

Media Release

20th June 2018

Parents across Knox take a stand on underage drinking

Over the last couple of years it has become evident that parents are contributing to changing the drinking culture for young people in Knox with reports that parents are establishing rules around alcohol supply and consumption.

Deborah Cocks from Communities that Care (CTC) Knox (auspiced by EACH), a program that aims to help young people across Australia to become a 'smarter generation' by reducing high rates of underage drinking says *"In communities where underage young people find it difficult to obtain alcohol there is less alcohol use and fewer alcohol related injuries assaults and deaths. Communities with less youth alcohol use also have higher rates of school completion"*.

Research conducted by the program in 2014 found that young people in Knox as young as 12 and 13 were getting alcohol from their parents.

Parents in Knox are now indicating that they are more likely to set a rule about drinking for their children and not purchasing alcohol for their children, following their participation in the Smart Generation and other programs currently being rolled out in participating schools and sporting clubs the Knox area. This change shows Knox parents are reflecting the changes observed in other areas of Victoria and across Australia.

"Young people struggle with the mixed messages about drinking from parents and other adults in their life, especially when parents are supplying alcohol to children while messages through schools and sporting clubs are saying the opposite."

"The role of parents in setting strong rules and guidelines when it comes to young people drinking alcohol is one of the most significant influences in their child's life. Setting these clear rules as early as possible will contribute to building protection for young people."

'We understand that in the past parents have been reluctant to set rules for their children to delay drinking until they are 18 in the belief that their supply is useful in teaching their children how to drink responsibly and feeling confident that they know how much their children are drinking. However, we know that this not the case, with research indicating that in families where adults allow moderate alcohol use their



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children are more likely to rebel with heavy and harmful alcohol use," Ms Cocks said.

Local Knox parent Amanda, who has participated in a CTC Knox program has expressed,

"In our family our rule is no alcohol until you are 18. Our children are 10 and 14 years old and currently they are against drinking alcohol. We often discuss alcohol and the consequences of drinking. We maintain open conversations with our children hoping that being honest and open will encourage trust and therefore our children will talk to us as issues regarding alcohol arise. The media's portrayal of alcohol and the negative effects supports our view that people under the age of 18 should not drink and that adults who do drink should drink in moderation. As parents we aim to give our children the skills and understanding to make the right choices concerning alcohol. Most of our friends who are parents have the same belief as us however a few of our friends still think its ok to let their 16/17 year olds drink alcohol if they are under their supervision."

The Smart Generation Program is being implemented in a number of communities across Australia, and includes a school-based education program aimed at students and parents.

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For more information or an interview on the recent research and the Smart Generation Implementation in Maroondah, please contact Deborah Cocks, Communities that Care Coordinator at EACH on 03 9757 6297 or via deborah.cocks@each.com.au.

Learn more about Communities that Care Knox at www.each.com.au/ctcknox.