
For Immediate Release**Press Contact:** Monica Nicholas

Santa Cruz County, Substance Use Disorder Prevention
1400 Emeline Ave. Bldg. K, Santa Cruz, CA 95060
(831) 359-8450



Friday Night Live Youth Flip the Script on Underage Drinking with a Poster Scavenger Hunt

Santa Cruz County, CA — June 21st, 2021— **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Santa Cruz County Friday Night Live (FNL) youth leaders from Pajaro Valley High School, Pajaro Middle School, Watsonville YMCA, and the Countywide Youth Council Chapters are tackling the issue of underage drinking by sharing the positive data that youth in our community are not using alcohol before age 21.

FNL youth recognized that perceptions of youth attitudes and behaviors significantly influence a young person's attitudes and behaviors. Unfortunately, these perceptions are often inaccurate. Using local California Healthy Kids Survey data, youth developed poster messages to educate and reinforce positive social norms and behaviors by highlighting the fact that the majority of youth in Santa Cruz County are choosing to not drink alcohol.

To share these important messages, youth developed FNL Poster Scavenger Hunt with posters placed at youth-centric locations and participating stores and restaurants throughout Santa Cruz County. Win Prizes by taking a picture with a poster. Upload the picture to Social Media on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter and Tag us @sccfnlp by August 31st, 2021, and you will be entered into a prize drawing! Prizes are courtesy of FNL and include backpacks, water bottles, headphones, t-shirts, and more! There is no limit on entries; for every unique picture you tag us in, you will be entered to win. Winners will be announced on Social Media on September 2, 2021.

"In today's society there is the stigma that large amounts of youth drink alcohol when, in reality, this is an over-estimate. This generalization of underage drinking overlooks the smart and healthy choices we have made. The positive social norms campaign highlights these great choices and supports us in continuing to make healthy choices by choosing not to drink alcohol. According to the California Healthy Kids Survey Data for 2017/19, 82% of 11th graders in Santa Cruz County have not used any alcohol in the past 30 days," said Emily Palone, FNL Youth Council member.

FNL members developed a series of youth-targeted positive poster messages. Using the data for Pajaro Valley Unified School District, Pajaro Middle School, Pajaro Valley High School, and Watsonville YMCA youth highlighted that 95% of 7th graders, 90% of 9th graders, and 85% of 11th-grade youth choose not to drink alcohol (California Healthy Kids Survey, 2019). FNL's Countywide Youth Council highlighted Countywide data showing that 82% of 11th graders have not used alcohol in the past 30 days, and 63% of 11th graders have never used alcohol in their lifetime (CHKS, 2017).

Adult-targeted educational materials, and a Public Service Announcement (PSA) were also developed to change the community misperceptions and promote positive norms that support young people's healthy choices. Parent education materials encourage parents to talk to their kids about alcohol and to safely monitor and secure alcohol in their homes to prevent unintended access.

Friday Night Live, a California program started in 1984, is a youth development program that promotes healthy lifestyles free of alcohol, tobacco, or other substance use among youth. Friday Night Live builds partnerships for positive and healthy youth development, which engage youth as active leaders and resources in their community. For more information about the Friday Night Live program, or the poster scavenger hunt, email: sccfnlp@santacruzcounty.us, call: 831-359-8450, and follow us on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook @sccfnlp.

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