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Contact: Bessie Oster  
Phoenix House  
646-505-2062  
boster@phoenixhouse.org

### **HOW PARENTS CAN HELP KEEP THEIR TEENS SAFE FROM ALCOHOL & DRUGS**

**(New York, NY)** - In response to a survey released today by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University that finds a dangerous disconnect between parents and teens when it comes to drugs and alcohol, Phoenix House offers five steps parents can take to protect their children.

CASA reports that 80 percent of parents believe that neither alcohol nor marijuana is usually available at parties their teens attend. BUT 50 percent of teen partygoers attend parties where alcohol, drugs or both ARE available.

“ALL parents need to recognize that actively preventing alcohol and drug use is their job, even if they believe their teen is not involved in high-risk behavior,” says Bessie Oster, director of Phoenix House’s *Facts on Tap* program, a national prevention initiative for teenagers. “At Phoenix House, we regularly see ‘good kids’ who get into trouble with alcohol and drugs right under their parents’ noses.”

Many parents know the basics of prevention: Start when kids are young.... Be firm and clear about expectations.... Remind teens that alcohol and drugs can be extremely dangerous.... Listen to teens and encourage them to share their thoughts.... Don't provide alcohol to minors.

But the everyday implementation of these concepts can be more challenging. Here are some very specific tips for parents to help keep teens safe:

- **Know your kids' friends.** It may not be your job to parent your teen’s friends, but they will influence your child's decisions and it’s in your family’s best interest for you to know friends and friends’ families.
- **Limit unsupervised time.** Teens are great at finding parks, woods, open fields, or other places to hang out. These unsupervised areas provide opportunities for drinking and drug use, so try to limit the times your child has to explore such areas on their own.
- **Know your teen’s plans.** Know when they are going, where they are headed and how they are traveling. Insist that your teen keep you posted of any change in plans. Get contact information where you can reach them 24/7 and make sure your child knows how they can contact you at all times.

- **Pick a curfew** that is reasonable for both you and your teen. Make sure your teen knows there will be consequences for violating curfew and then follow through if rules are not followed.
- **Be party smart.** If the party is elsewhere, confirm with the parents of the host that a responsible adult will supervise to ensure that no alcohol will be served. If the party is at your house, set the rules in advance and make sure your teen knows what's expected. Limit attendance. Set a time for the party to end. Keep your alcohol locked up. Know your legal responsibilities. Invite other parents to chaperone. Do not hesitate to call the police if things get out of control.

*Facts on Tap ([www.factsontap.org](http://www.factsontap.org)) is one of the nation's most comprehensive alcohol and drug prevention/ intervention initiatives on college campuses. Facts on Tap is a program of Phoenix House ([www.phoenixhouse.org](http://www.phoenixhouse.org)) which operates more than 100 drug and alcohol treatment programs around the country, and is funded by MetLife Foundation.*

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