



Prevention & Early Intervention Advisory Community Empowerment
Ph: (671) 477-9079 thru 9083, Fx: (671) 477-9076

*Drug Free, Alcohol Free, Tobacco Free
Towards a Healthy Future for Guam*

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Contact: Christine Camacho, PEACE Public Information Officer
Telephone Number: (671) 477-9079 or (671) 477-2301
E-mail: christine.camacho@gmail.com
Fax Number: 671-477-9076
Website URL: www.peaceguam.org

Guam Participates in Nationwide Series of Town hall Meetings To Address Underage Drinking

Hagatna, April 8, 2008- A nationwide series of more than 1,600 town hall meetings is kicking off between March and April to encourage action against underage drinking. Guam is included in this national effort and will be hosting three town hall meetings during **April- Alcohol Awareness Month**. Three community organizations: **Island Girl Power, Pingelapese Guam Organization, and Youth For Youth LIVE! Guam** has teamed up to raise awareness about the problems associated with underage drinking. The town hall meetings are being held separately to raise awareness and educate the public about the social harms and costs associated with alcohol use and abuse, including underage drinking. Town hall meetings begin tomorrow and will continue on the following dates/locations:

- **Wednesday, April 9, 2008: Island Girl Power**, Dededo Senior Citizens Center, 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
- **Saturday, April 12, 2008: Pingelapese Guam Organization, Tamuning Senior Citizen's Center**, 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Tamuning Senior Citizen's Center
- **Friday, April 18, 2008: Youth For Youth LIVE! Guam** will host their town hall meeting on the first day of their 18th Annual Youth For Youth Conference, Hyatt Regency Hotel, 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Town Hall Meetings are part of a national effort to increase understanding and awareness of underage drinking and its consequences, and to encourage individuals, families, and communities to address the problem. Local communities are given the opportunity to come together to learn more about the new research on underage drinking and its impact on both individuals and the community.

-More-

**The Conch Shell symbolizes our awakening
from the deep slumber of unawareness
and urges us to accomplish our and others' welfare.**

"These town hall events are one of many efforts SAMHSA (Substance Abuse Mental Health & Services Administration) and its partners are taking to respond to the growing realization that the scope and ramifications of underage drinking are worse than we thought," said Terry Cline, Ph.D., SAMHSA Administrator. "Ninety-six percent of alcohol dependent adults started drinking before the age of 21, and a growing body of research suggests that alcohol may change the way the brain works and the way it's wired – potentially having consequences far beyond adolescence."

According to Guam's Epidemiological Profile, youth have reported drinking alcohol before the age of 13. Over one-third of high school students are current drinkers, while binge drinking has increase among Guam's youth between 2003 (17.3%) to 2005 (18.5%). Alcohol was a factor in 44% of 2005 traffic fatalities. The 2005 Unified Crime Report cites brawls due to the influence of alcohol, with one-third of murder in 2005 A preliminary report in 2006 indicated an increase in homicides, with the increase attributed by the police to increased alcohol consumption at home. Young people who began drinking before the age of 15 are four times more likely to develop alcohol dependence than those who wait until the age of 21. The community is encourage to get involved and attend the town hall meetings.

Town hall meetings are **FREE** and open to the public. Guam's town hall meetings are listed on the national website for town hall meetings and can be viewed at www.stopalcoholabuse.gov. To get involved or for more information, call the PEACE office at (671) 477-9079 or visit www.peaceguam.org for a complete list of activities.

- End -

**The Conch Shell symbolizes our awakening
from the deep slumber of unawareness
and urges us to accomplish our and others' welfare.**