

Watchwords by Officer Tom Hanshaw
November 16, 2012

Last week I was able to attend a training session at the office of Essex County District Attorney Jonathan Blodgett in Salem, regarding a new anti-bullying program the staff had developed. While I was there, I was also able to pick up a few copies of the new pamphlet on preventing underage drinking; a serious ongoing issue in many communities. The front of the pamphlet certainly caught my attention and I complimented the staff for doing such a great job. In fact I also commented that the Essex County District Attorney's Office is like the "flu shot for crime." They are working proactively to prevent crime and keep our communities healthier.

You can check out the pamphlet online by visiting the District Attorney's site at www.mass.gov/essexda in the search tab; type in social host law and click on the PDF, "Preventing Underage Drinking....priceless."

The law in Massachusetts is clear; whoever furnishes alcohol to a person under 21 years of age shall be punished with a fine up to \$2000 or imprisonment for up to a year or both. "Furnish" means knowingly or intentionally supply, give, provide to or allow to possess alcoholic beverages on premises or property owned or controlled by the person charged. In addition to an explanation of the law, District Attorney Blodgett answers some commonly asked questions concerning scenarios involving the "social host." For example, you can be charged for providing alcohol to under-21 guests in your home, be subject to a civil law suit, be responsible at other venues, like a rented hotel room and not have insurance coverage for damages, serious injury or a death.

Parents have the most influence in their child's life, so you have an impact on their choices and decisions. Talk with them, set rules and help them to stay safe and healthy. I encourage every parent of a teenager to visit the Essex County District Attorney's web site and learn more about the consequences involved with underage drinking. It's an issue that affects too many lives each year in communities across Massachusetts and the Country.

Just a reminder about the annual, "Fill A Cruiser with Food Drive" to benefit Our Neighbor's Table. We'll be collecting donations of food tomorrow at the Super Stop & Shop on Macy Street between 9:00 AM and 2:00 PM. Look for the flashing lights as we attempt to fill a few cruisers with items for the needy as the Holiday Season approaches. This year, Joan Bukosky of ONT tells me the Pantry is most in need of cereal, canned fruits & vegetables, canned prepared foods like spaghetti o's, boxed pasta, soup and baby food. Donations of cash or checks payable to Our Neighbor's Table also helps with the weekly purchase of perishable items like eggs, milk and bread. A number of volunteers will be collecting items at the Plaza, so please stop by and help those who need assistance.

The annual Thanksgiving Day Bench Press Meet at Hard Nock's Gym this year will benefit the Paige Fortin Fund. Paige is recovering from a terrible accident on September 15th and has undergone several surgeries, with more to follow on her road to recovery. For more information or to donate on behalf of a lifter, visit www.pressforpaige.com or stop by and see Dave Nock at the Gym. I was able to meet Paige on Election Day as she stopped by the High

School with her family to vote for the first time. She had a huge smile and lit up the cafeteria with her enthusiasm and excitement. Donations can also be sent to The Paige Fortin Recovery Fund, PO Box 143 in Amesbury. Our community has truly come together to help Paige and her family recover.

Finally, the first of December is approaching; just a reminder the winter parking ban is too. As of December 1st, vehicles cannot be left on City streets and in Municipal Lots overnight, regardless of weather conditions. A violation may result in a parking ticket and/or towing at the owner's expense.