

What is Project Graduation?



When Spring rolls around, only one thing is on the minds of high school seniors across the country: **GRADUATION!** As a rite of passage, graduation night is unequalled in the eyes of youth. It is a night to be proud, to celebrate past achievements, and to look forward to the future. But some teens mistakenly think that the best way to celebrate on graduation night is to drink alcohol. In the past, graduation parties involving alcohol have left some graduating seniors with hangovers, embarrassing memories, and in trouble with their parents, friends, and/or the police. Some others were not so lucky. There were 15 teenagers killed in alcohol related crashes in Maine's 1997 graduation season.

Graduation parties should be fun, not fatal. The idea of all night, chemical-free graduation parties is not new. Oregon high schools have sponsored such parties for graduating seniors for 50 years.

The name "Project Graduation" was coined 20 years ago by planners in Maine, where a total of 18 people had died during two graduation seasons due to alcohol related crashes. Maine's first Project Graduation was such a success that high schools throughout the State (and now the Country) have adopted similar programs, and "Project Graduation" became a generic name for the chemical-free graduation parties that have started a new tradition - celebrating safely.

All school-related functions are supposed to be chemical-free, but what makes Project Graduation different is the attitude of the students. They have made a conscious decision to enjoy their graduation night without alcohol or drugs. And no other group, including parents and school personnel, can make that decision for the students.

With the help of the parents, students and the community, we will be able to make this year's Project Graduation a great success!