

Community's role in alcohol awareness

Several weeks ago, I had the privilege of attending a parents' forum at West High on the issue of underage alcohol use. The panel did a wonderful job of presenting information and used some amazing technology to elicit the audience's thoughts and perceptions on the issue.

One of the most interesting segments of the evening was dispelling myths associated with underage and binge drinking. The most prevalent myth is that alcohol abuse among our youth and young adults is inevitable and that parents can do nothing to influence their children's behaviors.

Parents have more influence and ability to shape their children's attitudes and decisions than they give themselves credit. Important and specific information about setting a good example and establishing boundaries was shared with the audience. The take-away message was that parents need to be good role models when it

comes to alcohol (or other substance) use and to involve themselves in their children's activities.

I would expand that to include each of us individually and as a community has a role to play by being role models and setting high expectations of behavior when it comes to alcohol use and change the perception that underage and binge drinking is acceptable.

I would like to thank the representatives from MECCA, the University of Iowa and the Iowa City School District for this forum and encourage parents to take advantage of the information and materials available to address this issue with their youth.

Please visit www.mecca-services.com for more information.

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