

Body Electric and WEIU TV present

## Bring It Home: Kids Guide for Parents

featuring Charleston Middle School Students

Defiant, rebellious, disobedient. They ignore all your good advice or do just the opposite of what you say. Kids! You can't tell them anything. They think they know better than you. Tell them not to go near alcohol, and they turn right around and drink anyway. Right?

Wrong! Grown-ups and kids themselves sometimes buy into this negative stereotype of today's teens, overlooking the positive things youth are doing to improve their lives and ours. Right now, kids across the United States are involved in efforts to deliver help to the victims of Haiti's earthquakes. Many are working to improve and preserve the natural environment, mentoring younger children, or engaging in recreational and learning activities where alcohol plays no part. Others have turned spring break into a time to perform valuable community service work to help neighbors in need instead of engaging in dangerous underage drinking.

This socially responsible generation is taking on underage drinking directly, too. Young people are contributing to declining rates of underage drinking through responsible decision-making on a personal level, postponing alcohol use until the legal drinking age of 21. What's more, many adolescents are active in preventing underage drinking among their peers by speaking out about their positive choices and why they are making them. For example, Charleston Middle School (CMS) students, in Charleston Illinois, are working with Body Electric and WEIU TV to address one of the most important issues in teen alcohol use: parents. They believe that parents are the biggest influence when teens make choices about using alcohol. And that influence starts when children are young. They have brainstormed all the good tips they can think of to advise parents

to help them raise teens who choose to stay alcohol-free. In the video, "Bring it Home: Kids Guide for Parents" CMS students ask parents to join the growing group of adults who want to be part of the solution. CMS students are valuable role models and exert peer pressure of the positive kind. That's what makes them the best spokespersons for this program and this important prevention initiative.

"Bring it Home: Kids Guide for Parents" will air on PBS affiliate, WEIU TV, in Charleston on Wednesday, April 7 at 7pm. It's part of the national Town Hall Meetings (THMs) organized and led by underage youth themselves, in communities all over the United States.

The half-hour TV program will follow the students as they:

### I. Look at the scope and problem of underage drinking in this area

(production note: "Top Ten" jpeg to be projected in classroom -- large scale graph showing responses of teens on their number one health threat, from 1998 to 2008 - Body Electric data -- alcohol)

### II. Talk about who influences them the most -- *parents*; identify what is happening in their own lives that make it harder for them to avoid alcohol

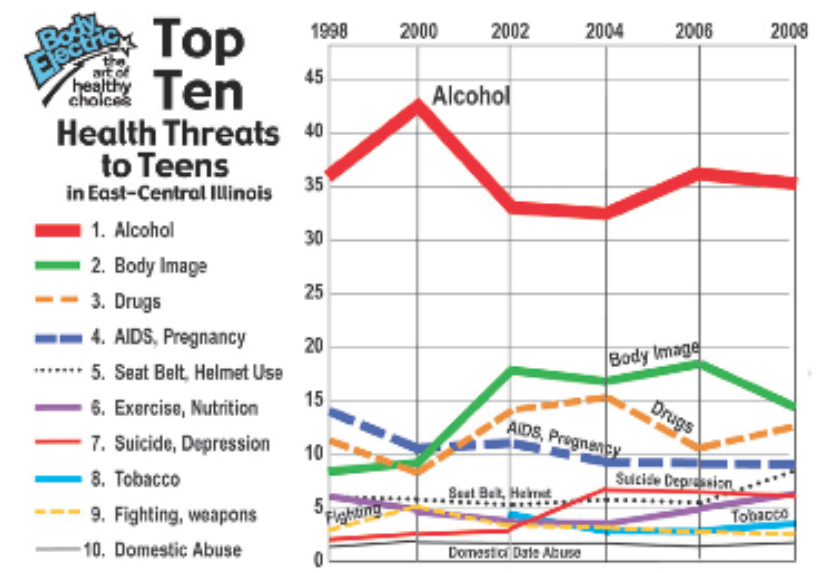
(production note: data on parents serving alcohol at parties, data on parents being active in child's life)

### III. Brainstorm tips they can give parents

and those who are raising children younger than them -- so they will all turn out healthy and resilient, able to delay drinking until they are 21.

### IV. Challenge parents to sign a pledge

to do their best to help all children in East-Central Illinois stay alcohol-free.



## Parents Serving Alcohol

Body Electric 2008 survey results indicate two out of five teens (40.9%) have been to a party at a friend's house where alcohol was served with parents' knowledge or consent (see graph at right). There has been some improvement since 2006 (3.3% decline). But one in six (17.6%) said his or her own parents allowed a party to include alcohol at their family's home (also in graph). This number has increased 4.8% since 2006.

The American Medical Association (AMA) released similar findings from two nationwide polls that reveal how underage youth obtain alcohol, as well as how easily and often.

The AMA discovered that nationally one out of four (25%) parents of children aged 12-20 say they have allowed their teens to drink under parental supervision in the past six months. Approximately one in 12 (8%) indicated they have allowed their teen's friends to also drink under their supervision in the past six months.

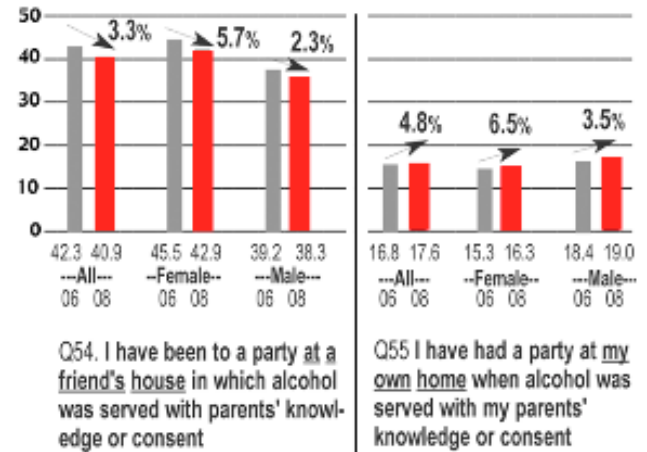
No responsible adult should ever equate underage alcohol use as a rite of passage. Fatal car accidents, injuries and assaults, and irreversible damage to the brain are not rites of passage for any child -- they are the true results of underage consumption.

Some parents believe it is inevitable that teens are going to drink somewhere, especially at prom and graduation time, so they attempt to provide a "safe" environment for this behavior by hosting a supervised party with alcohol, taking away car keys so teens can't drink and drive.

But the issue consists of more than unsafe or illegal behavior. **When alcohol is introduced to adolescents young, growing bodies and brain, the health risks to adolescents are very real.** Alcohol has been shown to have a more detrimental affect on teens' growing brains than on adult brains. Certainly no caring parent would willingly fill a teen's morning juice glass with beer or liquor as a nutritional breakfast for a growing brain. And yet, we find well-meaning parents making poor decisions based on trying to do the right thing to keep their child safe.

There are so many social pressures on teens, and the first line of defense must be parents who care enough to make important, health-conscious decisions. Parents must debunk the idea that drinking is a socially acceptable norm for teens and replace it with the solid, fact-based position that underage alcohol use is an unacceptable health risk for

teens. AMA Research from [http://www.alcoholpolicy.md.com/press\\_room/Press\\_releases/adults\\_give\\_youth\\_alcohol.htm](http://www.alcoholpolicy.md.com/press_room/Press_releases/adults_give_youth_alcohol.htm)



### More Parent Data from 2008 Body Electric Survey:

Compared to 2006 (50.1%), less than half (47.9%) of our teens got homework help from parents in 2008.

Fewer youth say their parents know where they are and who they're with when they go out (from 81.7% in 2006 down to 76.7% in 2008).

Having a trusted adult to talk to is a large protective factor for youth, and 85.5% (compared to 86.3% in 2006) of our teens report that they have such a relationship.

61.1% of teens say they spend time each week doing things with the family. This is good!

**What kind of message are parents sending?** Youth believe their parents disapprove of these health risks, in order:

**90.9%** of teens say the parents believe it would be wrong or very wrong if they used marijuana

**85.7%** of teens say the parents believe it would be wrong or very wrong if they smoked cigarettes

**79.9%** of teens say the parents believe it would be wrong or very wrong if they used alcohol

**72.9%** of teens say the parents believe it would be wrong or very wrong if they had premarital sex

**Do the communities of East-Central Illinois help and encourage youth to stay alcohol free?**

**68.1%** of teens said it was sort of or very easy to get alcohol