

The Pacific County Sheriff's Office Offer's Tips For A Safer Graduation Experience

Local News

Posted by: David Haviland

Posted on : May 28, 2013 at 7:52 am



High school graduation should be a happy time and a time to celebrate the accomplishments of students. Graduation season is right around the corner. Unfortunately, tragedy too often accompanies graduation time and in many cases, drugs and alcohol are involved. These tragedies occur everywhere during this special time of celebration and have occurred in our area before. The Pacific County Sheriff's Office would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all the graduating students of the class of 2013 as well as their parents and guardians and offer a few tips that we believe will decrease the chance of other tragedies occurring during this special time.

Take steps to change what is seen to be normal behavior around graduation. Graduation time can be risky for youth because, in American culture, students are sometimes expected by members of their community and peers to celebrate with all night parties, co-ed sleepovers and drinking. In fact, some parents and communities condone this behavior and even encourage it. To keep your child safe, you must work with your schools and your community to change the view that reckless teen partying is normal and okay. You can help your teen remain safe by taking responsibility, getting involved and setting limits.

Supervise graduation parties. The likelihood of youth engaging in negative risky behavior increases when there is a lack of supervision. Unsupervised graduation parties and sleepovers increase the chances of drug and alcohol use and serious car accidents.

Know what your kids are doing. Even on graduation night, ask where your children are going, with whom they will be and what they will be doing. Ask who and how they will be supervised at a party. Be wary of sleepovers and all night parties. For some teens, sleepovers are opportunities to use drugs or alcohol and can put them under too much peer pressure. If your teen is at a home party, be sure you and the supervising adults share the same values and expectations for behavior at the party. Check in by phone or drive over to make sure a responsible parent is supervising the event and your child is still there. Make sure your teen has a safe ride home at the end of the party.

Be clear about what you expect and be firm. Around age 17 and 18 is a time when youth are expected to seek more independence and are often eager to separate from parental controls. Many older teens are able to make responsible and moral decisions for themselves and get annoyed at

parents wanting to monitor their behavior. But the combination of more independence along with pressures to party and fears about what the future holds can make graduating students vulnerable.

Talk to your teen about what is a reasonable curfew and stick to it. Have your teen check in often. Discuss in advance the consequence for breaking the rules.

Look out for all teens. Not all kids will have parents who are looking out for them. If you sense that other people's teens may be vulnerable, step in and keep track of them as well as your own kids. Invite these kids to your home where you can supervise and keep them safe. Notify their parents of their whereabouts. Tell local authorities if you think kids have been drinking and where to find them. It is better to keep them safe, rather than be sorry if tragedy happens.

Do not make excuses. If your child is acting strange and you think drugs or alcohol may be the reason, talk to your child right away. No matter what your child tells you, remain calm and listen. If you lose control and become loud, you could push your teen away.

Get involved. Volunteer to supervise school or neighborhood parties. Offer to chauffeur kids to and from graduation celebrations. Host an alcohol free party at your home.

Encourage graduating teens to take healthy risks. It is normal and healthy for teens to take appropriate risks that help them to learn, develop independence, conquer fears and build confidence. Rather than celebrating the graduation rite of passage with drinking and drug use, encourage your teens to celebrate with their friends and family in some creative and healthy ways.

To the classes of 2013 from Raymond High School, Willapa Valley High School, South Bend High School, Naselle High School, Ilwaco High School and North River High School we congratulate you and hope you have a safe celebration.