

# DavisPARENTSDO

## *Beware of Picnic Day Alcohol Use by Teens*

Although alcohol use by underage persons is illegal, society's view of moderate drinking is generally tolerant. This situation, combined with permissive subjective norms toward drinking, lack of parental awareness and strict law enforcement, the presence of appealing alcohol advertisements, and individual problems such as stress and depression, often leads to an environment where alcohol use is normal, comfortable, and easily accessible for adolescents. Therefore, underage drinking, particularly heavy drinking, can continue into college and is reinforced by peer alcohol use. (Robert L. Suefert, 2008)

We live in a college town and are about to experience the biggest campus festival of the year: Picnic Day. Across the country, picnic days and the equivalent are being eliminated or at least cut back because of the escalating problems around the use of substances, particularly alcohol, at these events. Last year on Picnic Day you may not have felt safe walking downtown with younger children. College students were openly intoxicated to the point of unconsciousness before noon. Store windows were broken. The city and campus police could not keep up with reports of out of control behavior in town or at parties.

The City of Davis, UC Davis, and local businesses are attempting to ensure Picnic Day will not be the alcohol-fest it was last year. As parents of Davis teens, you can also help keep your kids by doing the following before and during Picnic Day:

- Be aware of how accessible alcohol has been to teens in Davis during open campus celebrations. Authorities are working to reduce that accessibility, but every year more and more people attend Picnic Day from out of town to party. Alcohol can be obtained at parties any teen can walk into, from out of town visitors selling to minors, or even through local businesses and restaurants.
- Discuss with your teen their plans for Picnic Day – and make sure they have a plan and you know where they will be and with whom.
- Verify those plans with your teen's peers and their parents. If your teen objects, point out that your job as a parent is to keep them safe and know how they spend their time.
- Consider providing an alternative to your teen going alone to Picnic Day. They may not want to hang out with their family, but you can attend Picnic Day together and check in with your teen periodically. If your teen goes with another family, make sure they know of your expectations. Or, have your own picnic day party, without alcohol.

For more information on the realities of substance use by Davis teens, visit our website at [davisparentsdo.org](http://davisparentsdo.org). **DavisPARENTSDO** is a district wide PTA committee.