

GUIDANCE GAZETTE

Mt. Vernon Township
High School

mvths.org

April, 2008

You—Yes, YOU—Can Do Something About Underage Drinking

“I really should do something about that.” How often have you said that to yourself about a social, political or health issue you feel should be changed? So why don’t we act on our desire to make positive changes in systems or situations? Most of us feel powerless. We can’t see how one person’s actions could change anything. And we don’t know what to do, even if we do believe one person can make a difference.

Individual acts of advocacy *can* make a significant impact when we all pitch in—even if it’s just now and again. This is especially true in the case of underage drinking. Merchants, politicians, schools, and civic leaders are sensitive to issues raised by their constituents. And most other people would have a hard time arguing against making a change that would protect the health and safety of children. The Michigan Coalition to Reduce Underage Drinking (MCRUD) developed a comprehensive list of actions ordinary citizens can take to raise awareness about underage drinking and to curb it. MCRUD believes that “adult behavior is a major part of the climate that either encourages and tolerates or discourages and prevents a youth’s choice to use alcohol.”

With that in mind, consider a few of the ideas MCRUD offers that individuals can act on to help deter underage drinking.

- If you belong to a civic or other organization that plans fundraisers or other events, question whether these should include alcohol. Raise the issue especially if youth attend these events or if funds raised would benefit youth.
- Talk to retailers about their alcohol promotion through signage and posters on doors, windows, the sides of their buildings, etc. Be specific about why you think these advertisements would be appealing to youth.
- Register your objection to alcohol sales, promotion or signage at sports events and venues that are intended for family involvement (fairs and festivals, for example).
- If you choose to drink in the presence of your children, drink responsibly, and discuss what makes your drinking behavior responsible (“I’m having a glass of wine with dinner and will not be driving anywhere afterward.”).
- When a child observes negative consequences from someone’s drinking, discuss the situation with your child.

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News for Juniors

Prairie State Achievement Examination

Juniors in the state of Illinois are required to take the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE), and it is made up of two kinds of tests. The ACT test will be given on April 23; this is a test that colleges use for admission purposes. The Work Keys test will be given on April 24; this type of test is used by businesses for hiring future employees. Schools use the combined scores of ACT + Work Keys (called PSAE score) to measure student achievement.

The ACT test consists of questions in English, math, reading, science reasoning, and writing. The Work Keys test consists of applied math and reading for information. (An additional science test will be given.) Proper preparation before these tests can reduce stress/test anxiety. Juniors will review sample questions in their English, math, social studies, and science classes, plus review test-taking strategies. Students are also urged to spend additional study time preparing on their own using the preparation booklet that was given to each student. The resources listed below can also be useful:

⇒ **On the Web:** www.actstudent.org for interactive sample questions in all ACT test areas.
www.edinformatics.com for sample questions in all tested areas.

⇒ **In the Career Center:** ACTive Prep (an electronic guide to the ACT assessment). This CD-ROM is available in 206B.

⇒ **In the School Library:** Check out ACT study guide books (ie: *ACT for Dummies*).

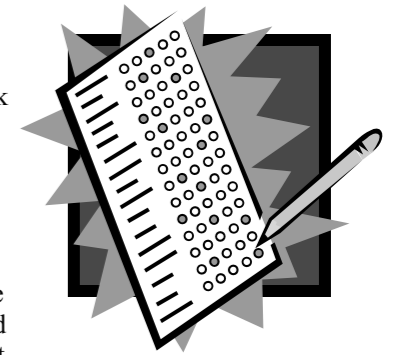
Juniors will be asked to report to their PSAE testing room on April 18 for a preliminary session. They will become familiar with “standardized testing procedures” and learn what they need for the test (#2 pencils and a calculator). Students will complete a registration folder including the following:

- 1) An “interest inventory.” The results of this activity show career possibilities that a student may want to investigate as he/she makes post-high school plans.
- 2) High school code. This important number (**143080**) permits ACT to send the student’s ACT score to the high school. Please note, however, that high schools cannot place this score on the transcript without a student’s written permission.
- 3) College/university codes. Students will be asked to select codes for colleges/universities to which the ACT score can be directly sent. If a student fails to write in the high school code or a college/university code, then the student will have to pay an additional fee to have those scores sent at a later time.

On April 23 and 24, juniors will report at 8:20 a.m. to their assigned room for testing.

Test results will be reported in parts. The ACT test scores are mailed to the student by the end of May. The over-all PSAE scores are mailed to the school, and will be given to students in the fall, 2008. It is important to note that the overall PSAE score, by law, will be placed on a student’s transcript, therefore showing that the student has completed the state requirement for graduation.

We encourage parents to discuss this test information with their student, and encourage proper preparation for this important event.



High School Graduation Requirements

All students graduating from Mt. Vernon High School must take and pass the Illinois constitution test, and the federal constitution test. If any senior has yet to complete this requirement, he or she should see their counselor *immediately*.

CONSUMER ALERT

With college costs soaring, how are students and parents supposed to determine which of the available scholarship search companies are a legitimate way to seek financial assistance?

According to the Federal Trade Commission, legitimate companies will advertise that they can get students lists of scholarships in exchange for an advance fee, or there are scholarship search engines on the World Wide Web. The key: legitimate companies never guarantee or promise scholarship or grants.

To steer clear of scholarship fraud, the FTC recommends that a student *spends time* searching for scholarship opportunities, not money. Nobody can guarantee that a student will win a scholarship; if something sounds too good to be true, it probably is. If you are suspicious of an offer, it is usually with good reason.

Scholarship Opportunities *NOTE: this section has been updated since the newsletter was printed.*

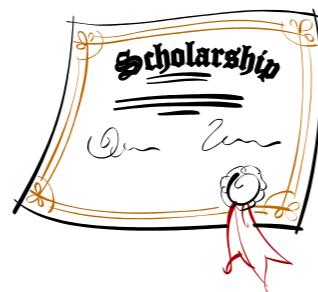
What's New?

- ◆ **Mt. Vernon Elks Lodge 819 Scholarship:** This scholarship is for seniors who will be enrolled as a full-time student at Rend Lake College for the 2008-09 school year. Due April 11.
- ◆ **Mt. Vernon Junior Woman's Club Scholarship:** This scholarship is for seniors who will be enrolled as a full-time student at Rend Lake College for the 2008-09 school year. The amount of the scholarship will be based on tuition for two semesters at 16 credit hours per semester. Due April 11.
- ◆ **K.A.R.E. Foundation Scholarship:** Students who meet income guidelines and will enroll in a 2 or 4-year school may apply for this \$500 scholarship. Due April 11.
- ◆ **University of Illinois Balanced Man Scholarship:** Applicants for this scholarship must be senior males who excel in scholarship, leadership, athletics, and community service and who will attend the University of Illinois at Champaign/Urbana. Due April 18.
- ◆ **Crosswalk Community Action Agency Scholarship:** Seniors who meet income guidelines and rank in the upper half of their class may apply for this scholarship. Recipients must attend a college or university in the state of Illinois. Due April 1.

What's Due in April?

- * **Keep Mt. Vernon/Jefferson County Beautiful Recycling**—*Deadline extended!* Due April 10.
- * **Southern Illinois Healthcare**—April 22

Scholarships will be presented at
the Honors Program on
Thursday, May 15.



Summer School Plans

Any student who has failed a class that is required for high school graduation may want to consider attending summer school this summer. Up to two full credits may be earned in summer school. Specific information about dates and times will be available soon; listen to the school announcements. Students who are interested in taking advantage of this opportunity should see their counselor for sign-up procedures.

Summer Camp Scholarship Opportunity

The Mt. Vernon Junior Women's Club will be sponsoring scholarships to help students defray the cost of various camps during the summer. Applications are available in the Guidance Office. Completed applications are due by April 11.

Attention College-Bound Student Athletes

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) regulates many college athletics programs. The NCAA Clearinghouse certifies eligibility for freshmen athletes who wish to participate in Division I or Division II sports in college. It would be wise for juniors who are interested in collegiate athletics to become familiar with the registration process through the NCAA website: www.ncaaclearinghouse.net. Then go to the Prospective Student-Athlete page and click on "Registered Student Login."

You Can Do Something About Underage Drinking

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- Object to visible alcohol-industry sponsorship of any activity young people are involved in, such as sports, band, theater, etc. When watching TV, movies, music videos, plays or other programs, discuss portrayals of underage or adult drinking and any use that is problematic, glorified, gratuitous, or without consequences.
- Go to city hall and ask why there is an alcohol billboard in your neighborhood.
- Avoid, prevent or register your objections to the little things we do that may have the unintended consequence of promoting youthful alcohol use. For example:
 - ✓ Serving beverages to children in alcohol beverage glassware or containers
 - ✓ Ordering "Shirley Temple" drinks for children in restaurants
 - ✓ Wearing or allowing children to wear alcohol-promotion clothing
 - ✓ Using toys with alcohol messages
 - ✓ Portrayal of alcohol use in children's cartoons, videos, etc.
 - ✓ Handing out wine glasses or steins as prom favors

