Stern-Ellis 1

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Humanities ½

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**Would You Do It?**

Every day eight teenagers die as a result of teenagers drunk driving (Stunn). This is just one of many startling statistics that go along with teens drinking and driving. It is a severe issue that needs to be resolved. Teen drinking and driving is caused by peer pressure and inexperience among teens. If society continues to let this happen, it will keep destroying teen lives and kill many. Parents need to raise awareness of this issue to their children early on and teens need to have a safe plan to prevent this problem.

Teens continue to die from drinking and driving which is often caused by peer pressure and the lack of experience teens have with both alcohol and driving. For instance, according to a study done by Copeland, et. al. a major cause of teen drinking and driving is high schoolers “taking their first steps into adulthood” (254). With these steps comes a strong need to “fit in” and “keep up” with peers to prove one’s ability to handle ‘adult activities’ like drinking, which can lead to driving under the influence. Copeland agrees that adolescents’ social and psychological environments cultivate strong pressures to engage in “adult” behaviours like drinking making it more common for teens to be pressured by their friends to drink, leading to reckless decisions like driving under the influence.  However, peer pressure is not the only factor in teenage drinking and driving. Inexperience with driving and alcohol among teens is a huge factor as to why teens are killed daily in motor vehicle accidents. Inexperience combined with peer pressure makes drunk driving in teens an even bigger issue because many of them are just beginning to learn how to drive and are experiencing the “connotations of power and freedom” that can

Stern-Ellis 2

come with having a drivers license (254). Inexperience with alcohol combined with “teenagers feeling they can do anything without endangering themselves” creates a dangerous combination that can result in fatal instances of drinking and driving (Stunn). The complex of immunity derived from drinking alcohol along with the ever present peer pressure that comes along with being in high school causes many teenagers to get behind the wheel while under the influence.

Teen drinking and driving has many negative effects; it kills teens and has many consequences for those who do survive one of these accidents. So many teen lives are lost daily because of drinking and driving. One startling statistic shows; “Forty percent of alcohol-related car crashes result to death involving teenagers” (Stunn). This fact shows that for every ten car crashes that involve alcohol, four of them include teenage death as a result of the crash. Because of this, families across the nation mourn the loss of their son, daughter, sister or brother, something that could be easily avoided. While death is the steepest consequence to teenage drinking and driving, it is, unfortunately, not the only effect it has. Teenagers who survive accidents related to drinking and driving receive many consequences. For example, “While the penalties for underage drinking and driving vary based on the exact laws in your area, the punishment often includes fines of up to $2,500 or more, as well as a mandatory license suspension and three to five years of probation” (Mokeyane). This statement shows a few of the legal consequences connected to drinking and driving. This is a very negative, yet important, effect because it completely interrupts the lives of teens, who are usually in school creating their futures, making them learn and own up to the dangers they have caused. From these examples, it is clear that no teenager should drink and drive because it cause very negative consequences on their lives including even death.

Stern-Ellis 3

While this is a terrible issue, there are many ways to help prevent teen drinking and driving. Parental education is one way to prevent teens from drinking and driving. For example, “Parental involvement, with a focus on monitoring and and restricting what new drivers are allowed to do, helps keep new drivers safe as they learn to drive. Research has shown that when parents establish and enforce the ‘rules of the road’, new drivers report lower rates of risky driving, traffic violations, and crashes” (“A Dangerous Mix.”). This statement shows that when parents talk with their kids about the dangers of drinking and driving, the reckless choices made by teens tends to drops. Parents need to talk to their kids about the risks of drinking and driving early on in their lives so that they will be prepared and educated as teenagers. However, this is not the only solution to helping teens make safe decisions regarding drinking and driving. A strong way to help teens is to make sure they have a designated driver. In his article, Hanson suggests to, “Volunteer to be a designated driver. It could save your life and the lives of your friends” (2013). Teens need to understand how serious of an effect having a few drinks can be on someone’s ability to drive. It is difficult to keep all teens from experimenting with drinking at parties while they are underage. However, before parties, teens can decide on one person who will agree and commit to drive everyone home. Having a predetermined plan and pushing parents to talk about drinking and driving are safe solutions to helping prevent unnecessary risks.

Teen drinking and driving can ruin teen’s lives and results in thousands of fatal car accidents each year. Teens throughout America find themselves in drinking and driving situations when faced with peer pressure and inexperience with alcohol. Deaths and other detrimental incidents can be prevented if parents educate their kids about alcohol and driving while teens can designate a sober friend to drive intoxicated teens home from parties or other

Stern-Ellis 4

events. This teen issue is so important because it is very preventable. Society needs to not ignore all the lives that have been lost due to teen drinking and driving and educate kids at an early age in order to prevent more loss of life.

Stern-Ellis 5

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