



## Why is the Drinking Age 21?

### UNDERAGE DRINKING IS DANGEROUS & UNHEALTHY:

- **The Teen Brain:** Underage alcohol use can alter the structure and function of the developing brain, which continues to mature into the mid-to-late twenties, and may have long-term consequences (NIAAA 10/2/2013).
- **Underage drinking poses a range of life threatening risks:**
  - Every year in the United States, about 5,000 people under the age of 21 die as a result of underage drinking: 1,900 deaths from motor vehicle crashes, 1,600 from homicides, 300 from suicide, as well as 1,200 from falls, burns, & drownings (NIH NIAAA 7/2013).
- **Young people who drink are more likely than others to be victims** of violent crime like rape, aggravated assault, and robbery (Centers for Disease Control July 2013).
- **Youth who start drinking before age 15 year are five times more likely to develop alcohol dependence or abuse later in life** than others their age who do not drink (NIH NIAAA 7/2013).
- **New research indicates that t(w)eens who tasted alcohol before they started middle school were five times more likely to have a full drink by ninth grade,** compared with their classmates who did not taste alcohol (2015 Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs).

*For information about how to  
talk with your child to prevent underage drinking,  
go to  
[manhassetcasa.org](http://manhassetcasa.org) or  
[underagedrinking.samhsa.org](http://underagedrinking.samhsa.org)*



# Nassau County's Social Host Law

- You and anyone over the age of 18 are breaking the law if you give alcohol to your teen's friends who are under the age of 21, under any circumstance.
- You and anyone over the age of 18 are subject to prosecution by the Social Host Law if you knowingly allow a person under 21 to remain in your home or on your property while consuming or possessing alcoholic beverages.
- A violation of the Social Host Law is **a misdemeanor – a criminal conviction** and punishable by progressive fines and penalties
  - 1st Offense is subject to a fine of \$250;
  - 2nd Offense is subject to a fine of \$500;
  - 3rd Offense and future offenses are subject to a fine of \$1000 and/or up to a year in jail.

## New York State's General Obligation Law

- **Under §11-100**, any person who is injured by a minor who is intoxicated, or whose ability is impaired **may sue for the resulting damage** against whoever knowingly provided the alcohol to the minor (Stop DWI New York).

## New York State's 911/Good Samaritan Law\*

- A person who in good faith seeks care for himself or someone experiencing a life threatening emergency will not be charged or prosecuted for a drug or alcohol related offense including possession of drug paraphernalia, with some exceptions.
- Protection does not extend to offenses involving: drug trafficking and sale, obstruction or interference with law enforcement, and possession of felony amounts of controlled substances or marijuana.
- **Always CALL 911 if someone is experiencing a life threatening emergency.**
- **Call 1.866.UNDER21 to ANONYMOUSLY report the illegal purchase or consumption of alcohol by minors.**

\*New York State Office on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse