

*Underage Drinking...*

**Actions**

**Have**

**Consequences**

Mayor Sophie Heymann

Borough of Closter

# *Overview of our Community*

- Closter, an upper-middle class suburb of New York City, is located in north east corner of Bergen County.
- Of Closter's 8400 residents, 1170 are students enrolled in our public schools.
- Closter's students attend one of our two public schools, Hillside Elementary School (K-4) and Tenakill Middle School (5-8).

- Closter is part of the Northern Valley Regional High School District; a district serving the seven towns of the Northern Valley.
- Closter's students attend the Demarest campus of Northern Valley Regional High School with students of Demarest and Haworth.
- The NVRHS Demarest campus serves approximately 1400 students grades 9-12.

# *Problem*

- Since 2000, alcohol use and substance abuse has steadily increased.
- Resources providing law enforcement with the tools they needed were limited.
- The area's affluence, combined with a record number of latch-key households has significantly increased in the past eight years fostering larger numbers of middle and high school age students left at home unsupervised.

# *Response*

- Law enforcement's steadfast and determined solicitation of community support resulted in the adoption of Closter Borough Ordinance 67-14, *Consumption by Persons Under Legal Age*.
- Borough Ordinance 67-14 enhanced enforcement of 2C:33-17b, *Making Real Property Available for Underage Consumption of Alcoholic Beverages*.
- Continued support of educational programs designed to increase public's awareness, responsibilities and consequences of actions.

# *Result*

- Borough Ordinance 67-14 states it is unlawful for any person under the legal age to consume alcohol or to, without legal authority, knowingly possess or knowingly consume an alcoholic beverage on private property.
- Borough Ordinance 67-14 further states it is unlawful for any person who has ownership or control of any premises, or supervision of any event, shall permit or allow the consumption of alcoholic beverage by a person under legal age in or upon any such premises.
- Police now have the enforcement power to enter private property and impose the *Consumption by Persons Under Legal Age* ordinance.

- Since 2003, the number of adults arrested for making real property available to minors for the consumption of alcoholic beverages has steadily increased.
- This increase is due in large part to the adoption of Borough Ordinance 67-14 and increase in enforcement power.
- Increased community service sentences and penalties issued to juvenile offenders through the courts are raising the awareness among youth for consequences of their actions.

# *Creating Community Awareness*

- The Borough of Closter provides educational resources to members of the community regarding alcohol awareness, responsibility and legality.
- Various methods of communication are utilized, inclusive of newspaper, direct mailing, annual calendar and website information.
- The “*Parent’s Who Host, Lose the Most*” campaign is promoted throughout the year, with increased emphasis during the spring (proms and graduations) and summer seasons.

# *Summary*

- The Borough of Closter continuously works to educate its residents regarding their responsibility to protecting its youth.
- Commitment to providing ordinances regarding consumption and possession by persons under the legal age as well as establishing the ability to enforce laws which prohibit the provision of material and/or property to youth brought recognition to this serious problem.
- The increased number of arrests, both adult and juvenile, over the past several years has raised social awareness and consciousness to a difficult social dilemma.