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GRADUATION SEASON USHERS IN DEADLIEST MONTHS FOR TEEN DRIVERS

GREATER WASHINGTON NONPROFIT URGES PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THWARTING TEEN DRINKING THIS SUMMER

Falls Church, VA, May 29 – Citing the fact that summer's arrival also ushers in that period (June – August) when the greatest number of U.S. teen traffic deaths occur¹, a Washington-metropolitan area alcohol education group is urging for parental involvement to combat both teen drinking and drunk driving this summer.

The Falls Church-based, nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) is providing area parents of teens with "Tips for a Safe Summer." WRAP's tips, designed to inform Greater Washington parents on how best to deter teen drinking during the dangerous summer months, include:

- **Know the Facts...** Underage drinking can lead to substantial harm including traffic crashes, violent crime, property crime, unintentional injury and at-risk sex. In addition, motor vehicle crashes still remain the leading cause of death of young people in the U.S.
- **Talk with Your Teen...** Studies time and time again have confirmed that parents can have a significant – if not most significant – impact as to whether their teens will engage in risky behaviors including the use of alcohol. Have open, caring, thoughtful, ongoing conversations on alcohol with your teen. Create clear family rules and expectations by setting a "no alcohol" rule and supporting such an environment with "zero-tolerance" consequences if such rules are broken.
- **Foster Self Confidence...** Instill self-confidence in your teen by talking with them about peer pressure. At some point, your teen will be offered alcohol. As the National Institutes of Health points out, "teens say they prefer quick 'one-liners' that allow them to dodge a drink without making a big scene."
- **Lay Down the Law...** The District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia all have zero tolerance laws making it a crime to possess, transport or purchase alcohol if you are under 21.
- **Beware of Your Civil Liability...** In most cases, it's unlawful for parents to allow their children's friends to consume alcohol in their home. If these same "friends" are later involved in a crash, the providing parents may be responsible for injuries, property damages and wrongful death. These same parents may also face criminal charges of contributing to the delinquency of a minor.

"On average, over ten teenagers die in U.S. motor vehicle crashes every day during the summer months," said Kurt Gregory Erickson, WRAP's President. ***"For too many parents, unfortunately, summer's unstructured time may also be a deadly time for their teenage children and their friends."***

"In 2013, the months of July and August were particularly deadly as that's when the greatest number of teens were killed in traffic crashes compared to other months that year."

In 2012, 28-percent of young drivers (15 to 20 years old) who were killed in crashes had a blood alcohol concentration level of 0.01 grams/deciliter, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. In that same year, 24-percent of young drivers died with a BAC of 0.08 g/dL.ⁱⁱ

According to the 2014 Monitoring the Future survey sponsored by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, nearly half (45.4%) of U.S. high school seniors don't view binge drinking on weekends as carrying a great risk. In addition and while alcohol use rates have declined consistently in the last half-decade, alcohol is still the drug of choice for all three surveyed age groups (8th, 10th and 12th grade students).ⁱⁱⁱ

In addition to its updated tips for parents to deter underage drinking and drunk driving this summer, WRAP also encourages parents to be aware of social networks their children use. Party promoters often prey on youth via social media sites and by promising a good time and access to alcohol for a fee, according to WRAP.

“Make no mistake about it, parents play an integral role in when and if their children drink alcohol,” said Erickson. ***“These tips are simply meant to reinforce their efforts to foster a healthy and safe summer for them and their teenage children.”***

The nonprofit [501(c)(3)] Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) is an award-winning public-private partnership working to prevent drunk driving and underage drinking. Through public education, innovative health education programs and advocacy, WRAP is credited with keeping the metro-Washington area's alcohol-related traffic deaths consistently lower than the national average. WRAP, however, may best be known to area residents via the organization's popular free cab ride service for would-be drunk drivers, SoberRide®.

For more information, visit WRAP's web site at www.wrap.org.

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ⁱ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration / Fatality Analysis Reporting System (below)

ⁱⁱ <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/812016.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.monitoringthefuture.org/pubs/monographs/mf-overview2014.pdf>

***15-20 YEAR OLDS KILLED IN MOTOR VEHICLE TRAFFIC CRASHES
BY MONTH OF THE CRASH, AND YEAR
FATALITY ANALYSIS REPORTING SYSTEM (FARS) 2009-2012 FINAL AND 2013 ARF***

Month	2009		2010		2011		2012		2013		2009-2013	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent								
January	340	8%	245	7%	229	6%	269	8%	218	7%	1,301	7%
February	279	7%	235	6%	233	6%	227	7%	186	6%	1,160	6%
March	328	8%	281	8%	263	7%	284	8%	240	8%	1,396	8%
April	347	8%	314	9%	291	8%	295	9%	255	8%	1,502	8%
May	382	9%	332	9%	302	8%	279	8%	245	8%	1,540	9%
June	387	9%	324	9%	320	9%	341	10%	309	10%	1,681	9%
July	393	9%	365	10%	366	10%	338	10%	312	10%	1,774	10%
August	399	10%	377	10%	356	10%	280	8%	318	10%	1,730	10%
September	334	8%	302	8%	269	7%	294	9%	269	9%	1,468	8%
October	338	8%	337	9%	374	10%	308	9%	266	8%	1,623	9%
November	344	8%	277	8%	319	9%	268	8%	265	8%	1,473	8%
December	299	7%	276	8%	299	8%	260	8%	248	8%	1,382	8%
Total	4,170	100%	3,665	100%	3,621	100%	3,443	100%	3,131	100%	18,030	100%