

**Lorain County Sober Truth on Preventing Underage Drinking  
(STOP)**

**Program Evaluation  
October, 2010**

**Prepared for:**

**Lorain County Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services Board  
(ADAS)**

**Prepared by:**

**Joint Center for Policy Research (JCPR) of the Public Services  
Institute at Lorain County Community College**

## **Lorain County Sober Truth on Preventing Underage Drinking Program Evaluation September 2010**

The Joint Center for Policy Research (JCPR) of the Public Services Institute at Lorain County Community College was contracted by the Lorain County Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services Board (ADAS) to evaluate the Lorain County STOP program from October 1, 2009 to September 30, 2010. The overall purpose of the project was to reduce or prevent underage drinking.

Stated goals for the STOP grant were as follows:

- Provide Information
- Build Skills
- Reduce Access, Enhance Barriers & Modify Policies
- Change Consequences, Incentives
- Alter the Physical Design of the Environment

The stated objective for the first year of the STOP grant was: By September 30, 2010 Lorain County's STOP Task Force will implement population based activities to focus on underage drinking. Consequently, the focus of the evaluation during Year 1 of the grant was to measure progress towards this objective. Great strides have been made towards this objective as is evidenced by the results below.

### **Goal 1: Provide Information**

**Town Hall Meeting :** A youth-focused town hall meeting was held on Thursday May 6, 2010 at the Amherst High School. At this town hall, with emphasis on underage drinking, results were presented from the county-wide, Pride Survey, Communities that Care Youth Survey grades 6, 8, 10, and 12. One hundred and fifty (150) students grades 9 through 12 attended the town hall. Students were invited to provide feedback on the town hall by sharing what they found most beneficial about the meeting and soliciting their ideas on how to improve the program. Another town hall meeting for parents and community leaders was hosted on the same day. The format and data presentation mirrored that of the high school. Twenty partners and community leaders attended with one family agreeing to participate in future STOP initiatives.

With respect to program benefits, many students indicated they were stunned by facts and figures concerning youth drug use including underage drinking county-wide and in their school compared with the rest of the County. Student comments indicate that the town hall was a great success, that the information provided was well received. The town hall provided the forum for students to react to the information and for discussion with peers as one student commented:

“One thing that I found to be beneficial from this program is the discussions that each table had, talking about how to deal with various things, such as peer pressure, using drugs, and what we thought about the consumption of drugs in different schools and areas.”

Other comments were:

- The fact that we got to talk out with our age and get their views on the facts we were presented with
- The survey that was taken really gave me a great visual and I could truly understand what was going on
- It allowed us to discuss a growing problem in today's society
- It was eye-opening to see the percentages. I think that other students would benefit.
- I found that the most beneficial thing resulting from this program was the fact that student's opinions and views were taken seriously and eagerly. This created a level of equality during conversations among everyone, students and adults alike...the program was also educational with many interesting facts and statistics, and was enlightening to have the opportunity to listen to the thoughts of peers.
- It was a discussion and not a lecture. It was informing.
- Seeing our statistics compared to Lorain County, especially in the areas where we were higher and shouldn't have been.
- That we had a high rate of underage drinking in our school.
- Learning how many people do do drugs in your school compared to the County. It really gets you thinking about drugs and the effects.

Regarding recommendations for improvement, three general themes clearly emerged. First, several students noted that their peers who could have benefitted the most were absent from the meeting. They recommended targeting such students in the future. For example one student suggested, "Pick more students that drink so they can learn something," and another said, "Pick students who need to hear the presentation," while another commented, "invite students who are involved with drugs and alcohol..." Secondly, some suggested using former alcoholics or drug abusers (students or adults) to talk about dangers and risks of substance abuse, as one stated, "perhaps inviting an ex-alcoholic or ex-drug user to explain more about how these substances hurt you." Thirdly, several students recommended allocating more time to the program as one observed, "It needs to be longer. You can't discuss a topic such as this in 45 minutes."

Other suggestions included:

- Allow students to talk about their experiences with alcohol and drugs without consequences.
- Let a third party run the presentation without teachers and administrators being present to enable students to feel comfortable around the adults present
- Showing long term effects of people that start taking drugs and drinking at a young age
- Have adults and/or students who have consumed drugs to talk about why they did drugs, and how they had to cope with their decision.
- "Provide more background information/education regarding legal restrictions and consequences. I think that one of the most important protective factors for any

type of risk behavior is education about the behavior and the consequences that it could possibly, or inevitably lead to.”

- “Provide some sort of closing/deciding factor to the program such as students voting on something or creating some sort of conclusion. This would provide a feeling of closure relating to what the program is all about.”
- Pick students who need to hear the presentation.
- “Don’t tell things we already know. We were told in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade to not do drugs. If you was to make the program more effective you have to scare students. Fear works wonders.”
- Have more discussions
- Talk to people instead of a presentation
- Have more interactive activities besides discussions

**Parents Who Host Lose the Most Campaign:** The local Parents Who Host campaign ran from May 10 to May 23, 2010. Yard signs, parents pledge cards, banners and stickers for local food vendors were distributed. Local Public Service Announcements were developed and run on local spots during the month of May. Members of the STOP Task Force signed up and assisted with the distribution of the campaign materials. Following were results of the campaign:

- 11 adults/students and community leaders developed local Public Service Announcements
- Public Service Announcements ran 244 times through the local radio stations during the local campaign (5/10 – 5/23)
- 400 Yard signs and 30 Parents Who Host banners were posted in various locations throughout Lorain County including cities and school districts (Amherst, Avon Lake, Lorain, North Ridgeville, Oberlin, Firelands)
- Local pizza vendors distributed PWH stickers on their pizza boxes during the weekend of May 13<sup>th</sup> (Amherst, Lorain, Oberlin and LaGrange pizza shops)
- Letters to the editor and proclamations for this campaign were also sent.

**Banding Together 2010–** For the first time, the program worked with local festivals through a Banding Together initiative. Starting with the 2010 Lorain International Festival and Bazaar in June, the program collaborated with the festival committee and other groups to wrist band all legal-aged drinkers to prevent underage drinking at festivals. This initiative was reported in the two major newspapers, the Chronicle Telegram and The Morning Journal. The wrist banding was repeated at the Lorain Port Fest in July, at the Amherst Jamboree in July, and at Dancing on Main Street, Amherst in August. The STOP Task Force discussed expanding the effort to more locations next year by starting the planning process early. The STOP Task Force has determined it will convene all local festival managers during winter, 2011 to discuss spreading this implementation throughout Lorain county festivals

**Talk Early Talk Often** – was a new campaign that rolled out in late August by the national AdCouncil. The STOP program took advantage of this campaign by rolling out 52 Public Service Announcements during the week of 09/20-30 using local voices.

**Goal 2: Build Skills**

**Reach Out Now:** The Reach Out Now curriculum was implemented in three school districts, Lorain City Schools, Firelands Local Schools, and Avon Lake City Schools with students in grades 5 and 6. The Reach Out Now campaign was enthusiastically received by the schools as indicated by one teach coordinator:

*“I would like to continue the Reach Out Now program for next year. I would like to do more classroom interactions with the Key Club members that would then maybe culminate in an all school assembly. I know we were pressed for time this year and hopefully next year we can start planning right away.”*

While the STOP coalition members implemented the program in Lorain and Firelands, high school students implemented the Avon Lake program. Key Club members from Avon Lake High School interactively and innovatively, through role-playing and skits, presented the program to younger kids in the elementary school.

At all the sites, pre and post-tests were given to participating students during the sessions. Post-test results show that students learned valuable lessons about the dangers of underage alcohol use. Student knowledge increased, overall, after the campaign with an average score of 93% on the post-test compared with 85% on the pre test. Furthermore, there was a significant change particularly in four knowledge areas. Youth learned that:

- ✓ The same amount of alcohol does not have the same effect on an adult as it does on a younger, smaller person (p<.001)
- ✓ Alcohol affects women differently than men (p<.001)
- ✓ When a person drinks alcohol, it is absorbed into the blood stream within minutes (p<.01)
- ✓ Drinking alcohol affects emotions (p<.01)

**All Students:**

Knowledge are about alcohol	% students answering correctly	
	Pre	Post
When a person drinks alcohol, it is absorbed into the blood stream within minutes	83%	91%
A given amount of alcohol has the same effect on an adult as it does on a younger, smaller person	69%	87%

Alcohol can affect women differently than men	61%	87%
Long-term alcohol abuse may lead to some types of cancer	93%	95%
Drinking alcohol can affect your emotions	93%	99%
Alcohol can make your senses, such as vision, work better	98%	99%
Heavy alcohol use has no risk of any long-lasting effects on the body	88%	90%
Drinking a lot of alcohol at one time can lead to a coma	92%	97%
<b>Average Score</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>93%</b>

### **Goal 3: Reduce Access, Enhance Barriers & Modify Policies**

**Don't Serve to Teens** – a campaign targeting adults and retailers began in summer, 2010. Task Force Members and other community partners created Public Service Announcements which ran on local ration stations 110 times during June 21-27,2010.

The STOP coordinator met with one of the two beverage distributors in Lorain County. This meeting identified potential partnerships with the 600+ vendors in Lorain County. However due to the STOP coordinator quitting in mid-summer, this partnership has stalled and will be revisited by the STOP Task Force.

STOP was invited to partner with the Safe communities Coalition for their annual CHEERS to Safe Serving and Safe communities” held on August 31, 2010. One stop Task Force member participated as a facilitator and two beverage service staff also participated. Participating retailers in this event received an ID checking Guide provided by the STOP Task Force. The Responsible Retailing curriculum was offered to participating retailers. Two retailers expressed interest in receiving more information regarding this curriculum. Follow-up will be made once the STOP coordinator position has been refilled.

### **Goal 4: Change Consequences**

**Shoulder taps, alcohol purchase survey-** a meeting was held with the County Prosecutor regarding the legalities of the shoulder taps and purchase surveys. The Prosecutor offered to provide contact to all local police departments regarding the partnership with STOP for the implementation. Three police departments accepted the offer to begin purchase surveys (Lorain, Amherst and Elyria). To date – Lorain PD held a purchase survey on their own with 20 out of 33 purchase/violations. Recently Elyria PD held a purchase survey effort – 8 of 10 citations occurred

## **Goal 5: Alter the Physical Design of the Environment**

**Needs Assessment** - To help the STOP grant understand underlying needs and conditions in the community that were to be addressed to reduce and prevent underage alcohol use, the STOP Task Force commissioned three community surveys between November and December, 2009. More people completed surveys than originally planned. For example, 8 more people participated in the Attitude Residents Survey (54 compared with a target of 42), 5 more coalition members completed a Community Coalition Survey (30 compared with 25), and 27 more Law Enforcement Surveys were completed (52 compared with 25). Survey results provided baseline data to guide the STOP Task Force in determining priority efforts, developing goals and objectives, and selecting specific environment strategies to address underage alcohol use within Lorain County. Relatively small sample sizes were targeted for the surveys to gauge a general pulse regarding perceptions relative to underage drinking. Survey findings, cannot therefore be generalized to the whole population. Below is the summary of survey results.

**Attitude of Resident Survey** - The Attitude of Residents Survey consisted of 44 questions and focused on community norms, perceptions and attitudes regarding underage consumption of alcohol in Lorain County. The survey asked respondents to provide feedback regarding their perception and opinion about laws pertaining to the sale of alcohol, alcohol use by minors, and the prioritization of issues related to youth in the community.

### **Summary of Results:**

- The typical respondent to the Attitude of Resident Survey was a 31-55 year old Caucasian female with some college education who had never been married without teenage kids.
- Most respondents were currently employed earning between \$40,000 and \$60,000 per year.
- Prioritization of problems within Lorain County: Only 17% (n= 9) of respondents identified the issue of underage use of alcohol as a top priority, outranked by issues of teenage violence (n=17; 31.4%), teenage pregnancy (n=14; 26%) and academic issues (n=12; 22%) as having a higher priority than underage alcohol use. Only one respondent identified tobacco use as a priority.
- A little over one-half of the respondents strongly oppose lowering the legal drinking age to 18 (n=29; 54% )
- Data regarding a \$.05 per drink tax to fund youth alcohol prevention programs was neither supported nor opposed (27 favor; 50%) and (25 oppose; 46%) 2 respondents were unsure. However, respondents clearly indicated being opposed to the tax increase when the monies would be used for any government purpose (only 5 favor; 9%)
- Fifty-seven percent (n=31) of the respondents believe it is wrong for an 18 year old to “party with alcohol”, forty-three percent (n=23) support the notion.

- Respondents favored laws requiring store owners and clerks to check ID's and attend training and opposed laws banning keg sales for home parties, keg registration and requiring those serving alcohol to be age 21.
- 65% of respondents felt that driver's license suspension was an appropriate punishment for youth caught using alcohol, 24% felt a \$200.00 fine was appropriate for the same.
- Respondents identified two of eight locations in which alcohol should be banned: public parks and city streets. The other six locations (concerts and cultural events, special community events, college campuses, public beaches and lakes, campgrounds, and college football games) all identified the requirement of special permits to consume alcohol.
- Respondents favor restriction of alcohol related advertisements.

**Community Coalition Survey** - The Community Coalition survey was given to 30 community leaders in Lorain County. Community Coalition members were asked several questions regarding underage drinking and to respond by prioritizing their top three responses per category or to check all that apply. Limited information was gathered regarding demographics of the Community Coalition members. The following information was collected: All thirty respondents were over the age of 21. Respondents reported being involved with youth service organizations, law enforcement or community Task Forces.

### **Summary of Results:**

- The findings from the survey suggest that community coalition members believe that most alcohol is provided to them by older youth (n=23; 77%) or it is easy to obtain from home (58%)
- The respondents reported penalties need to be strengthened against adults who provide alcohol to underage youth (n=17).
- The respondents identified several community efforts attempted regarding underage alcohol consumption. They are: working with youth and involving and influencing parents. Respondents indicated these attempts to intervene have been ineffective
- Respondents report that it is necessary to involve youth in positive activities, and working to educate parents, and penalize adults who are providing alcohol to minors.
- Respondents felt that the community needed the most support to address underage drinking in the following categories: police and the school to work together and support in creating youth leadership opportunities.
- Other recommendations made included working with the media through generating attention, creating press releases or communicating the message to key officials.
- Over half of the respondents requested training in the areas of best practices to prevent underage drinking and involving and influencing parents. Liability training and working with youth were two other trainings recommended.

- Barriers identified included lack of involving and influencing parents, engaging youth, and lack of funding.
- Seventy percent of the coalition members are willing to disseminate information materials to parents.
- Respondents reported the need for penalties for adults providing alcohol to youth (71%), criminal penalties for sellers to youth (58%), fines/license suspended for youth (58%) and stronger penalties for youth (53%).

**Law Enforcement Survey** - The Law Enforcement Survey focused on attitudes and perceptions regarding underage alcohol use. Law Enforcement officials completing the survey included the State Highway Patrol, Lorain County Sheriff's Department, and several city police departments. The average respondent was a police officer/patrolman with approximately 13 years of experience

### **Summary of Results:**

- Law enforcement indicate greater concern and prioritization regarding adolescent drinking and driving, underage consumption and possession over issues involving adults (transfer of alcohol to a minor, sale of alcohol to a minor, and allowing youth to drink in their home).
- Law enforcement report their greatest barriers to reduce underage alcohol use include increasing funding and manpower, collaborating with the juvenile justice system, including working with judges and prosecutors as well as effectively enforcing laws regarding adults who provide the alcohol to minors.
- Stronger penalties for youth, education of the community and stronger penalties for adults providing alcohol to minors were also identified barriers. There were several other minor subsets of data, including manpower, purchasing of PBT's, lack of jail facilities and the use of fake ID's. Each of these had two respondents or under.
- Law enforcement reports a need for training opportunities focusing on underage alcohol consumption.
- Law enforcement reported that parents need to be held more accountable
- Most reported that the juvenile justice system responded with minimum penalties.
- Forty percent of the law enforcement officers responded by stating that they didn't know how the juvenile cases were handled.
- The majority of law enforcement believe that underage alcohol use is available everywhere.
- Law enforcement were unable to identify available resources currently available regarding underage alcohol use

**Environmental Prevention Strategies Training:** During the first year of the grant, in addition to the community needs assessment, STOP Task Force members, coalition members and the community at large were afforded multiple opportunities to participate in training. Several training opportunities were offered during the 2009/10 grant year

including a training on Thursday December 10, 2009 targeted at Community Partners Law Enforcement, Faith Leaders City, Civic Leaders, Coalition members Parents, Prevention Professionals. Participants learned how communities implement environmental approaches that directly reduce alcohol, tobacco and other drug problems. Topics included: Overview of Environmental Approaches; Identifying Problem Environments; Using Data to “Paint the Picture;” Matching Strategies to Identified Problem Environments.

Task Force members participated in an educational national webinar, “Implementing Environmental Strategies” on January 21, 2010.

A training titled: *Alcohol Use, Depression, and Young People: Implications for Addressing Suicide* was offered on April 29, 2010.

The STOP Task Force partnered with the Ohio Department of Public Safety on June 23, 2010 to host the northern Ohio Liquor Policy Conference. Local law enforcement, city councils, prosecutors from Lorain County and the northern Ohio region numbering 75 attendees participated at this local conference. Task Force Members educated themselves on Ohio’s Underage Drinking Laws particular to underage drinking, internal possession, underage possession, underage purchase, furnishing to minors, minimum ages for on and off premise sellers/servers, false identification, blood alcohol concentration, keg registration, hosting underage drinking parties. Discussion on alcohol density outlets and social host laws and liquor permits provided learning opportunities for the Task Force.

Task Force members again participated in a webinar presented on August 24 addressing reducing alcohol outlet density.

A Task Force member represented the underage drinking issue at a liquor permit hearing in the City of Amherst on 9/25/2010.

### **Implications/Sustainability:**

- In 2011, start the planning process early in the festival season for the wrist banding program to allow expansion of the program to more festivals. During the 2010 festival season, three events were covered. With the expansion of the wrist banding, awareness about underage alcohol consumption will be created across the county for festival goers.
- Expand the Reach Out Now to more schools. The curriculum was implemented in three schools during the 2010 school year. All schools participating this year have expressed interest to implement the program again next year. Similar to festivals start school involvement early in the school year to allow more time allocation to the program and wider coverage of schools. With schools embedding the Reach Out Now prevention program in their curriculum sustainability will be ensured.

- Task Force members to be used more to reach out into their own jurisdiction with messages about preventing under age alcohol use. During the first program year, Task Force members participated in implementing the Reach Out Now curriculum, distributing cards, obtaining pledges, and putting out yard signs for the Parents Who Host campaign. The various training that Task Force members participated in has equipped and enhanced skills that member will continue to use in their own sphere of influence to combat underage drinking.
- It is anticipated that in the coming years more work with respect to preventing underage drinking will be accomplished through the efforts of STOP partners, Task Force members and coalition members.
- The STOP Task Force target strategies are now fully embedded into the Communities that Care Logic Model, in particular:
  - ✓ Embedding national campaigns (parents who host, talk early –talk often, don't serve to teens)
  - ✓ Town Hall meetings focused on underage drinking
  - ✓ Responsible retailing initiatives
  - ✓ Addressing physical design – wristbanding efforts, surveillance activities with local police departments and school policies
  - ✓ Assessing alcohol outlet density
  - ✓ Reach out now enhancements
  - ✓ Liquor violations