

Clayton Hogston

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### Prevention of Drunk Driving

As you sit at home, a phone rings. You pick it up only to nearly drop it in shock. A friend of yours has died in a car crash and two others in the car are severely injured. A drunk driver caused this accident. The drunk driver did not swerve and run the teens off the road, he was driving the car. What could have been done to prevent this premature death? Could friends and family have prevented it? The answer is yes. Family and friends, along with educational classes in schools, could have prevented this death.

The first place to start with drunk driving awareness is at home. Though a teen may spend most of their day at school, all good practices begin at home. To start these practices, the parents must be willing to accept that their child may drink. Many parents do not know that their child drinks alcohol or whom a child is spending time with. The child is usually not asked because the parents do not want to offend their child. What needs to be stressed to these parents is that their child being dead is much worse than that teenager being offended. Though the teen may be angry with their parents for a while, knowing whom the child is spending their time with is a good way to prevent drunkenness and therefore prevent drunk driving.

Friends also play an important role in drunk driving prevention. If one knows that one's friends are drinking and possibly driving, one needs to confront that friend. Again, the problem of offending the friend comes into play. One could lose this friend for a short while or lose this friend forever. If this friend still drinks even after one has confronted them, then one needs to confront their parents. This seems to most teens like stabbing the

friend in the back. This, though, is probably the most effective means of stopping one's friend from drinking and driving. Parents can set curfews and ground their children, where a friend cannot. Parents can also teach their children the importance of not drinking at all. The school could also help in this process.

As mentioned before, a teen spends most of their day at school. This time presents an opportunity to teach teens about drinking and driving. A class on drunk driving, it's consequences, and prevention could be made a mandatory class at school. This class would be taken the freshman year of high school. This class would emphasize the risks of drunk driving and what could happen. Various speakers, parents and friends of drunk driving victims and convicted drunk drivers, could come in and speak to the class so they could see what drunk driving can do to the lives of those who lose a loved one. The final part of the class could be showing the class an actual car that was in a wreck where alcohol was involved. This class can give teens the tools and knowledge to stop drunk driving from happening.

Thankfully, the situation in the introduction is completely fictional. That does not change the fact that hundreds of teens die every year from alcohol and driving related accidents. It is just a story here, but it is the truth in real life. Everyone needs to work to prevent this from happening so that all teens can grow up and live a productive life. If not, we are all denying someone the chance to live by not preventing this tragedy.

Robert Clayton Hogston 3/13/09