

Where will you be?
Notre Dame Class of 2009
Project Graduation



Tuesday, May 19th, 2009 Immediately following the Ceremony

Dear Parents of the Class of 2009,

It seems like just yesterday you were at your child's eighth grade promotion ceremony, and here you are two months away from their high school graduation, the most important night of your teen's life so far.

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 or use drugs. 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; every year there are more deaths on the night of graduations than any other.

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

The name "Project Graduation" was coined twenty years ago by planners in Maine, where a total of eighteen 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 country 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 students; they are now graduates of Notre Dame Prep. While the Notre Dame Administration supports this event, it is not sponsored by the school since these young adults are now alumni of NDP. This is their first positive choice as adults, and we hope we can count on your support to have them make it.

This year the event will be held at the CrackerJax on Scottsdale Road just south of Bell road. We will collect the students right after the end of Graduation, outside of the Wells Fargo Arena. We will hold the busses for 30 minutes to check in the graduates and allow time for you to take family photos. Once the busses depart, you will need to drive your graduate to CrackerJax and check them in; we will not allow graduates who arrive alone entrance. We want to guarantee to everyone that all that attend are sober, and we appreciate your help in this.

This is a 100 percent drug and alcohol free event, and there is zero tolerance to anyone who does not abide by these rules. We have never in the six year history of the NDP Project Graduation had an issue with that, and we are sure we will not have any issues with this fine group of graduates either. If there is any issue, you the parent will receive a call to come and pick up your graduate.

The event will end at 4:30 am, and the kids will be quite exhausted. We have a lot planned for them and it is a very long day. We would encourage you to pick them up, but if you need to leave a car for them, they will be allowed to drive themselves home afterward, but again, we do discourage that.

This event will be an all -night event, first because all that is planned to occur needs that much time to pull off, but also to have a guarantee of success that our graduates are safe and not heading to other parties. Please note that the graduates will not be allowed to leave unless it is due to illness or an emergency, with your approval. We understand they are adults, but this is the agreement we ask for all that attend. We are sure this will not be a problem because this night will be filled with activities, games, prizes, and entertainment that they will all wonder where the time went.

Included in this mailer are the contract, the registration, FAQs, and a donation letter. We have had a bit of fundraising at our Winter Sport Snack Bar, but anything you can provide in support would be great. The cost of each graduate covers the event, but all extras come from the generosity of our community. We will have scholarships for anyone who needs them, so please do not allow that to deter you from having your graduate attend; we want them all there!

I am looking forward to this special night with your graduates, as is the committee. You are welcome to help in the planning of the event, but the night is yours to enjoy as a proud parent. Contact me if you would like to find a way to participate.

Thank you and congrats! You are almost there!
Colleen Katz and the 2009 Project Graduation Committee