

## **Winthrop Harbor Social Host Ordinance**

In August of 2009, the Village of Winthrop Harbor enacted a Social Host ordinance which holds adults accountable for allowing minors to use alcohol or drugs. The following are the components of the Social Host ordinance which has been adopted by 26 Lake County communities including Winthrop Harbor and Zion.

### **Key Components**

1. The ordinance applies to anyone regardless of relationship to the underage person. This includes parents, guardians and other related or unrelated persons. Often parties are thrown by another underage person.
2. The ordinance provides for enforcement regardless of the place in which the gathering is held. Traditionally the laws have applied only to a residence and then only to a person who is responsible for the residence. Many gatherings are held in other locations to avoid the consequences of current laws. The social host ordinance includes, residences, on private or public property (parks, forest preserves etc.) or in any conveyance. Conveyances include motor vehicles, trailers, watercraft or container.
3. The social host ordinance includes the use of illicit drugs in addition to alcohol.
4. The ordinance provides for protection of the person hosting the gathering if they contact the police for assistance to terminate the gathering. Often a large gathering will have started as a small gathering of a few friends. They in turn tell other friends and so on until the gathering is out of control.
5. The ordinance does not require the person responsible for facilitating the gathering to be present.
6. The ordinance does not apply to legitimate religious ceremonies or to parents providing alcohol only to their children in their own home as allowed by Illinois state law.
7. The ordinance provides for minimum fines to assure that the violators will understand the severity of the offense. The Winthrop Harbor ordinance assigns a fine of \$250-\$750 for the first offense, \$500 to \$750 for the second offense and no less than \$750 for the third offense.

For more information on social host ordinances and the prevention of underage drinking, please contact the Drug Free Communities Program at (847) 731-2658 or visit [www.zbchc.com](http://www.zbchc.com)