

*Geauga Family First Council  
PAAC Survey Project 2007  
Final Evaluation Report  
June 16, 2007*

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## I. Project Background

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### Project Objectives and Scope

The PFS process conducted in Geauga County several years ago resulted in the decision to pursue two separate, but related, strategies to address the gaps identified in meeting the needs of Geauga County's youth. The primary strategy was implementation of the All Stars program. The secondary strategy was implementation of an awareness and educational campaign encouraging parents to continually communicate to their children that underage alcohol consumption is unacceptable. Due to the overwhelming success of the Family First Council's (FFC) initial Parent Awareness and Action Campaign (PAAC), the FFC decided to implement a similar postcard campaign in the spring of 2007 targeting parents of local high school students. *The objective of this survey project was to measure the effectiveness of this recent marketing campaign.* (Please note that throughout this report the term "parent" can also apply to the child's primary caregiver, such as a grandparent, if no parent is involved.) This survey research addresses the following overall questions:

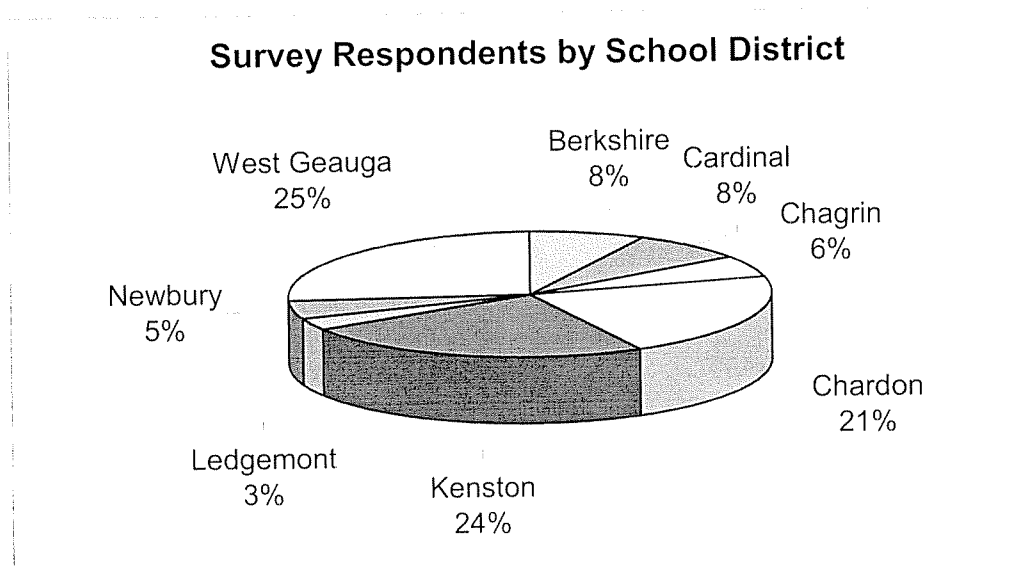
- Were parents aware of the campaign? Did they receive the postcards?
- Was the message of the campaign understood (importance of talking to your kids about underage alcohol use, and how to talk to them about it)?
- Did the campaign prompt any specific actions on the part of parents (i.e. talking to their children about abstaining from alcohol use)?

### Methodology

The survey and cover letter (see Appendices 1A and 1B) were mailed to a random sample of 2,000 households, 50% of the 4,000 total households receiving the postcards. The surveys were mailed approximately one week after the last of the six postcards was mailed, around June 11th. The Geauga Educational Service Center return address was used on the outgoing envelopes, along with the words "Gauga Parent Alert" in order to increase response rate. Recipients filled out the survey and returned it in the postage paid envelope provided. Maple Alley Market Research designed the survey (with input from Karen Lackey, Joann Randall and the Planning Team), had the surveys printed and distributed (using Cleveland Letter Service), and handled all tabulating and analysis of the responses.

### Summary of Respondents

A total of 330 surveys were returned, representing a 17.5% response rate (accounting for those that were undeliverable due to address errors). The following is a general summary of the respondents by school district. See **Appendix 2** for a more detailed breakdown by school district and grade level.



## II. Summary of Key Findings

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Overall, this marketing campaign appears to have been another success. As with the previous PAAC campaign, although the exact number of households impacted will never be known, the survey responses indicated that at a minimum, hundreds of families were positively impacted by the information that was provided in the postcard. The specific data and findings are presented below for each of the project's objectives.

### 1) Were parents aware of the campaign? Did they receive the postcards?

About 66% of the respondents recalled seeing all six of the postcards and most of the rest (29%) recalled seeing at least some of them. Only 5% of those who responded did not recall seeing any of them. However, the true overall level of awareness of the postcards is likely lower than what is stated here as those who did see them and take an interest were probably more likely to respond to the survey. Several newspaper articles ran in local papers about the campaign as well, and about 30% of respondents reported seeing one or more of these articles.

### 2) Was the message of the campaign understood (importance of talking to your kids about underage alcohol use, and how to talk to them about it)?

The message of “the importance of talking to your kids about underage alcohol use” appears to have been conveyed to most of the respondents. It is unclear whether or not parents gained specific information about *how* to talk to them, other than using the postcards as tool for doing so (which the majority did do). Responses to several questions combined indicate that those who did recall seeing the postcards reviewed them, read the information, looked at the pictures, and got the message.

Over half of the respondents agreed to some extent that they learned something new from the postcards, while 36% said that the information in the postcards was surprising to them. And, 54% agreed that the postcards made them “stop and think.” Over 90% agreed that the information reinforced what they already knew. Without question, this indicates that a good portion of the respondent group was comprised of those who are already “on board.” But, even for these parents, responses to other questions indicated that the campaign provided important reinforcement and tools for them to continue to talk to their teens about these issues.

Respondents recalled quite a bit of detail about the pictures in the postcards, indicating this was an effective way to communicate the message. The greatest number of comments were general in

nature, indicating that the graphics were strong, eye-catching, and appropriate for the message. The specific postcard mentioned most frequently was the girl on the floor in front of the toilet (40 mentions). The other one garnering the most recall was the passed out girl in her prom dress with the boy carrying her (26), followed by the car accident (18), morgue (11), and jail cell (9).

In terms of information on the cards, more than anything else, respondents recalled seeing statistics about the number of local teens who drink and the early age at which it starts, with many of them expressing “shock” and “alarm” in response to this information. Many also referenced seeing information for parents about hosting parties, not providing alcohol and liability issues. A number of people also stated that they recall seeing good information that got the message across, but could not recall specifics.

For the most part, respondents accurately recalled what information was, and was not, provided on the postcards, indicating that they really did read the content and think about it. The only exception was 74% reported that the postcards contained statistics about drug use among teenagers in Geauga County. Although some may have interpreted alcohol to be a drug, no specific statistics were provided about other illegal drugs and Geauga teens. The information respondents were most confident was on the postcards included statistics about underage alcohol use in Geauga County (90%), suggestions for parents related to teenagers and underage alcohol use (81%) and photographs of the consequences of underage drinking (79%).

### **3) Did the campaign prompt any specific actions on the part of parents (i.e. talking to their children about abstaining from alcohol use)?**

The postcards had enough of an impact on most respondents to prompt 63% of them to share one or more of them with their high schoolers. Some (21%) even shared one or more of them with their middle schoolers, and 26% displayed them in their house on the refrigerator, bulletin board, kitchen table or elsewhere. This is a real testament to the effectiveness and reach of this campaign.

In terms of changes in specific behaviors, the majority of respondents indicated that their view was either unchanged by the postcards, or that they already follow the specific suggestions that were given on the postcards. However, the postcards did have an impact on some respondents who indicated that they are MORE likely to take these steps as a result of the postcards; 29% are more likely to closely supervise teen parties in their home, 24% are more likely to enforce a curfew, 38% are more likely to talk to their teens about not drinking under 21, 36% are more likely to call in

advance if their teen is going to a party, and 26% are more likely to lock up alcohol in their home. In addition, 23% report that they will be less likely to tolerate alcohol consumption by their teen and less likely to tolerate teens consuming alcohol in their home because of the postcards. Although these are minority percentages of the overall survey respondent group, these are significant results.

### III. Survey Responses and Analysis

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This section provides the detailed responses to each question and summaries of any verbatim comments that were provided. For each question the actual results are provided, followed by a summary statement.

- 1) Over the past two months, a series of six postcards titled “Geauga Parent Alert” were mailed to your home. Do you recall seeing these postcards? (n=309)

66% Yes, I believe I saw all six of them  
29% Yes, I think I saw some of them, but not all of them  
5% No, I do not recall seeing them

Well over half (66%) of the respondents recall seeing all six of the postcards and most of the rest (29%) recall seeing at least some of them. Only 5% of those who responded did not recall seeing any of them. However, the true overall level of awareness of the cards is likely lower than what is stated here as those who did see them and take an interest were probably more likely to respond to the survey.

2) Please indicate your overall impression of these postcards:

<b>n=288-308 (depending on the question)</b>	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Somewhat agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
I learned something new from reading the postcards.	18%	36%	22%	13%	10%
The information in the postcards was surprising to me.	11%	25%	24%	22%	18%
One or more of the postcards was offensive to me.	2%	3%	13%	19%	63%
The postcards reinforced what I already knew.	56%	35%	7%	2%	1%
The postcards really made me stop and think.	27%	37%	25%	4%	7%

The postcards were effective in conveying new and useful information to many parents in a way that was thought-provoking, yet not offensive. Over half of the respondents agreed to some extent that they learned something new from the postcards, and 36% said that the information in the postcards was surprising to them. And, 54% agreed that the postcards made them stop and think. Only 5% of respondents indicated that the postcards were offensive in any way to them. Over 90% agreed that the information reinforced what they already knew. Without question, this indicates that a good portion of the respondent group was comprised of those who are already “on board.” But, even for these parents, responses to other questions indicated that the campaign provided important reinforcement and tools for them to continue to talk to their teens about these issues.

### 3) Do you recall anything specific about the *pictures* in the postcards that you saw?

Respondents recalled quite a bit of detail about the pictures in the postcards, indicating this was an effective way to communicate with them. The greatest number of comments were general in nature, indicating that the graphics were strong, eye-catching, and appropriate for the message. The specific postcard mentioned most frequently was the girl on the floor in front of the toilet (40 mentions). The other one garnering the most recall was the passed out girl in her prom dress with the boy carrying her (26), followed by the car accident (18), morgue (11), and jail cell (9). The hospital one was mentioned specifically only once. A number of comments were also made about there being pictures of drunk kids or kids in trouble or misbehaving, but without specific reference to one or more of the cards. The card receiving the most (and only) specific criticism was the prom date, as a few people were concerned that it went too far, that it was suggesting date rape, or that it was sexist. See **Appendix 3** for a complete list of verbatim comments. The following is a summary of the comments by general subject:

- General comments about graphics being very good, strong, eye-catching, appropriate (47)
- Girl throwing up in toilet (40)
- Prom night/hotel/girl passed out in boy's arms (26)
- Car accident/police (18)
- Kids drunk/misbehaving (not specific) (17)
- We ID/morgue/toe tag (11)
- Jail cell (9)
- General comments about showing consequences of drinking/bad choices (9)
- Specific negative comments about prom postcard being sexist, gone too far, date rape (7)
- General negative comments/too graphic/inappropriate (3)
- Comments about pictures that were not actually on the postcards (3)
- Hospital (1)
- No (94)

4) Do you recall anything specific about the *information* that was provided in the postcards that you saw?

More than anything else, respondents recalled seeing information about the number of local teens who drink and the early age at which it starts, with many of them expressing “shock” and “alarm” in response to this information. Many also referenced seeing information for parents about hosting parties, not providing alcohol and liability issues. A number of people also stated that they recall seeing good information that got the message across, but could not recall specifics. See Appendix 3 for a complete list of verbatim comments. The following is a summary of the comments by general subject:

- Number of teens drinking/early age that they are drinking (40)
- Messages for parents about hosting/liability/providing alcohol (28)
- Statistics (nothing specific) (22)
- General comments about content being good (12)
- General alert for parents about kids drinking (8)
- Drinking and driving references (6)
- Consequences of drinking/drugs (not specific to kids) (4)
- Negative comments (3)
- No/nothing (72)

- 5) To the best of your recollection, which of the following types of information were provided on these postcards? *Check all that apply.*

<i>n=291-305 depending on the question</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Not sure</i>
Statistics about underage alcohol use in Geauga County.	90%	0%	10%
Information about the availability of monthly meetings for parents.	11%	21%	68%
Suggestions for parents related to teenagers and underage alcohol use.	81%	2%	17%
Photographs of the consequences of underage drinking.	79%	3%	18%
Quotes from local authorities about underage drinking.	57%	4%	38%
Statistics about drug use among teenagers in Geauga County.	74%	3%	23%
A website and phone number for parents to call for more information.	55%	5%	40%

For the most part, respondents accurately recalled what information was and was not provided on the postcards, indicating that they really did read the content and think about it. The only exception was that 74% reported that the postcards contained statistics about drug use among teenagers in Geauga County. Although some may have interpreted alcohol to be a drug, no specific statistics were provided about other illegal drugs and Geauga teens. The postcards did not contain information about the availability of monthly meetings either, and only 11% indicated that it did. Not surprisingly, the information that most respondents were sure was on the postcards were statistics about underage alcohol use in Geauga County (90%), suggestions for parents related to teenagers and underage alcohol use (81%) and photographs of the consequences of underage drinking (79%). In all cases, most of the rest chose “not sure” versus “no”.

6) What did you do with the postcards after you read them? *Check all that apply.*

- 63% Shared them with one or more of my high schoolers
- 21% Shared them with one or more of my middle schoolers
- 26% Displayed them in my house
- 48% Threw them away
- 2% None of the above

The postcards had enough of an impact on most respondents to prompt 63% of them to share them with their high schoolers. Some (21%) even shared one or more of them with their middle schoolers, and 26% displayed them in their house on the refrigerator, bulletin board, kitchen table or elsewhere. Note that many who said they threw them away, indicated that they first did one of the other things, and then eventually threw them away. This is a real testament to the effectiveness and reach of this campaign.

- 7) Specifically as a result of receiving these postcards, please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. If your view is *unchanged* by the postcards, please indicate this by checking the last column.

<b>n=290-308</b>			
<b><i>Specifically as a result of reading the postcards...</i></b>	<b><i>Agree</i></b>	<b><i>Disagree</i></b>	<b><i>Neither/ I already do</i></b>
I am more likely to closely supervise teen parties in my home.	29%	1%	70%
I am more likely to enforce a curfew for my teenager.	24%	6%	70%
I am more likely to talk to my teen about not drinking under age 21.	38%	2%	61%
I am more likely to call in advance if my teen is going to a party.	36%	14%	50%
I am more likely to lock up alcohol in my home.	26%	28%	46%

<b><i>Specifically as a result of reading the postcards...</i></b>	<b><i>Agree</i></b>	<b><i>Disagree</i></b>	<b><i>Neither/ I never do</i></b>
I am less likely to tolerate the consumption of alcohol by my teen.	23%	3%	74%
I am less likely to tolerate other teens consuming alcohol in my home.	23%	1%	76%

In most cases, the majority of respondents indicated that their view was either unchanged by the postcards, or that they already follow the specific suggestion that was given on the postcard. About 70% of respondents said they already closely supervise teen parties in their home, 70% already enforce a curfew and 61% already talk to their teen about not drinking under age 21 (or view was unchanged). However, the postcards did have an impact on most of the remaining respondents who indicated that they are MORE likely to take these steps as a result of the postcards; 29% are more likely to closely supervise teen parties in their home, 24% are more likely to enforce a curfew, 38% are more likely to talk to their teens about not drinking under 21, 36% are more likely to call in advance if their teen is going to a party, and 26% are more likely to lock up alcohol in their home\*. In addition, 23% report that they are less likely to tolerate alcohol consumption by their teen and less likely to tolerate teens consuming alcohol in their home because of the postcards. Although these are minority percentages of the overall survey respondent group, these are significant results.

*\*The "disagree" responses to the statement about locking up alcohol in the home may be seem surprisingly high due to a number of people writing in that they do not keep alcohol in their home at all or they do not drink, therefore they chose "disagree." This choice was not necessarily a reflection on the postcard, but rather a reflection of the lack of appropriate choice for these respondents.*

- 8) Over the past several months a series of articles related to underage drinking in Geauga County were run in various local newspapers. These articles specifically referenced the postcards described in question #1. Do you recall seeing any of these articles about the postcards?

30% Yes  
55% No  
15% Not sure

Only about 30% reported seeing any of the articles about the postcards in the newspaper and 55% said they did not (the remainder were not sure). However, quite a few indicated that they do not receive or read a newspaper regularly so this was not an option.

- 9) Please indicate which of the following schools and grades your child/children currently attend. *Check the school district and circle the grade level.*

All of the public school districts and high school grades were represented in the respondent group. See **Appendix 2** for a detailed summary by school district and grade level.

10) Please use the space below to provide any other comments about the Geauga Parent Alert campaign.

Many people chose to provide additional comments in this section. **Appendix 3** provides the complete list of verbatim responses. The comments were all over the board, and included both compliments and criticisms of the campaign or specific parts of it. Many comments offered words of encouragement (keep up the good work! Keep the postcards coming! Thank you!) and pointed out how the postcards were good conversation starters and reinforcements to information they have been providing to their kids. Negative comments tended to focus on the campaign not being needed and being a waste of money. Since this campaign was focused on high school parents this time rather than middle school, more respondents indicated that this is a topic they've "got covered" so did not find value in the postcards. This was still a small percentage of the overall group, however. The following verbatim quotes provide some highlights of the types of positive responses that were given, providing some solid insight into the impact of the campaign:

- As much as I don't like seeing the postcards (or picturing it as my child) -- it makes you think and talk to them about it. Thank you.
- Great campaign - thank you! Ice breaker with child. Stats from credible source.
- I already realized WG has a big drinking problem and after much thought and having the postcards reinforce that, our daughter's graduation party will not have any beer, wine or any alcohol available for anyone. Pop, water will have to do. Thank you for hopefully opening up people's eyes about underage drinking.
- I applaud your efforts. The postcards are great conversation starters. Keep them coming.
- I appreciate you bringing these statistics to my mind. I was glad to have the nudge to share them with my teens.
- I shared the postcards with my child and friends.
- I was very happy to see the postcards circulated. It helped to reinforce what I have been saying all along to my kids. It gave me visual aids from a local level to show my kids.
- If they help prevent 1 accident, death or injury they are worth sending to families.
- I'm grateful to live in a community that cares so much about their youth/teen population. I think this is a wonderful campaign. Keep up the good work! Thank you!
- Keep up the good work! The postcards provide an opportunity for my family to discuss the topic of alcohol and drugs.
- Postcards gave me courage to be tougher! I like the campaign. My teens are drawn to the pictures; I read the statistics aloud to them for as long as they will listen. I like the fact that

there are a series of cards with vivid pictures, presenting small amount of info at a time. And this kind of campaign needs to be constant and repetitive. Too many PARENTS still don't get it, much less the kids. Keep it up, please!

- Shared these with my husband - kept for a while because they were too great to throw away. Great job. Thanks for your courage. Enter this program in an awards contest.
- Thank you - they were great. Parents talked about them at work!
- The two cards I recalled spurred an unplanned talk, discussion, with my oldest.
- Thank you for doing this. I was very impressed. After displaying the cards in my kitchen I passed them on to a friend!
- Thank you. These are good to share with my kids so they know that what we are saying is true.