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Students initiate discussion about local drinking culture

UAHS group hosts 'Top Ten Tips' event Tuesday night, Nov. 18

By SARA R. JOHNSON

Upper Arlington High School students are making a full-pledge effort to voice what parents should know about ways to communicate with their children about abstaining from use of drugs and underage drinking.

The high school group Team Delta Max will host Top 10 Team Tips for Parents from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 18, at the school's auditorium, 1650 Ridgeview Road.

Formed in 2006, Team Delta Max is a group made up of three entities -- students, parents and community leaders -- with the drive to help teenagers choose not to illegally drink or use drugs.

The event is free and is open to the public. Water and cookies will be available.

"One of the most vital pieces to the puzzle of creating change regarding underage drinking and drug use is the piece that involves parental discussion and involvement with the issue," said Erin Mayne, Team Delta Max adviser and founder.

"It's a rare opportunity for parents to hear straight from the kids' mouths exactly what students want to share about the drinking culture. That's something that can be incredibly beneficial for parents to hear."

The event will kick off with a resource information fair from 6:30 to 7 p.m. Several non-profit organizations that are based on alcohol or drug abuse counseling were invited.

Tables will be set up in the lobby where the organizations can talk with attendees and pass out information, said Kim Stands, a Team Delta Max parent member.

A few different entities will present top 10 lists to not participate in underage drinking or illegal drug use from 7 to 8 p.m.

Dr. Robert Crane who practices medicine in Columbus will present his top 10 health reasons for the students.

The students will follow with the top 10 things students want parents to know.

"The main thing is to have the high school students telling community parents and leaders what they need from them so they can keep doing the right thing and others can choose to do the right thing," Stands said.

"That's the main thrust. We want parents talking to them and see what the kids are doing."

Upper Arlington City Attorney Jeanine Hummer also will give her top 10 legal reasons to not participate in drug and alcohol use.

A question-and-answer session will follow the top 10 lists, running 8-8:30 p.m.

"We feel that ultimately that parents are guiding and directing their children, and we want to provide them with tips and ways to equip kids with the necessary tools to choose not to drink. We want to take every opportunity to do so," Mayne said.

Team Delta Max is comprised of 50-60 students, 10-15 community leaders and 20-25 families

with a parent representative.

"All of us together have been working to really forge a path of dialogue between parents, community members and kids to really address underage drinking and to find solutions together," Mayne said.

Past Team Delta Max events include The Max, an alcohol and drug free dance for students. The group has put on assemblies, and has talked with former first lady Hope Taft and Dr. Terry Cline, the appointed administrator by President George W. Bush for the United States' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Members also have passed out literature about the issue as well as held a 5k race.

The group has worked to have continual discussion about the issue outside of its weekly meetings between the students, she said.

"Few events take on a shape designed by kids to simply share with a group of parents and adults about an issue that truly impacts their lives on a day-to-day basis," Mayne said.

I invite parents to embrace this opportunity and to show support to students who are making this choice," Mayne said.

For more information visit the Web site teamdeltamax.com.

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--*Erin Mayne*