination and attitude will be stronger if you don't drink yourselves.

If you do drink, drink responsibly and for the right reasons. Escapist drinking or drinking that is out of control teaches the same style of drinking behavior to your children. One good reason not to abuse alcohol is to discourage your children from abusing alcohol. If you have lost control, seek help through Alcohol Anonymous (AA) or an alcohol treatment program.

Believe that alcohol in the hands of teenagers is a dangerous drug. It is dangerous because they are not yet adults. They are impulsive "risk takers" and feel invulnerable to harm.

Emphasize the legal age for responsible drinking.

Alcohol clouds judgement when there is still precious little judgement in the first place.

Drunk drivers cause more pain, heartache and destruction to families, to people and to property than almost anything else in this country.

**- Talk about alcohol and drugs with your children.** It is amazing that this subject is so seldom talked about before there is a problem. By then, it might be too late. Give guidelines and consequences for drinking behavior. Start early. The time to teach youth about alcohol use and abuse is in elementary school.

Research has shown that parents have a strong influence on whether their children drink when they make their attitudes and values crystal clear. Parents are the anti-drug.

Be clear about drunk driving or riding with drivers who have been drinking. Have alternate plans available for them if they are in a tight spot.

**- Zero tolerance.** Be firm and consistent in your policies. Have preset rules and consequences for drinking. Be consistent and follow through. Being soft on stupidity or disobedience is no favor.

Be aware of the sneakiness of youth. Kids lie. Expect that they will lie, but insist on the truth.

Come down hard on lies. Many parents learn sadly that they have been too naive and trusting when they shouldn't have been. Kids aren't truly happy when they have beaten their parents through deception. Be familiar with the symptoms of intoxication. Give them the security of knowing you are in control.

Parents, school officials and law enforcement get results when they apply firm policies and consequences for misbehavior. They need your support. Some youths take risks until they get into trouble. To them, the risk of further trouble isn't worth it. Siding with your kids to shield them from the consequences of their actions is a great disservice.



VAL FARMER

**- Know their friends.** Know what your kids are doing, where they are and who they are with. Know their friends. It is likely they share the same values as their friends and are influenced by them. Invite

them into your home. Host their activities. Wait up for teens at curfew times and visit with them after activities. Trust but verify their stories.

Encourage church youth group activities, extracurricular activities and associations with peers who strive toward goals. Positive peer pressure is just as real as negative peer pressure.

**- Talk with other parents.** Admit to having problems. Band together and support one another. Talk and coordinate with the parents of your children's friends. Together, you'll have greater control and knowledge. United parents can influence attitudes and practices in local communities.

**- Precautions.** Any alcohol in the home will be an inviting temptation for experimentation. Be absolutely clear with older siblings — you are against them introducing alcohol to their brothers and sisters.

Be careful of unattended houses. Leaving a teen home alone in the afternoons, in the evenings or on the weekend creates a vulnerability that a teen doesn't need.

**- Be an actively involved parent.** These kids aren't going to grow up by

themselves. Spend time with them. Communicate. Develop a feeling of family. Your bond with them counts. Teach them your values and principles. Have fun with them.

**Advice for teens:** Friends don't let friends drive drunk or ride with those who drive drunk. Drunk driving is not "cool." Don't laugh at it or ignore it. Give your opinion and take a stand. It may be too late to change some adults, but your generation can help stop this tragic problem.

Know that alcohol is dangerous. You have a future to protect. You are too valuable and life has too much to offer to let an alcohol-induced mistake derail your success.

Don't drink unless it is your idea. Drinking to be accepted by others is not responsible drinking. Many teens have found that others will respect and like them anyway even if they don't

drink. Be patient and find out if this isn't true for you too.

Be careful in choosing your friends. If your friends change and start doing things you don't like, back away and find new friends. You have a choice.

Learn to like yourself and who you are. Don't use alcohol as a short cut. It isn't the answer. It creates more problems than it ever solved.

*Val Farmer is a clinical psychologist specializing in family business consultation and meditation with farm families. He lives in Wildwood, Missouri and can be contacted through his website.*

## VISITING HOURS:

# April Is Parkinson's Awareness Month

This year, several members of the Yankton Area Parkinson's Support Group are sharing their experience with Parkinson's Disease (PD).

Beth: During the past year, PD continues to march on and so do I. I am having more problems swallowing, the facial "mask" of not showing emotion is more prevalent, and I'm having problems with "freezing" as I go about my daily routine. I now have to have the assistance of a rope to change my position in bed. I sometimes can't find the word I want in conversations with others and often my energy level is non-existent. However, all in all, I feel blessed. I continue to live in a place of gratitude for all I do have and all the wonderful people who are in my life, especially my dear family and friends who accept me as I am. Life is good!

Char: Ten years ago, I was always tired, even my family and friends commented on my fatigue. My eye doctor was concerned about my eyes looking almost closed. A few months later, I noticed my right leg seemed to drag a little. My medical doctor referred me to a neurologist but the actual diagnosis was made a year later by a specialist at Mayo Clinic.

Tom: My life has been a rollercoaster from the last 11 years when a doctor told me I may be showing symptoms of PD, but he wasn't sure. There are no blood tests, MRIs or other methods of diagnosis, only waiting for more symptoms to develop. Almost three years ago, I was diagnosed with PD and began treatment with the medication of choice, Sinemet. Recently, I experienced a terrible reaction to this medication. It affected me both mentally and physically. I was taken off all PD medications over three months ago and am doing fairly well. I continue to undergo testing to see if something else is causing my symptoms. The rollercoaster continues.

Sr. Kevin: In 2008, I was diagnosed with PD. A tremor in my right hand and arm was a symptom which I had for several years. I didn't think much about it because I had read that women of Irish descent often have a tremor that is passed on by the mother. My mother did not have a tremor but in my mind, being Irish was the cause of the

tremor. A nurse practitioner suggested I see a doctor about the tremor. After an examination by a neurologist and an MRI of my brain, the scan indicated a mild case of PD. Medication has lessened the tremor but I have occasional bouts of imbalance, dizziness and fatigue. Are these PD symptoms or my 81 years of living?

Laura: My dad was diagnosed with PD in 2005. As a family we had noticed symptoms in the late 1990s including tremor in his right thumb, small handwriting, softening of his voice, drooling saliva and leaning posture. He eventually started shuffling his feet and stopped swinging his arms when he walked. He bent so far forward that he could not see where he was walking and would bump his head. When he was in an unfamiliar or small place, his feet would "stick to the floor" and he would be frozen in place. Once we learned more about PD, we realized we had observed other symptoms for years before he was diagnosed: loss of smell and taste, pain and weakness in his hips and shoulders, no facial expression, chronic constipation and kicks or punches when he sleeps. By 2007, he was having difficulty in swallowing which caused food particles to get into his lungs, resulting in pneumonia. He quit walking in November 2010. As a daughter who spent a great deal of time with him, I had to adjust to these changes. Instead of him taking care of me, I was now helping take care of him. He passed away a couple of weeks ago at home with his wife of 69 years holding his hand. Along the way, I met a group of wonderful, supportive people in the Yankton Area Parkinson's Support Group. It was extremely important to have a source of information and education when dealing with PD in addition to have a shoulder to lean on when things become overwhelming.

Marilyn Bertsch (who's husband, Elton, along with Sister Harriet started our PD Support Group 15 years ago this month): PD came to our house when my husband, Elton, was 64. We didn't notice anything at first except he was moving slower. We attributed that to spending more time with his parents and walking at their pace. At a family reunion a cousin observed him walking down a

few steps. He asked Elton if he had some back problems. The response was, "My legs aren't working right." We soon became aware that his arms weren't working right either. His doctor referred him to a neurologist who not only diagnosed him with PD but informed him that he had probably had it for about 5 years. He was put on Sinemet immediately. In two weeks, he was walking like a new man. Elton died from PD at age 77.

Helen: My first symptom was a tremor in my right little finger when I used the "mouse" on my computer. The tremor progressed to my arm which caused the newspaper to shake while I was reading it. I am eight years past diagnosis and still on the initial medication but we've varied the dosage somewhat as the symptoms indicate. During this time, my osteoarthritis has become more of a problem that interferes with my daily life more than PD. The one strong constant in this journey has been the PD Support Group. At first it was a source of information that didn't seem to be available anywhere else. Then the knowledge that others were on the same journey was very encouraging and also somewhat discouraging at the same time. The best piece of information was that each of us is different, so the disease is different in each of us, even though some symptoms may be the same. My acceptance is not complete and probably won't be until my journey here is finished and I start a new "life" in the next life. Until then, I thank each of you for being good companions and making my journey more "acceptable."

The Yankton Area Parkinson's Support Group meets on the second Friday of each month (except December) at 1:30PM on the 3rd level of the Benedictine Center. There are no dues or fees thanks to the support of the Avera Sacred Heart Foundation. For more information, call Carol Hamvas (605) 665-7158.

*This weekly column is produced by the public relations office at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital to promote healthy lifestyles and provide useful medical information to our community.*

## BUDGET

From Page 1

equivalent)," he said. "As a result, teacher loads have become heavier."

Avon has also reviewed its staffing needs, said Superintendent Tom Culver. He fills multiple roles himself, as he also serves as elementary principal, athletic director and head football coach.

As a cost-cutting measure, the district will reassign courses taught by a retiring teacher rather than hire a half-time replacement, Culver said. The reassigned classes will come on top of the other teachers' daily load at no extra pay.

"Basically, volunteers are picking up the slack and helping out," he said. "That's one of the nice things about the people working here. They step right up to the plate, and it will be for the right reasons. They care about and help the kids. They certainly aren't in it for the money — South Dakota is 51st (in teacher pay)."

As another cost-cutting measure, the Avon district pays mileage to parents rather than operate a daily bus route, Culver said. The district operates two activity buses with drivers on an as-needed basis.

"Our budget for mileage, what we pay to parents, is \$55,000 this

year," he said. "A superintendent called me about our system, and he pays \$58,000 just for the salaries of his bus drivers. That doesn't include fuel, tires or the cost of the buses."

Paying mileage to parents brings another benefit, Culver said.

"It makes a huge difference in your community's Main Street," he said. "Twice a day, you have people in town, and they go to the store or get gas. I think it's good for the community."

Besides the budget cuts, voters have also responded with their pocketbooks, approving or allowing opt-outs of the state property tax freeze.

Scotland voters twice supported higher property taxes. The district initially opted out of the state property tax freeze for \$350,000 annually for five years. The district renewed the opt-out and is in the second of a five-year commitment.

"We are only using half the opt-out, so there is some flexibility to use reserve spending," he said.

Bon Homme is in the second year of a five-year opt-out for \$400,000 annually, Knudson said.

"We are making do with the opt-out but will be looking at options that least affect students over the next couple of years," he said. "Many cuts were previously made with the failure of the first two opt-out attempts in 2001-02."

Avon has not required an opt-out but would consider it, if needed, Culver said.

The three school districts in Bon Homme County have maintained steady enrollment, which has meant more state aid.

The Scotland district enrolls 261 students in K-12, an increase of 11 during the past two years, Alvey said. Those students amounted to about \$55,000 in additional state aid annually, including extra funding for small schools.

Avon has likewise seen a rise in its enrollment, said Superintendent Tom Culver. This year's 248 students in K-12 includes 53 through open enrollment. He looks for his district to surpass 250 students next year.

"If everything stays the way it is right now, we will have around 25 or 26 kindergarten students while we are graduating 15 seniors," he said. "That really helps to have 11 additional kids next year, which is a huge increase for a school our size."

The Avon district can absorb the larger class but won't add staff, Culver said. "Ideally, it would be two kindergarten teachers with a class of 25 or 26 students. But with the cut in funds, we won't do that."

With the cut in state aid, Avon stands to lose funding next year even with a greater enrollment, Culver said. He figures the district must cover another \$40,000 to meet the shortfall.

When it comes to finding more dollars, Avon will use a state law allowing capital-outlay funds to cover some other expenses, Culver said. "Basically it's a Band-Aid for those actual funding problems," he said.

The Avon district has held the line on spending for extracurricular activities but will keep those offerings, Culver said. With open enrollment, the district would lose students and far more state aid than it would save by cutting activities, he said.

That isn't to say that the Avon district wouldn't cut programs, Culver said. He pointed to previous boards and administrators who made tough decisions, such as eliminating the home economics program.

Despite the financial challenges, the Scotland district has positioned itself fairly well for the future, Alvey said.

"We have gone through some pretty difficult times in the past," he said. "We have the financial yet adjusted and now, we're set up a little bit better."

## GUARD

From Page 1

about the escape attempt or attack.

The prison, which has both maximum and minimum security wings, was locked down pending an investigation.

Berget and Robert were taken to the county jail in Sioux Falls, authorities said.

South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley said Tuesday that the state Division of Criminal

Investigation is investigating and more information would be released once the initial investigation and charging decisions are complete.

If the inmates are charged and convicted of murdering Johnson while trying to escape, prosecutors could seek the death penalty.

Gov. Dennis Daugaard said the state will act swiftly to bring the accused to justice and ensure the safety of prison staff.


"This incident is a somber reminder that our prison guards put themselves at risk, every day, to protect South Dakota from our worst criminals," Daugaard said in a statement.



**Mr. & Mrs. Pechous  
50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

The family of Laddie & Marlene Pechous request a card shower for their parents' 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on April 15, 2011.

Greetings can be sent to:  
30584 423rd Ave., Tabor, SD 57063.



**AM 1450  
MORNING COFFEE  
WEEKDAYS  
MONDAY-FRIDAY**

**Wednesday**  
7:40 Tammy Matuska  
8:15 Hy-Vee Chef Stacey  
8:45 Tracy Grottenhuis

**Thursday**  
7:40 Carmen Schramm  
8:15 Lisa Scheve  
8:45 Bruce Schield

**Friday**  
7:40 Steve Howe  
8:15 Pam Kettering  
8:45 Barb Clayton

**A SAFE PLACE, INC.**  
*A Counseling Center*



**Terre Berkland,  
MSW, CSW, PIP Therapist**

500 Park Street, Suite 13, Yankton

**605-661-5176**

• Children • Adults • Couples • Families

• Depression • Anxiety  
• Bipolar • Transitions  
• Behavior Management  
• Post Traumatic Stress

## Congratulations 2011 Hazel Hani Award Winner...Irene Hames



**Irene Hames**  
2011 Hazel Hani Award Recipient  
Avera Sacred Heart  
Volunteer of the Year



LEFT: 2011 Hazel Hani Nominees from left: (front) Irene Hames, Jan Revell, Eleanor Burbach; (middle) Gene Bullian, Leah Smith; (back) Chuck Mutziger, Al Koliner. Not pictured: Velma Kuchta.

We'd like to thank our 383 volunteers for their dedication, compassion and caring. National Health Care Volunteer Appreciation Week - April 10-16, 2011.

**Avera**  
Sacred Heart Hospital

Thank You

The family of Alberta Schweitzer would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who gave memorials, food, flowers, kind words of comfort and prayer during Alberta's illness and passing.

A special thank you to her Avera Majestic Bluffs "family" and Sister James Care Center for the loving care she received while a resident there. Thanks to Dr. Weber, the Avera Sacred Heart ED, medical floor nurses and ancillary staff. We are grateful to the UCC women who served lunch, Reverend Paul Opsahl, the VFW Auxiliary and Wintz & Ray Funeral Home.

We are blessed by the fond memories of our mother, grandmother and great-grandmother.

**Jack & Linda Dilts  
Keith & Dee Williams  
Dawn & Rick Sawtell & family  
Ryan & Jen Williams & family  
Chris & Veronica Dilts & family**