

CONTACT: Kurt Gregory Erickson
President

PHONE: W. 703-893-0461
CELL: 703-625-2303

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 13, 2017

PROM AND GRADUATION SEASON USHERS IN DEADLIEST MONTHS FOR TEEN DRIVERS

GREATER WASHINGTON NONPROFIT URGES PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THWARTING TEEN DRINKING

Falls Church, VA, April 13 – Citing the fact that spring and summer's arrival also ushers in that period (May – 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 prom and graduation season, as well as during the summer.

The Falls Church-based, nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) is providing area parents of teens with "[Tips for Parents.](#)" 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, purchase or consume 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.

"In 2015, an average of ten teenagers died in U.S. motor vehicle crashes every single 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."***

“Compared to other months that year, the months of May through August represented that period when the greatest number of teens were killed in traffic crashes in 2015.”

In 2015, 26-percent of young drivers (ages 15 to 20 years old) killed in U.S. crashes had been drinking (with a blood alcohol concentration [BAC] level of 0.01 grams/deciliter or higher according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration). That same year, 21-percent of young drivers killed in U.S. traffic crashes has a BAC of 0.08 g/dL or higher.ⁱⁱ

According to the 2016 Monitoring the Future survey sponsored by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, nearly half (48.4%) of U.S. high school seniors don't view binge drinking on weekends as carrying a great risk. In addition 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.”**

Founded in 1982, the nonprofit [501(c)(3)] Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) is a coalition of diverse interests using effective education, innovative programs and targeted advocacy to end alcohol-impaired driving and underage drinking in the Washington, DC metro area. Through public education, innovative health education programs and advocacy, WRAP is credited with keeping the metro-Washington area's alcohol-related traffic deaths historically lower than the national average. WRAP, however, may best be known to area residents via the organization's popular free safe 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 <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812363>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.monitoringthefuture.org/pubs/monographs/mtf-overview2016.pdf>

**15-20 YEAR OLDS KILLED IN MOTOR VEHICLE TRAFFIC CRAHSES
BY MONTH OF CRASH, AND YEAR
FATALITY ANALYSIS REPORTING SYSTEM (FARS) 2011-2014 FINAL & 2015 ARF**

Month	2011		2012		2013		2014		2015		2011-2015	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
January	229	6%	269	8%	220	7%	213	7%	227	7%	1,158	7%
February	233	6%	227	7%	191	6%	167	5%	195	6%	1,013	6%
March	263	7%	284	8%	240	8%	271	8%	243	7%	1,301	8%
April	291	8%	295	9%	256	8%	237	7%	268	8%	1,347	8%
May	302	8%	279	8%	247	8%	273	9%	320	10%	1,421	9%
June	320	9%	341	10%	309	10%	279	9%	314	9%	1,563	9%
July	366	10%	338	10%	312	10%	278	9%	302	9%	1,596	10%
August	356	10%	280	8%	320	10%	313	10%	316	10%	1,585	9%
September	269	7%	294	9%	271	9%	265	8%	274	8%	1,373	8%
October	374	10%	308	9%	267	8%	292	9%	323	10%	1,564	9%
November	319	9%	268	8%	267	8%	337	11%	273	8%	1,464	9%
December	299	8%	260	8%	250	8%	265	8%	256	8%	1,330	8%
Total	3,621	100%	3,443	100%	3,150	100%	3,190	100%	3,311	100%	16,715	100%