

Press Release: December 5, 2013
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From: Mary Conway – 686-0295

National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month

December is National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month. During this month, the Santa Ynez Valley Youth Coalition is recommitting to its strategy of working to prevent tragedy before it strikes by encouraging community and family members to stay safe, sober, and drug-free on the road this Holiday season.

As we strive to reduce the damage drug use inflicts upon our community and its youth, we must address the serious and growing threat drunk, drugged, and distracted driving poses to all of us. Alcohol and drugs, both illicit and prescribed, can impair judgment, reaction time, motor skills, and memory as well as erode a person's ability to drive safely and responsibly. Distracted driving, including the use of electronic equipment behind the wheel, has recklessly claimed too many lives as well. Unfortunately, research suggests that younger drivers are particularly susceptible to the hazards of drugged driving, with marijuana being the drug most often found in impaired drivers.

To bring an end to these heartbreaking outcomes, we, as a community, must take action by promoting rigorous enforcement measures and effective substance abuse prevention programs. While enforcement and legislation are critical elements of prevention, we know that parents, educators, and community leaders who work with young people every day, are our community's best advocates for responsible decision making. All of us have the power to effect change and work to end drunk and drugged driving in the Santa Ynez Valley. In our homes and communities, we can engage our youth and discuss the consequences of drug and alcohol abuse. In our local clinics and hospital, health care providers can redouble their efforts to recognize patients with substance abuse problems and offer medical intervention. Last, our governing bodies and officials can explore new legal actions that will hold drugged drivers accountable and encourage them to seek treatment.

As we come together with our loved ones this holiday season, let us renew our commitment to drive safely, act responsibly, and live drug-free. Be the role models our young people want to emulate. This action can help create a better tomorrow.

The Santa Ynez Valley Youth Coalition is dedicated to promoting healthy lifestyles and preventing and reducing substance abuse among youth in the Valley.

The Coalition is sponsored by Santa Ynez Valley People Helping People who provides staffing and administrative support for its programs and services. If you would like to learn more about the Coalition, visit the website at www.svyvcoalition.org or contact Director Mary Conway, at 686-0295.

