



Inside this Issue

Celebrate Safely	1
CEO's Report	2
Plan to Party Advertisement	2
Helpful Phone Numbers & Websites	2
Christmas Message from Youth Solutions and Our Corporate Sponsors	3
News in Brief	4
Diary Dates 2009	4
Thank you to our Volunteers	4
Some Facts about Alcohol	4



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Christmas Edition

Celebrate Safely this Holiday Season Keeping our teenagers and young adults safe

Celebrations should be just that, a chance to get together with family and friends to mark special occasions or just to enjoy each others' company. This is the same for our teenagers and young adults.

As we greet the years' end and celebrate Christmas and the New Year, there seems to be an abundance of celebrations for teenagers and young adults to attend; including school formals, schoolies, gigs, parties and casual get-togethers.

These should be **positive** experiences, where young people can enjoy each others' company in a safe environment; as well as build friendships, support networks and their own self esteem.

There are practical things that parents can do to reduce possible harm to our teenagers and young adults when they are celebrating.

Holding and hosting an event

The first step is to **plan**. Of course no plan is foolproof, but planning ahead can help avoid: gatecrashing, alcohol and drug misuse, property damage, injury to individuals, drink or drug driving, you or your guests not enjoying the event or having problems with friends, family and neighbours.

Start with this simple checklist:

- Be informed
- Plan ahead
- Set your rules
- Issue written invitations
- Consider the venue
- Advise neighbours
- Limit the noise
- Consider transport for guests
- Consider general safety
- Consider security

Alcohol and Drugs - a parent's role

Unfortunately celebrations; whether they are planned or unplanned, a large scale event or just a small gathering, at times include the misuse of alcohol and drugs.

As parents we are definitely not the only influence in our teenagers' lives, when it comes to alcohol and drugs. However, what we say and do can help them and their friends keep safe.

Don't leave it to chance . . .

- Be informed about alcohol
- Talk to your teenager
- Know your teenagers friends
- Be a positive role model, moderate your own drinking
- Don't supply alcohol to under 18s - it is illegal
- Supervise parties responsibly
- Set clear boundaries
- Support other parents
- Encourage your teenager to plan ahead
- Encourage safe transport options for your teenager

To assist parents and young people to celebrate safely, Youth Solutions has compiled a Planning Parties Fact File. For your free copy phone 4628 2319 or download one from the Youth Solutions website www.youthsolutions.com.au.

**In an emergency always call 000.
For after hours counselling call
Lifeline on 131 114.**



Thank you for your support during 2008

2008 has certainly been a year of steady growth and review. A number of changes have been made to the structure of our organisation and I am especially excited about the appointment of two new Project Support Officers, Tiffany Sullivan and Sally Berry.

I welcome our new Executive Support Officer Nina Blair who shares this new role with Sue Willoughby.

Congratulations to both Rebecca Whitford and Geraldine Dean, newly appointed to their roles of Program and Service Delivery Coordinator and Promotions Coordinator respectively, both of whom are celebrating 5 years of service to Youth Solutions.

Significant challenges during 2008 for the Service have included a heavier reliance

on fundraising through events as well as collaborative partnerships with other organisations. This has become necessary as the expenditure of the Service has increased in line with the growth and delivery of Service activities.

In light of these challenges, I'd like to acknowledge the continued support of our business community. I'd also like to thank our very committed Board. No community organisation can work alone, partnerships with all sectors of our community are essential in reaching a greater number of our young people. We need the whole community to assist our young people in keeping themselves safe!

This year has seen a continued commitment to our Vision and Mission. Youth Solutions' service delivery continues to aim to reduce high risk

behaviours associated with drug use; minimise associated harms and delay or prevent the initiation or uptake of alcohol or other drug use by young people, by utilising a range of strategies.

We sincerely thank all those who have supported our Service and look forward to a productive 2009.

Please enjoy this special Christmas edition of *Solutions* and stay safe this holiday season.



Debbie Roberts
Chief Executive Officer

plan to party

celebrate safely this holiday season

STAY with friends and DON'T take chances

PLAN ahead with your friends—
Work out how you will look out for each other?

BEFORE you go out, have a plan for getting home and tell someone where you are going

Stranger danger still exists—
DON'T accept lifts from anyone you don't know or stay at a stranger's place

DON'T get in a car with a driver who has been drinking or using drugs



Remember it's OK NOT to drink

DON'T swim at night and
DON'T swim at all if you are drunk or using drugs

DON'T accept drinks from strangers and
DON'T leave your drink unattended

Helpful Phone No.s

Drug & Alcohol Treatment Access Line
Sydney South West Area Health Service
9616 8586

ADIS (Alcohol Drug Info Service)
24 hour free service
1800 422 599

For Emergencies
000

After Hours Counselling
Lifeline 13 11 14

Helpful Websites

www.mynite.com.au
If you are having a party anywhere in New South Wales, you can notify NSW Police Force using this website.

www.drinkwise.com.au
This website aims to provide information to assist parents interested in finding out how their drinking may influence how their children drink in the future.

www.beyondblue.org.au
Christmas time is not always festive for everyone. This website provides practical advice and links to places that can help.



Twas
the night
before
Christmas

Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house
Your children home safely, along with your spouse
No drinkers were driving, no grog fuelled fights

Merry Christmas to all and to all, a good-night!

Youth Solutions and their Supporters
Wish You and Your Loved Ones a Safe and Happy Christmas & a Peaceful 2009



Rotary Club of Narellan



Chris Agius Standards & Conformance



Macarthur Chronicle



Bringing you Safer Celebration messages this Festive Season

On Track Projects are nearing completion. Campbelltown Performing Arts High School Interact utilised their On Track grant to contribute towards the successful staging of the 2008 Campbelltown Youth Excellence Awards. Narellan Interact are making great progress in the production of their youth road safety DVD. Thank you to the Foundation for Young Australians for making the On Track funding available!

You Choose Project Funded by the Cancer Council of NSW, the YouChoose project will review and reproduce Youth Solutions Smoking Cessation Program targeting young smokers aged 12-24years. Project partners include: Ambarvale High School, Association of Children's Welfare Agencies, Traxside Youth Health Service, University of Western Sydney and Youth Solutions.

Inspiring Mental Health Funded by the IMB Community Foundation, Inspiring Mental Health is Youth Solutions second module to the Inspiring Youth Solutions resource. This module aims at creating opportunities for communities to address the important issue of adolescent mental health using the peer lead community action model of a Youth Forum. The project is working in partnership with: Mission Australia, Campbelltown City Council, Sydney South West Area Health Service and Headspace Macarthur.

2008 Board

- Geoff Ellis – President
- Tony Ross – Vice President
- Peter Campbell – Treasurer
- Gordon Hay
- Jenny Gleeson
- Karen Dries
- Emma Macfarlane
- Damon May
- Lisa Hunt

Strategic Direction

Our Mission

Supporting young people to make safer life choices to achieve their full potential

Our Vision

Creating solutions with young people, families and the community to promote positive life outcomes by preventing harmful drug use



2009 Diary Dates

Youth Week

28 March – 5 April 2009

National, state and local activities

Cannabis Training

"What You Need To Know"

Tuesday 31 March 2009

Facilitated by NCPIC (National Cannabis Prevention and Information Centre) – Contact Youth Solutions to express your interest in attending

Diversity Day

Wednesday 20 May 2008

Facilitated by DAMEC (Drug and Alcohol Multicultural Education Centre) – Contact Youth Solutions to express your interest in attending this ½ day workshop to explore issues around diverse communities within a drug and alcohol context

Drug Action Week

21 June – 26 June

www.drugactionweek.org.au

Youth Solutions Annual Charity Event

Saturday 25 July 2009

Join us at the Youth Solutions Annual Charity Event

Thank You To our Volunteers

Youth Solutions would like to thank our valued volunteers for their contributions throughout 2008. Your time and efforts are most appreciated!

Aaron Ellis
Amanda Pilottos
Andrew Moyle
Blair Ellis
Blake Moyle
David Michell
Deborah Gander
Emma Macfarlane
Geoff Ellis
Gordon Hay
Jeffrey Hinks
Jenny Gleeson
Jill Smith
Karen Dries
Lauren Moyle
Leanne Agius
Lend Lease Bingara
Lisa Hunt
Nicole Ellis
Patricia Elbourne
Peter Campbell
Peter Roberts
Sharon Moyle
Tony Ross

Did you know? Some Facts about Alcohol:

Alcohol can cause many short and long-term effects such as, blurred vision, vomiting, decreased co-ordination, sexual impotence, depression, liver, heart and brain damage (NDARC Fact Sheet, ALCOHOL, 2008:2).

"You don't have to be drunk to be affected by alcohol. Drinking kills driving skills" (Drinking and Driving, THE FACTS, RTA/Pub.2005:1-2).

As your Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) increases, so does your risk of being involved in a crash. BAC levels of: 0.05 doubles the risk, 0.08 is 7 times the risk and 0.15 is 25 times the risk of being involved in a crash (Alcohol and Drugs, RTA, 2007).

Drink spiking is a growing problem worldwide, with alcohol being the most common drug used to assist sexual assault. Avoid drink spiking by watching your drink, avoid sharing drinks, buy your own drink, keep an eye on your friends and most importantly report the incident if it occurs. (Drug Info Clearinghouse, DRINK SPIKING: WHY IT'S NOT FUNNY, 2003:1-3).