



## **SATURDAY NIGHT IN THE SUBURBS HOW TO GUIDE**

### **PURPOSE:**

Saturday Night in the Suburbs is a parent awareness program in collaboration with the Unified Prevention Coalition of Fairfax County (UPC), the school-community coalition, the high school staff, and students. Its purpose is to provide an evening of dialogue with a panel of students from the senior class to discuss drugs, alcohol abuse, parties, parent supervision and enabling, the Internet and communication with parents.

### **NEEDED:**

Panel: 8-12 students from the senior class

Moderator: Adult moderator -- a member of the UPC, a Coalition Coordinator, or other individual knowledgeable about the current county youth survey and can interject survey data into the discussion is effective. The moderator will ask a series of questions pertaining to the topics outlined above. Contact the UPC for assistance.

Audience: Parents of 6<sup>th</sup>-12 graders are encouraged to attend.

Date: Weekday evening 7-8:30 p.m. (No conflicts with band, chorus, drama, games, etc.)

Place: Cafeteria, Library, Lecture study, Community center (probably better to have it a smaller atmosphere and not a huge auditorium)

Equipment: Seating for parents, tables for panel, podium for moderator, microphone for panel and moderator

Food: Pizza, drinks/water, and paper products for panel (NOTE: Ask PTA/SA/O/SO or another organization to provide. Snacks/desserts for parents attending is optional.)

Coalition Information Table: pamphlets, brochures, latest information, Parents Who Host fact cards, flyer with date of next coalition meeting, etc.

Sign-in Sheet: name, affiliation, contact information (email), interests

### **TIME LINE:**

#### 1-2 Months prior:

- ✓ Meet with high school principal or staff to select students for panel. The panel should be a diverse group—a mix of students involved in sports, after-school activities, drama, band, chorus, leadership, possibly some who are not involved in school activities but participate in community activities/events. The bottom line is not to select all students who are in leadership, in SGA, on the honor roll, etc.
- ✓ Advertise the event in school newsletter, through the PTA/SA/O/SO, websites, emails, KIT messages, meetings, flyers, post info on school marquee, also, put a flyer/invite in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade weekly take home folder. **Please note on distributed materials: “Saturday Night in the Suburbs” was developed by the Unified Prevention Coalition of Fairfax County. For more information, visit [www.unifiedpreventioncoalition.org](http://www.unifiedpreventioncoalition.org).**

Few days to a week prior:

- ✓ Meet with the panel after school.
- ✓ Provide the questions, and tell them what to expect.
- ✓ Explain the “rules”:
  - Answer the questions, openly and candidly
  - Don’t provide names and specifics of events -- speak in general terms
  - Assure the panel that parents will not be allowed to “interrogate” them
- ✓ Remind them again the date/time/place of the event

Evening of Event:

- ✓ Panel meets about 1 hour prior (6 p.m.).
- ✓ Reviews questions as a group.
- ✓ Provide panel with pizza, drinks, and dessert while they collect their thoughts.

Event:

- ✓ Start on time (7 p.m.)
- ✓ Principal, Coalition Coordinator or PTA/SA/O/SO representative/president kicks evening off with a welcome. The principal should explain the purpose of the evening, and the “rules.”
- ✓ The moderator should take over and have the panel introduce themselves: Name (first is fine), activities involved in, college /after-graduation aspirations – short and sweet.
- ✓ The moderator should work through the questions having members of the panel who feel comfortable and knowledgeable answer the questions. Not all panel members have to comment on every question. The moderator also can comment as he/she deems appropriate.
- ✓ The panel should speak for an hour and 10 minutes, leaving a Q&A period of 15-20 minutes.

NOTE: Questions from parents can be allowed during the program, but limit them in order for all topics can be covered and don’t let parents get personal and derogatory. Again the students are to give an accurate assessment from their point of view on the issues presented.

- ✓ End on time (Students have homework and school the next day). Principal closes with remarks and thanks everyone for coming.
- ✓ Coalition Coordinator available to answer questions, etc.

Follow-up:

- ✓ Provide each student with a certificate of participation or a nice note for their participation

NOTE: Students in general are a bit apprehensive about the evening, but all have said that they are glad they participated —besides it looks good on a resume!!

Questions?: Contact Jennifer Lewis-Cooper, Unified Prevention Coalition  
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