



News Alert

Northeast Community Challenge Coalition

Drinking Scenes Pervasive in Harry Potter Movie

As Harry Potter fans crowd movie theatres to catch the newest movie in the Harry Potter Series “Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince,” parents may be shocked by the starring role given to alcohol. In scene after scene, the young wizards and their adult professors are seen sipping, gulping and pouring various forms of alcohol to calm their nerves, fortify their courage, or comfort their sorrows.

The movie depicts the characters as 16-year-olds coming of age and enjoying some new freedoms– including an un-chaperoned trip to a pub, which after drinking at the bar Hermoine is shown to be tipsy, putting her arms around her male companions.

According to the New York Times, alcohol educators say parents should be aware of alcohol’s role in the Harry Potter series, as well as the movie. Studies suggest that movies influence teenagers’ behavior when it comes to drinking, drugs and tobacco. According to the Institute of Medicine, youth exposure to alcohol through movies contributes to early initiation of alcohol use.

By fifth and sixth grade, alcohol expectancies turn positive, focusing on the arousing and positive effects of alcohol use (e.g., alcohol makes one social, happy and sexy.)

Alcohol experts say this does not mean that children shouldn’t see the new Harry Potter movie. It actually presents an opportunity for parents to talk to their children about alcohol, says Dr. Christopher Welsh, a University of Maryland psychiatrist and addiction specialists. “I hope parents can talk to their kids and tell them even though Harry Potter made drinking seem fun, that isn’t O.K.” said Dr. Welsh.

Talk with your child early and frequently about the health, legal and social effects of alcohol and other drugs.

Please see attached Parent Media Tips for the Home and Will You Teach Your Child Brochure.

