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21 Reasons to be Hopeful

Spring is a time for renewed determination and hope, and we have at least 21 reasons to be hopeful. Times have changed and our efforts are paying off! Maine youth's alcohol use rates have been declining for the past 15 years. To celebrate, we are conducting some exciting outreach and community events to raise awareness of the role we all play in keeping our youth drug and alcohol free. There is something for everyone, including parent Table Talks, a Prom Photo contest, training for alcohol retailers, support for law enforcement, and a Portland City Council Resolution planned for April.

In addition, schools are gearing up for the end of the year—including prom and graduation season—and we plan on being there to support parents, teachers, law enforcement, and our communities to help make this a safe and memorable spring. As if that weren't enough, it's also grant season for us, and we've been hard at work to make sure that we can continue our youth substance abuse prevention efforts in Portland, the Casco Bay region, and the Gray-New Gloucester community.

So please take a moment to read why we're hopeful—and join us!

**Sincerely,
Erica, Jo, Emily, Sue, Jen, and Laura**

PS:

You can keep up with our current events between newsletters on our

[blog](#), [website](#) or on our [Facebook page](#). 

April is Alcohol Awareness Month

21 Reasons is offering teachers and youth group leaders a resource for Alcohol Awareness Month: 3 activities in a small workbook format; each activity can be completed in under an hour and is focused on environmental prevention. We are also offering a \$25 activities minigrant for each classroom or organization that uses the workbook. Teachers/staff interested in using the workbook should contact [Jen Hodsdon](#) anytime between now and the last week of April.

On Monday, April 5th, Portland City Council will vote on the 8th Resolution

Declaring Alcohol Awareness Month in the City of Portland. This year's Resolution will celebrate the reduction in students' past 30-day drinking rates. This good news would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of our community partners; the Portland Police Department, for example, conducted 924 liquor licensee compliance checks in 2009, with nearly 100% compliance rates. As a result, more students—especially 11th and 12th graders--report that alcohol is hard to get. The Portland City Council Meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, City Hall. The Honorable Nicholas M. Mavodones, Jr., Mayor, will preside. Anyone is welcome to testify to the council in support of the 21 Reasons coalition or the resolution. Contact [Jo Morrissey](#) for more information.

Our Underage Drinking Prevention Tip of the Month:
Don't be fooled! Teens may look mature, but their brains are still growing until age 25! Alcohol can permanently affect developing brains, and hampers judgment. To receive a monthly email with more tips, [click here](#).

New Projects

Prom Photo Contest, \$500 Grand Prize

21 Reasons, with the help of Tim and Eva in the Morning on Maine's Coast, 93.1, is announcing a **"best" prom photo contest**—with a cash prize of \$500 to the most awkward, uh, winner! First 21 submissions receive a music download gift card!

Who can enter? Anyone over 29 can enter, because anyone 29 and older was in high school before 1995.

How do I enter? Go into the attic and find your most awesome prom photo, then go to www.21reasons.org and follow the simple directions. It's so easy even a baby boomer can do it.

What can I win? There are two ways to win!
The first 21 photo entries will receive a \$10 music download card. The photo with the most votes will receive \$500!



HOW do I win? When your photo is posted online, 21 Reasons will send you a link to it. You send the link to ALL your friends and family, and then they can vote for your photo as the best! On-line voting opens up April 12th. Photos posted as they come in until then.

Why? To celebrate the fact that underage drinking rates in Portland have been declining since 1995, 21 Reasons, an underage drinking prevention coalition, is sponsoring a Prom Photo Contest. Together, we are making

underage drinking a thing of the past...just like those tacky prom dresses.

More contest details on our [website](#).

Table Talks



We are looking for parents who would like to host a Table Talk discussion! *Table Talks: Parents Connecting for Alcohol-Free Youth* is a new 21 Reasons and Casco Bay C.A.N. Coalition initiative.

The program allows parents to come together to discuss underage drinking in an informal setting. The discussions, usually held in a parent's home, are led by trained facilitators, who will share some of the latest research around underage drinking, and will help the parents discuss underage drinking and how to prevent it.

The Table Talks were a joint effort by the Maine Office of Substance Abuse (OSA), MESAP (Maine's Environmental Substance Abuse Prevention Center), and 21 Reasons. Table Talks were approved as a replacement format for the 2010 Town Hall Meetings here in Maine. SAMHSA, who funds the semi-annual meetings, has provided \$500 stipends to groups around the state to hold Table Talks this spring—including 21 Reasons and Casco Bay C.A.N.!

Parents who would like to get involved in Portland should email [Jo Morrissey](#). Parents in the Casco Bay community (Falmouth, Cumberland, Yarmouth, North Yarmouth, Freeport & Pownal) should email [Suzanne DiBella-Olson](#).

For more info, check out the [Table Talks: Parents Connecting for Alcohol-Free Youth How-to Guide](#).

Program News

It's all in the name: The Casco Bay C.A.N. Coalition

After months of discussion, 21 Reason's mentee coalition in the Casco Bay region decided upon a name! The Coalition is now: "Casco Bay C.A.N.—Create Awareness Now...To Reduce Youth Substance Abuse." Casco Bay C.A.N. includes the towns of Falmouth, Cumberland, North Yarmouth, Yarmouth, Freeport & Pownal. The Coalition is currently in the process of creating a professional logo and will be working on additional branding this spring and summer.

Working with Merchants

21 Reasons and Casco Bay C.A.N. offered low-cost trainings for alcohol retailers this March. Both trainings were conducted by Frank Lyons of [BC Consultants](#). Frank, a law enforcement officer for 29 years, also worked with the Bureau of

Liquor Enforcement for over 23 years.

On March 11 in Casco Bay, 28 employees and managers from 9 on-premise retailers in 5 Casco Bay towns (Yarmouth, Freeport, Falmouth, Cumberland & Chebeague Island) participated. It was one of the best turnouts to a seller-server training in the region, and Casco Bay C.A.N. thanks Frank Lyons and Lt. Perry for their help in coordinating this training!

The Portland training was also held in March, and a cheery group of 15 employees and managers from off-premise licensees attended. Frank's down-to-earth style made it an informative and enjoyable training.

Between the two organizations, 44 employees and managers were trained in how to avoid illegally selling alcohol, and got a refresher in State alcohol laws and policies. All left with a state certification good for 5 years.

Portland will be holding a training specifically for on-premise retailers on May 11. To register, contact [Jen Hodsdon](#).

In addition to the seller-server training, both 21 Reasons and Casco Bay C.A.N. mailed best practices guides, plus other resources and information about the coalitions, to liquor licensees. The information went to all 130 liquor licensees – on-premise and off-premise – in the Casco Bay region, and to all on-premise licensees in Portland.

It's grant writing season!

21 Reasons and Casco Bay C.A.N. have been busy writing and submitting applications for the following federal grant funding opportunities:

- **Emily Wolff assisted our mentee coalition in applying for a 5-year Casco Bay C.A.N. Drug Free Communities Grant. If successful, Cumberland County will receive funding for Casco Bay C.A.N. and its work to prevent youth substance abuse in the towns of Falmouth, Cumberland, North Yarmouth, Yarmouth, Freeport and Pownal.**
- **Jo Morrissey submitted an application for our second 21 Reasons Drug Free Communities Grant, which will fund our programs in the Portland Metropolitan area for the next 5 years. 21 Reasons' mission is to create an environment with policies and practices that support the drug free development of all our youth.**
- **Jen Hodsdon submitted a Year 3 renewal grant for the Sober Truth on Preventing Underage Drinking (STOP) Act. The goals and objectives are to reduce underage drinking by reducing youth access to alcohol.**
- **21 Reasons is applying for another DFC Mentoring grant, which would provide support for a two year mentoring relationship with the Gray-New Gloucester Youth Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition. By the end of the project, the coalition will be prepared to apply for an independent Drug Free Communities grant.**

We hope to hear from SAMHSA (the Substance Abuse and Mental Health

Services Administration) about funding during the late summer 2010. These grants would provide significant support to 21 Reasons, and other local coalitions, to continue to reduce youth substance abuse rates in our communities!

Thank you for all of your support this year!

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