

# Underage Drinking...

Actions Have  
Consequences

*A message from the Closter Police  
Department*

# Our Community

- Closter is a suburb of New York City located in northeast corner of Bergen County.
- Of Closter's 8373 residents, 1210 are students enrolled in our public schools and 610 are students enrolled in the regional high school.
- Closter's students attend one of our two public schools, Hillside Elementary School (K-4) and Tenakill Middle School (5-8).

- Closter's high school students attend the Northern Valley Regional High School District; a school district comprised of seven towns: Closter, Demarest, Harrington Park, Haworth, Northvale, Norwood and Old Tappan.
- Closter's students attend Northern Valley Regional High School's Demarest campus with students of Demarest and Haworth.
- There are approximately 1400 students in grades 9 through 12 attending the Demarest campus of Northern Valley Region High School.

# Problem

- In the past 10 years, alcohol use and substance abuse have steadily increased.
- Resources providing law enforcement agencies with the tools necessary for enforcement were limited.
- The increase of incidents involving alcohol and other gateway drugs can be attributed to many factors that are not unique to our community, but are shared by other communities locally and nationwide.

# Response

- Closter Police Department's steadfast and determined solicitation of community support resulted in the adoption of Closter Borough Ordinance 67-14, *Consumption by Persons Under Legal Age*.
- Borough Ordinance 67-14 enhanced enforcement of 2C:33-17b, Making Real Property Available for Underage Consumption of Alcoholic Beverages.
- Consistently implementing and evaluating programs that change the public's perception of the dangers, responsibilities and consequences of actions.

- Through nonstop educational and media campaigns, Closter's law enforcement has heightened the awareness of the retailer's responsibility to prevent serving or selling alcohol to underage buyers and effectively raise public consciousness of the nation's drunk driving epidemic.
- Cooperation of retail establishments notifying law enforcement of potential underage consumers and consumers possessing fake/false identification.
- "WE CHECK for 21" media program to retail establishments, prompting commitment to be vigilant in checking for 21. In 2012 the Closter P.D. announced its official partnership with the HERO CAMPAIGN for DESIGNATED DRIVERS, promoting the use of safe and sober designated drivers.

# Result

- Police agencies now have the enforcement power to enter private property and impose the *Consumption by Persons Under Legal Age Borough Ordinance*.
- **Borough Ordinance 67-14** states it is unlawful for any person under the legal age to consume alcohol or to, without legal authority, knowingly possess or knowingly consume an alcoholic beverage on private property.
- **Borough Ordinance 67-14** further states it is unlawful for any person who has ownership or control of any premises, or supervision of any event, shall permit or allow the consumption of alcoholic beverage by a person under legal age in or upon any such premises.

- Within the past 10 years, the number of **adults arrested** for making real property available to minors for the consumption of alcoholic beverages has steadily increased.
- This increase in arrests can be contributed to the adoption of **Borough Ordinance 67-14** and to the increased enforcement power.
- Increased community service sentences and penalties issued to juvenile offenders through the courts are raising the awareness among youth for consequences of their actions.

## Since January 2003

**241 Arrests** in violation of Borough Ordinance 67-14,  
*Consumption by Persons Under Legal Age;*  
*NJ 2C:33-15 Underage Possession;*  
*NJ 2C:33-17 Making Real Property Available*  
*for Underage Drinking*  
**(133 Juvenile/108 Adult Age 18+)**

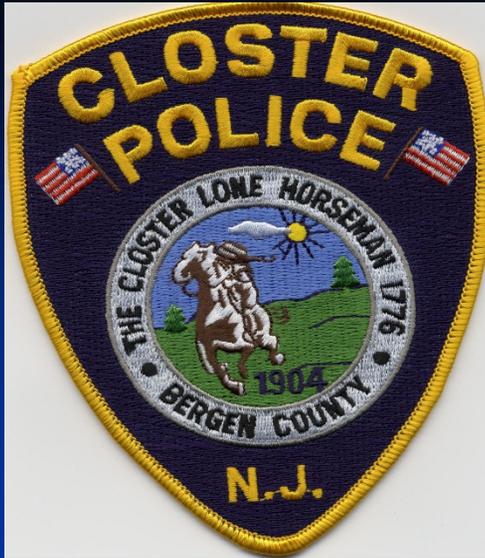
**66 Arrests** for Possession of False Identification  
**(21 Juvenile/45 Adult Age 18+)**

**243 Arrests** for Drug related violations  
**(78 Juvenile/165 Adult Age 18+)**

**215 Arrests** for D.W.I.  
**( 9 Juvenile/206 Adult Age 18+)**

# Creating Community Awareness

- The Closter Police Department continuously provides educational resources to the community reviewing the responsibilities and legality of alcohol to all underage persons.
- Information is delivered through a multi-media approach; press releases, Borough's annual calendar and links on the Borough's website.
- The "*Parents Who Host, Lose the Most*" campaign is promoted throughout the year, with increased emphasis during the spring (proms and graduations) and summer seasons.



# An IMPORTANT PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGE

*from the*

## CLOSTER POLICE DEPT.

Borough of Closter's Ordinance 67-14, Consumption by Persons Under Legal Age, makes it unlawful for a person under the legal age to possess or consume alcoholic beverages on private property in the Borough of Closter. Penalties imposed for violating the Borough's Ordinances are not limited to fines; the Court may suspend the driving privileges of the defendant.

It is a *criminal offense* in the State of NJ (2C:33-17a) to serve alcohol to anyone who is under the age of 21. NJ's Social Host Liability Law imposes civil penalties on social hosts who serve alcohol to minors. It is a **criminal offense in New Jersey to allow underage drinking in your home.**

# Summary

- The Closter Police Department resolutely works to educate and inform all members of the community, emphasizing retail proprietors and local establishments of their absolute responsibility to protect our youth from consuming, serving or obtaining alcohol.
- The increased number of arrests, both adult and juvenile, has raised social awareness and consciousness to a difficult social dilemma.
- The commitment in providing ordinances regarding consumption and possession of alcohol by persons under the legal age combined with the ability to enforce laws prohibiting the provision of material or availability of property to youth brought community recognition to this serious problem.
- Act responsibly, “Don’t be a party to teenage drinking; It’s against the law”.