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Police in Groton want to deter graduation drinking parties

By [Chuck Potter](#) Day Staff Writer

Groton - If you drink, don't drive. If you're graduating, don't drink.

Police throughout the town and city will conduct "party patrols" this weekend to detect and deter gatherings of underage youth engaged in consuming alcoholic beverages.

"We really want to get the word out," Groton City Police Chief Bruno Giulini said. "We want to advise parents and students that we'll be out there."

Both Groton high schools, Fitch and Grasso Tech, have graduation ceremonies tonight.

Giulini said he was pleasantly surprised to receive a call from Michelle Hamilton of Ledge Light Health District and coordinator of the Groton Adolescent Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition. She said grant funds were available for patrol shifts over the weekend.

"It will allow us to keep an officer available," Guilini said. "If we get a call about activity where young people are believed to be drinking, we can respond without interrupting service to the community."

Hamilton said the funds were available through a state Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services grant to address underage drinking.

"The best time to break up an underage drinking party is before it happens," she said. "If we let parents and kids know that we are vigilant about this, maybe they won't have the party. We want officers available, so if a concerned resident hears a loud party, there will be officers available."

The Groton Town Police also released a statement. "There is no 'safe' underage drinking party, and people who host or allow these parties, can and will be held criminally responsible," detective Lt. John Varone said. "The dedicated patrol operation is one step in addressing this problem on a local level."

Hamilton offered tips for hosting an alcohol-free party: establish rules and expectations beforehand; allow only invited guests; provide plenty of entertainment; be vigilant throughout the party; don't allow guests to come and go; end the party at a reasonable time.

To report underage drinking in the town, call (860) 441-6712. In the City of Groton, call (860) 445-2451.

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