

“Words to be Heard” Scholarship

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".08"

Walking through the door, you see a dark room with a neon sign in the center. Students enter the room and a conversation is heard. "Man, I cannot wait for that party tonight." "I know! Matt's parents are out of town all week. I can't wait to get totally wasted!" Walking to the next room, you enter a party with about 20 kids just starting to drink. The number displayed in the room is .02. Things in the room are typical of a high school party. It's Matt's living room with kids dancing and having a great time. As you walk through the door to the next room, you are handed a red plastic cup. The next room is the kitchen in Matt's house. The number in the room is now .03. In the sink is a keg on ice with a kid doing a keg stand on it. Also in the room is a group of kids doing shots at the kitchen table. As you walk through, the actors start interacting with you; guys whistling at girls and girls flirting with guys. As you leave this room, you're handed a plastic shot glass. The next room you enter is set up to look like Matt's patio. This room has the number .05 in it. In one corner of the room is a hot tub with a group of kids drinking beer and being loud and obnoxious. Once you enter the room, a kid in the hot tub vomits. As you exit the room, you are rudely splashed with water and mocked. The next room is Matt's garage where there is a game of beer pong being played. The number in this room is .06. There is only one area to enter in this room, and that is in the middle of the crowd of people watching the game. The actors around YOU are obnoxious and touchy-feely drunks that harass you. When one of the players bounces a ball into the opponent's cup, everyone yells and starts to chant "Chug! Chug! Chug!" The opponent does so and upon finishing his drink, wobbles and passes out, hitting his

head on the table as he falls. You are rushed out of the garage as actors create chaos among each other with shouts to get the passed out and bleeding player help. As you leave this room, you are handed a plastic wine glass. The next room displays the number .07. This room is a replica of the first room entered; Matt's living room. However, this time the room is trashed. Blinds are knocked down, lamps are broken, couch pillows are ripped, and the carpet is stained. Some of the actors are dancing obnoxiously. Others are passed out on the couch, caked in their own vomit. At one end of the room a bathroom door is open with a student inside vomiting in the toilet. As you are prompted to exit, police lights begin to flash outside. Chaos in the living room ensues and you are trapped inside. Actors interact with you telling you to run and get out of the house. The actors disperse and the only people left in the room are you and your friends. As you once again start to exit the room policemen block the doorway. You are arrested on the spot and marched out of the door to the next room. Matt's front yard, and instructed to lean against the cop cars. You are given a mock breathalyzer test and as you and each of your friends take it, a neon ".08" lights up in a different spot of the room. After each of you is tested, the room has 10 ".08"s lit. You all stand and watch as the cops pull some of the actors out of their cars and breathalyzer them as well. More ".08"s light up and the cop announces to the group that all of them are over the legal limit and they will not only be facing underage drinking charges, but also DUI charges. You then file out of this room and trade the items you received in other rooms for a pair of handcuffs. The next room you enter is fashioned to look like a jail cell where you watch a video. This video shows the future of you and your friends, now in jail. It consists of you being denied your driver's license, college acceptance, and jobs. After the video, a speaker enters the room to discuss the serious consequences of underage drinking. You leave this final room with a new view of what underage drinking is really about.

The experience is intended to make students feel like they are part of the party at Matt's house. The rooms would be set up in a high school gymnasium or other vast room. The actors at the party would interact with the students as if they were drunk. The overall

feeling given to the students is that they are part of this party and, as the night goes on, they view how the people they saw in the first scene change and become people they are not. Also, students will observe the disgust of alcohol sickness and the obnoxious behavior of drunks.

To prevent underage drinking, having students experience a non-romanticized high school party, with all the nitty gritty details scares them and shows them the real story. The party feels fun and exciting at first, but by the end the mood feels offensive and uncomfortable. Finally, the jail cell would be a real consequence of underage drinking. After the video, an instructor would give statistics on underage drinking and driving under the influence. The experience needs to be as real as possible for this program to be effective and should be administered to younger high school students. Experiencing something is the best way to learn it, whether it's good or bad. This program is all about experiencing real life consequences, not just hearing it from a teacher.