# WHAT’S IN YOUR KIT

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Dear Community Partner:

Thank you for downloading the *Power of You(th)*® October Activation Toolkit provided by Mothers Against Drunk Driving® (MADD). This toolkit contains ideas created and approved by teens for teens.

MADD is excited to provide you this toolkit of fun activities for October Activation in order to help prevent underage drinking and the many lives lost as a result. These toolkits are great to use around Red Ribbon Week, Homecoming and other football games, fall festivals, parties and breaks, or Halloween. Included you will find:

- October Activation Fact Sheet
- October Activation information
- Information on Drawing Community Attention

Print or download and share this toolkit with other students and invite them to join your efforts. Contact a local MADD office, who may be able to provide additional resources, such as:

- "The 411 on Teen Drinking," a booklet to educate and empower teens to take a stand against drinking underage and to never get in a car with someone who has been drinking
- Red Ribbons
- *Power of You(th)* Red Wristbands

To engage parents during October as well, visit madd.org or contact your local MADD office for more information about MADD’s Power of Parents® research-based parent handbook to help parents talk with their teens about alcohol.

Let’s work together to kick off a fantastic school year by empowering other teens and your community to take a stand against underage drinking! If you have any questions, email programs@madd.org, and we will try to help you in any way we can.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Did You Know?
• Teen alcohol use kills about 4,700 people each year, more than all illegal drugs combined.
• Adolescent drinkers perform worse in school, are more likely to fall behind and have an increased risk of social problems, depression, suicidal thoughts and violence.
• A GfK Roper report showed that 74 percent of kids (ages 8-17) said their parents are the leading influence on their decisions about drinking.

October Activation
October, is a time of year when schools around the country encourage young people to pledge to live a drug-free life just in time for homecoming and the holidays. MADD knows that in order to prevent youth from drinking alcohol—the drug most commonly used by youth—we must not only educate teens on the dangers of underage drinking, but also equip parents to talk about alcohol with their kids. By engaging youth, parents and the community to collectively enforce 21 as the minimum drinking age and zero tolerance for underage drinking, MADD is working to reduce the deaths and injuries that are a result of this teen epidemic.

What Can My School Do?
Schools can partner with MADD during October to influence teen drinking behavior, by providing teens with fun and impactful ways to take a stand against underage drinking and by providing parents with the tools to talk with their teens about alcohol. The following MADD programs and activities are available for schools to utilize or promote during October Activation:

October Activation Toolkits: Join with schools across the country as students collectively use their power to say no to underage drinking by promoting and using the October Activation Toolkits. These toolkits are designed for Educators, Student Leaders, Community Leaders, and School Resource Officers and are available for download at madd.org/powerofyouth.

High School Presentations: Invite a MADD speaker to come into your school to present educational information about the dangers of underage drinking and give helpful tips for teens. This engaging presentation addresses factors that can lead teens to drink underage, the health risks, and tips on how to avoid peer pressure.

Power of You(th)®: MADD offers “The Power to Take a Stand”, a teen booklet that has been reviewed and approved by teens, to provide teens with research-based information on the dangers of underage drinking. This tool is designed to offer teens tools to resist peer pressure, and empower them to take the
next step and influence their peers to make the right choices. Red ribbons and red *Power of You(th)* wristbands are also available for Red Ribbon Week. Contact your local MADD office for more information or to request a local presenter.

**Power of Parents®**: Dr. Robert Turrisi from Pennsylvania State University developed and evaluated a handbook for parents of college students that successfully reduced underage drinking and the associated behaviors among participating college freshman. MADD has partnered with Dr. Turrisi and adapted his handbook model to reach parents of high school and middle school students to equip them with the tools to have potentially lifesaving conversations with their kids about alcohol. This handbook, along with other research-based information and resources for parents can be requested at madd.org or through your local MADD office, and is also provided to parents during free, 15 and 30 minute parent workshops conducted by a program certified facilitator.

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**About Mothers Against Drunk Driving**

*Founded by a mother whose daughter was killed by a drunk driver, Mothers Against Drunk Driving® (MADD) is the nation’s largest nonprofit working to protect families from drunk driving, drugged driving and underage drinking. MADD also supports drunk and drugged driving victims and survivors at no charge, providing one supportive service every 3 minutes through local MADD victim advocates and 1-877-MADD-HELP. Learn more at madd.org or call 877-ASK-MADD.*
74% of kids (ages 8-17) said their parents are the leading influence on their decisions about drinking.

Teen alcohol use kills 4,700 people each year - that’s more than all illegal drugs combined.
UNDERAGE DRINKING FACT SHEET

- Teen alcohol use kills about 4,700 people each year — that’s more than all other illegal drugs combined.¹
- High school students who use alcohol or other substances are five times more likely to drop out of school or believe good grades aren’t important.²
- Three out of four 12th graders reported NOT binge drinking in the past two weeks.³
- Teens who do NOT drink alcohol until they are 21 are over 80% LESS likely to abuse alcohol or become alcohol dependent later in life than those who drink before age 15.⁴
- The brain is not fully developed until the early 20s, and alcohol can cause long-term damage to a growing brain.⁵
- The 21 minimum drinking age has saved about 800 lives per year.⁶
- Youth who begin drinking before the age of 15 are five times more likely to develop alcohol dependence than those who wait until they are 21.⁷
- Adolescent drinkers perform worse in school, are more likely to fall behind and have an increased risk of social problems, depression, suicidal thoughts and violence.⁸
- Teens who do NOT drink alcohol until they are 21 are 85% less likely to be in a motor vehicle crash because of their drinking later in life than those who drink before age 14.⁹

SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

General Use

- With homecoming and fall festivals around the corner, MADD [field office] is encouraging you to #ProtectUrFuture and connect with the #PowerOfYouth program. Don’t drink before the age of 21. Learn more at Powerofyouth.com @madd.official @StateFarm [Tag partner’s handle]

- Teens, it’s not just your bodies that are growing. Your brains are too! Don’t drink before 21. Join MADD [field office] and #ProtectUrFuture. Learn more at Powerofyouth.com @madd.official @StateFarm [Tag partner’s handle]

- Lots of drama at teen drinking parties? Makes sense. Teen brain can’t keep emotions in check with alcohol & other drugs onboard. powerofyouth.com #ProtectUrFuture @madd.official [Tag partner’s handle]

- Don’t like high taxes? Stop giving kids alcohol! Underage drinking costs society about $24 billion a year…unpaid medical, property damage, and loss of societal income. #ProtectUrFuture www.powerofyouth.com @madd.official @StateFarm [Tag partner’s handle]

- Drugs are bad…but underage drinking is worse. Alcohol kills more youth every year than all other drugs combined. #ProtectUrFuture. [Tag partner’s handle] @madd.official

- Did you know teen drinking kills 4,300 youth each year? That’s more than all illegal drugs combined! Check out Powerofyouth.com and #ProtectUrFuture @madd.official @StateFarm [Tag partner’s handle]
COMMUNITY
WORKING TOGETHER TO CREATE A WORLD WHERE UNDERAGE DRINKING ENDS, AND LIVES DON'T.
DRAWING COMMUNITY ATTENTION
OP-ED TOPICS

Since October Activation is typically an on-campus initiative, you may feel like there is little you can do. You, however, can be the school’s biggest supporter by choosing to draw attention to the topic and the good work your school is doing to prevent underage drinking by involving the local media. You can be a valuable partner in your local school’s efforts to prevent underage drinking. By choosing to download this toolkit, you have taken the first step.

1.) Write an op-ed article for your local newspaper.

• What is an op-ed? An op-ed is an opinion based editorial or article. Op-eds usually run in a newspaper or magazine and they express the opinions of the author.

• What should be included in an op-ed?
  ◊ Start your op-ed with an opening paragraph that lets the reader know exactly why you’re writing.
  ◊ Start off with a sentence such as: “Underage drinking is a dangerous and important topic that cannot be overlooked in our [CITY OR STATE].”
  ◊ Include key statistics about underage drinking. Refer to the Red Ribbon Week Fact Sheet for help.

• Teen alcohol use kills about 4,700 people each year — that’s more than all illegal drugs combined.

• Kids who start drinking young are seven times more likely to be in an alcohol-related crash.
  ◊ State YOUR (the author’s) opinion on the issue.
  ◊ Call for action.
    • How can underage drinking be prevented?
    • Are you urging parents to talk to their teens?
    • Is high visibility law enforcement an important component?

• How long should an op-ed be? The length of an op-ed can depend on the outlet. Follow the guidelines of the newspaper. Contact your local newspaper and ask what length is acceptable for a submitted op-ed. Op-ed lengths can vary from 400 to 1,200 words.

• How do I submit an op-ed? All publications have a different process to submit an op-ed. Visit that media outlet’s website to see if you have the option to submit the op-ed online. If not, call the local office and ask for their assistance.
2.) You can draw the media’s attention to events the school has planned and lobby for coverage.

- **Find out what is going on.** Work with partners at the school to find out what their plans are and if they would like the media to be involved. Some schools, especially small schools, do not have public relations departments to help get the word out about what is going on on-campus.

- **Who is the contact?** Work with the school to find out, if the media is interested, who would be the correct point of contact at the actual school.

- **Call around.** Depending on the size of your community and what other issues are currently occupying your local media, the ease of obtaining coverage can vary. You can “pitch” stories by simply calling the outlet (newspaper, TV news, etc.) and asking for the news desk or the assignment editor. The titles may vary in different areas, but generally you are looking for the person who assigns the stories to the reporters.

- **Make the “pitch”**. Once you get the correct person on the line, give them the pertinent details about what is going on and why you feel like it is important for them to cover this story. Most media outlets are fast paced, so be sure to have prepared your pitch to be succinct and interesting. If there has been a recent tragedy or law passed that relates to underage drinking, linking the school’s activity to that can sometimes help. Make sure your school is comfortable with this tactic first.

- **Leave contact information.** Once you have completed your pitch, be sure to leave your contact information as well as the contact information for the contact at the school.

- **Follow Up.** If you have not heard anything in a few days, it is ok to call back and check in. Don’t be too pushy. They will usually tell you if they think the story will be covered.
Resources & Materials
If you or your organization are interested in ordering any of these resources contact your local MADD office by visiting madd.org/local-offices/.