

LEADing the Way

LEAD • Linking Efforts Against Drugs • Summer 2002

Student and Parent Drug/Attitude Studies

A full copy of this research is available in the LEAD office.

For other information, visit www.LEADweb.org

LEAD conducted two research studies over the past several months among students and parents regarding alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use and attitudes.

LEAD hired Rocky Mountain Behavioral Science Institute to conduct a survey called the American Drug and Alcohol Survey, given to over 1.5 million students nationwide. It was conducted in the fall of 2001 among 546 sixth and eighth grade school students at Deerpath Middle School and the School of St. Mary, and 896 high school students at Lake Forest High School and Lake Forest Academy. The purpose of this study was to assess the level of use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs as well as to obtain information and attitudes about these substances. The last student drug survey conducted in the community was in June of 1997.

The Parent Survey, conducted in January of 2002 by Assessment Unlimited, was a telephone survey of a random

sample of 192 parents with students in grades 6 through 12 in Lake Forest or Lake Bluff. This study, funded by a private family foundation, was designed to gather baseline data on parents' attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge regarding risk factors related to alcohol, tobacco, and drug (ATOD) use among teens and the critical role that parents can play in substance abuse prevention. This study was also designed to help LEAD evaluate the types of programs and services to provide to the community. This was the first time that research on parental attitudes regarding ATOD use had been conducted in this community.

STUDENTS

Key findings: Students

Alcohol has been in the past and continues to be the most widely used drug by students in Lake Forest/Lake Bluff. Of 6th graders, 17% reported having ever used alcohol, and this level rose to 81% among 11th graders. Past month data is generally regarded as a better measurement of regular use, however; the level of current use (past month) was 3% and 10% for middle school students (6th and 8th grade students respectively), but rose to 49% for 11th graders. While national data is only available for 8th, 10th, and 12th graders, it appears that local students are significantly below national levels of use in 8th grade, but by 11th grade, Lake Forest/Lake Bluff

Key Findings

- ◆ Alcohol is the most commonly used and abused "drug" by our community's youth.
- ◆ Local use of alcohol is heavier than nationally by the time students reach 11th grade.
- ◆ Use of tobacco is also a concern, as is use of marijuana, but levels of use are lower than alcohol.
- ◆ Use of hard drugs and club drugs is lower than the national average.
- ◆ Two thirds of parents believe their students would not use alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs.
- ◆ Most students do not regularly use alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs, although the ones who do are a real cause for concern.
- ◆ Parents think more students are using alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs than actually do.

American Drug & Alcohol Study, RMBSI, Inc., 2001-2002, and Assessments Unlimited, 2002.

students are drinking at about the same level as 12th graders nationally (49% vs 50% for 12 graders nationally). Still, it is important to point out that contrary to popular belief, the majority of high school students surveyed did not use alcohol in the past month (78% for freshman and 51% for juniors).

The same patterns are true of "been drunk" results. Nationally, for instance, 8% of 8th graders have been drunk in the last month, compared to 2% of Lake Forest/Lake Bluff

Alcohol has been in the past and continues to be the most widely used drug by students in Lake Forest/Lake Bluff.



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The average age of first “getting drunk” was 14.2 years among the current 11th graders.

Study results

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students. However, by the 11th grade, the level of students who report having been drunk in the past month reached 32%, which is the same level as 12th graders nationally. Still, the majority of high school students have not been drunk in the past month (96% of freshmen and 68% of juniors).

| % of Students who have used alcohol in the past month | | |
|---|------|------------|
| | Used | Been Drunk |
| 6th grade | 3% | 0% |
| 8th grade | 10% | 2% |
| 9th grade | 22% | 4% |
| 11th Grade | 49% | 32% |

The frequency and level of drinking among 11th graders is a concern, however. Half of the juniors who got drunk did so three or more times during the month. The average age of first “getting drunk” was 14.2 years among the current 11th graders.

Cigarette use by local youth is significantly lower than national among all age groups surveyed, with past month use under 10% by 6th, 8th, and 9th graders, and 25% use in the past month by 11th graders. The 11th grade use

Specific Findings

Alcohol is by far the most commonly used “drug” among local students.

There is a significant jump in use and abuse by the 11th grade.

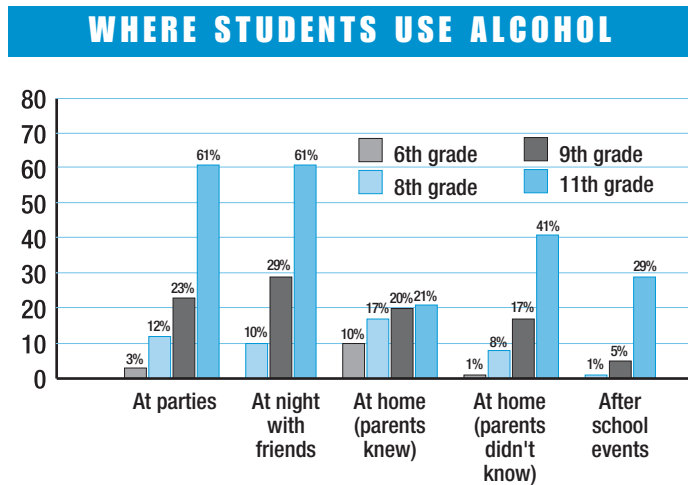
Local usage levels are below national average for grades 6-9, but are above national levels for 11th grade.

level is similar to national levels for 10th graders and significantly below levels for 12th graders (31% nationally). Use of smokeless tobacco affects 2% or fewer students until 11th grade, where 6% used in the past month. These levels are also lower than national. Students regarded cigarettes as somewhat more difficult to get than alcohol, although by 8th grade, over half of the students said cigarettes are “fairly easy” or “very easy” to get. Again, it is important to point out that the majority of local students do not smoke.

Marijuana is the third most commonly used drug by local students. While use is very low through the 9th grade (3% and under in past month), the level does rise to 18% (in past month) among 11th graders. This compares to national levels of 20% for 10th graders and 22% for 12th graders.

Students reported using marijuana far more frequently than those who use alcohol, with a third of them inhaling the drug 10 or more times a month. While students reported that marijuana was less easy to get than alcohol or cigarettes, by 11th grade, 84% said it was “fairly easy” or “very easy” to get. The average age of first use of marijuana among current 11th graders was 14.6 years. While heavy use of marijuana by a specific group of students is a major concern, it must be noted that a majority of students surveyed have not tried marijuana by 11th grade.

Experimentation and past month usage of other drugs, such as cocaine, heroin, crack, hallucinogens, steroids, and PCP, were generally very low (<1- 2% for all grades surveyed). Exceptions (among the older students) are: Ritalin (when used as a stimulant by those who are not prescribed the drug by a physician) at 8% ever tried, and Ecstasy at 6% ever tried. Past month use of these specific substances was 3% and 2% among 11th graders surveyed. While inhalant use among younger students is a problem nationally, inhalants were tried by 3% of local 6th graders, a relatively small percentage compared to national figures. The only drugs in this grouping considered relatively easy to get were



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Study results

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inhalants—most students agreed that the other drugs were much more difficult to obtain.

Around 20% of high school students (9th and 11th graders) drank at home with their parents' knowledge (whether they approved or disapproved is not known), and by 11th grade, 41% drank at home without their parents' knowledge.

Where do students use alcohol? Most of the alcohol and drug use is with friends and outside of school. Specifically, alcohol use “at home” was the most common location among 6th and 8th graders and “at parties” or “at night with friends” were the most common locations for the older students. Approximately 20% of high school students (9th and 11th graders) drank at home with their parents' knowledge (whether they approved or disapproved is not known), and by 11th grade, 41% drank at home without their parents' knowledge. Among 11th graders, 29% used alcohol “after school events,” 18% used “at school events,” and 19% used “before school events.” 12% of 11th graders used alcohol “while driving around” or “right after school.” These locations are similar for the use of drugs other than alcohol, but with much lower numbers for “at home with parents' knowledge.” Most students, even in middle school, consider alcohol “fairly easy” or “very easy” to get; by 11th grade, 97% of the students felt this way.

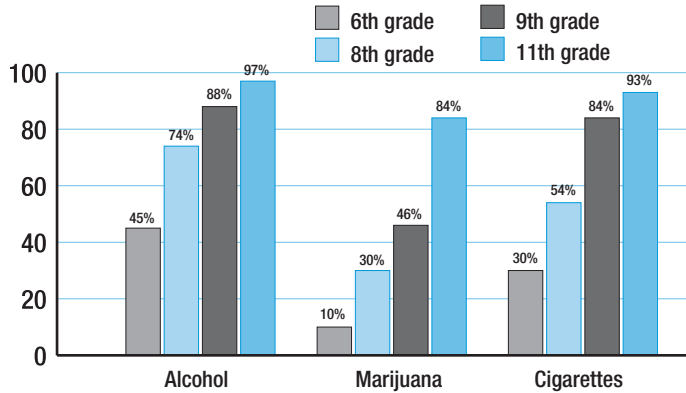
Average ages of “firsts” for 11th graders:

| | |
|----------------------|------|
| First drunk: | 14.2 |
| First marijuana use: | 14.6 |
| First inhalant use: | 13.5 |

Perception of risk is an important factor in preventing substance abuse. Students were asked if using alcohol regularly would lead to “a lot of harm” and only 25% or less believed

PERCEIVED AVAILABILITY

% rating “fairly easy” or “easy” to get



this was true. Most students surveyed did agree that the other drugs, including cigarettes, would cause harm if used heavily, including getting drunk.

% of Students who have NOT used in the past month

| | 9th Grade | 11th Grade |
|------------|-----------|------------|
| Alcohol | 78% | 51% |
| Been drunk | 96% | 68% |
| Cigarettes | 92% | 75% |
| Marijuana | 97% | 82% |

All students were asked to admit problems that they might have had from alcohol use. While the level of problems for middle school students was quite low, high school students, especially 11th graders, reported these problems: couldn't remember what happened (39%), passed out (30%), made you break something (22%), fought

with other kids (18%), made you do something sexual and later regretted it (18%), hurt self (16%), and fought with parents (15%).

PARENTS

Key findings: Parents

When asked, “what is the most serious problem among youth in our community?” parents cited alcohol most frequently, with other problems mentioned less often (in rank order): drugs, lack of parental supervision, too much free time, peer pressure, lack of respect for authority, and too much money.

The problem of teens' access to alcohol and underage drinking was uppermost in the minds of many parents.

Access to alcohol and underage drinking was mentioned twice as often as any other issue. Concerns about the interviewee's own children were similar, with drinking and associated problems listed first. Other concerns included making poor choices, negative influence of peers, drugs, and sex.

Just as students tend to overstate perceived level of use among their peers, parents also perceived that more students

Most alcohol and drug use is with friends and outside of school.

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Study results

continued

are using alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs than actually are as reported in the student survey. See chart below.

responsible for monitoring student use of ATOD (alcohol, tobacco, other drugs) on campus. While a majority of parents also agreed their school is doing a satisfactory job in enforcing substance abuse

Parents' perceptions of drug use

| Drug: | Perceived use | Reported use |
|-----------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| Tobacco—high school | 41% | 8% in 9th, 25% in 11th |
| Tobacco—middle school | 16% | 1% in 6th, 5% in 8th |
| Alcohol—high school | 62% | 22% in 9th, 49% in 11th |
| Alcohol—middle school | 17% | 3% in 6th, 10% in 8th |
| Illegal drugs*—high school | 39% | 3% in 9th, 18% in 11th |
| Illegal drugs—middle school | 12% | <2% in 6th, 2% in 8th |

* Marijuana use cited for comparison in high school and in 8th grade; inhalants used for 6th grade.

Nearly all parents believe that they could tell if their child was using tobacco, or if their child had been drinking. A smaller proportion of parents believed they could tell if the child was using drugs. Nearly two thirds (64%) said that their child would not use tobacco, alcohol, or illegal drugs.

Most parents said they were aware of community resources related to teen substance abuse and nearly all parents were familiar with the work of LEAD.

Most parents have a strong opinion about the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs by teens and very few agree that use is acceptable for them. Fewer than 10% agree that it is okay for teens to smoke or drink alcohol, even with their parents' permission or even if the teen is 16 or older. More than 90% in each case said that they would be "really upset" if they found out that their teenagers were using tobacco or drinking alcohol. A majority of parents recognized their responsibility to keep children from abusing tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs, and a majority also felt that schools should be

policies, 18% disagreed with this statement and 10% had no opinion.

Most parents feel adequately prepared to talk with their children about ATOD, but many said they would be interested in learning more about effective communication with their children on this topic. Almost every parent said they have already talked to their children in 6-12 grade about ATOD and more than 80% have set family rules and consequences.

CONCLUSION

LEAD will use the results of these surveys to help research, develop and refine prevention programs with community partners next year. Among these programs will be an innovative approach called "social norms marketing" where the community (students, parents, others) will be reminded of the positive results this survey has yielded, rather than focusing on the negative. This social norms approach has been very successful on college campuses across the country in reducing binge drinking, tobacco use and other risky behavior. **LEAD**

Make clear rules

If parents have not previously established rules around more basic activities, they will have little chance of getting children to obey a rule about not using marijuana, tobacco, or other drugs. Here are some tips:

- Set clear rules. Discuss in advance the consequences of breaking them. Don't make empty threats or let the rule-breaker off the hook. Don't impose harsh or unexpected new punishments.
- The rules must be consistently enforced; every time a child breaks the rules the parent should enforce a "punishment."
- Punishments" should involve mild, not severe, negative consequences. Overly severe punishments adversely affect the relationship.
- Set a curfew. Enforce it strictly, negotiating for special occasions.
- Have kids check in at regular times when they're away from home or school. Give them a phone card, change or even a pager with clear rules for using it. ("When I beep you, I expect a call back within 15 minutes.")
- Call parents whose home is to be used for a party. On party night, don't be afraid to stop in to say hello (and make sure there is adult supervision).
- Make it easy to leave a party where drugs are being used. Discuss in advance how to signal you or another designated adult who will come to pick your child up the moment he or she feels uncomfortable. Later, be prepared to talk about what happened.
- Don't be afraid to intervene if your gut tells you something's wrong.

Source: *The National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign's Behavior Change Expert Panel.*

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Since late fall, the arrests for drinking and related offenses have increased.

Police Chief speaks out

Police Chief Michael Hosking recently commented on the findings of the student drug use and parental attitude surveys conducted by LEAD.

“First, there is good news in the parental survey,” commented Hosking. “It’s a good thing that so many parents are aware of the problems we have with teens and alcohol/drugs.”

The Chief, noted, however, that the percentage of parents who thought their own students were involved was so much lower than the perceived level

Parents might not be accurately sizing up the situation in their own family... false IDs are common, and the broad availability of alcohol makes alcohol consumption the biggest local problem with youth.

of use in the community, that parents might not be accurately sizing up the situation in their own family. He reported that false IDs are common, and the broad availability of alcohol makes alcohol consumption the biggest local problem with youth, confirming the results of the student survey: “It used to be that tobacco was the bigger challenge, but alcohol has taken over as the more pressing issue.”

“Levels of student use of alcohol seemed to decline during the 9/11 crisis, but since late fall, the arrests for drinking and related offenses, such as DUI, have increased. We are concerned,” said Hosking. He mentioned that his contacts at

Lake Forest Hospital had noted an increase in cases of alcohol poisoning, but “some of this is due to the increased level of awareness that too much alcohol can be life threatening.” Hosking cited increased levels of surveillance of underage alcohol purchases in Highwood, North Chicago, and Waukegan, but felt that many kids have access to alcohol at home. “Parties where alcohol is served are also smaller, quieter, vs. the large gatherings we used to see.” Hosking noted, however, that the weekend of the Lake Forest High School Prom was very quiet and thus a big success, with few incidents on this historically problematic weekend.

The Chief acknowledged that the town also has a marijuana problem, but use of other drugs is limited to a smaller group of kids. “We don’t really have a drug culture here.” The department is also on the alert for the small but growing level of use of club drugs such as Ecstasy or GHB among students. **LEAD**

Advice to parents

Chief Hosking suggested that parents should trust their kids but put important “checks and balances” into play. “There are a lot of risks out there in today’s society, so parents need to be very observant, and keep their eyes open,” he said.

Legal Risks for Parents of Teen Drinking/ Drug Use

This is a part of a series answering questions of parents who have called LEAD regarding their liability surrounding teen drinking and/or drug use. Special thanks to the Lake Forest and Lake Bluff Police Departments.

If we have a party and serve alcohol to the underage students, while taking away their keys to help keep them off the road, are we at risk, legally?

Absolutely. No adult is permitted to provide alcohol to minors (except a parent to their own children), even if keys are taken away as a precaution. Those providing alcohol can be arrested.

Please note that taking away the keys only addresses one risk of alcohol consumption—drinking and driving.

Other very real risks include: alcohol poisoning, risky sexual activity and violent or erratic behavior while intoxicated—all very dangerous situations for teens.

More Q and A next issue

Mailing volunteers needed!

Volunteers are needed to help with mailings in the LEAD office at Gorton. This is a great opportunity for service hours for young people.

Call the LEAD office at 847-295-9075 for details.

No adult is permitted to provide alcohol to minors (except a parent to their own children), even if keys are taken away as a precaution.

Those providing alcohol can be arrested.

PARENT U NOTES

Modeling Moments
by keynote speaker
Michael Brandwein

Show what to do when things go wrong. Many young people believe “excelling” means an absence of mistakes; indeed, many students will avoid challenging themselves academically to avoid being imperfect.

But making mistakes is how we learn. Greater achievement results from increased abilities to balance success and failure. Unfortunately, many young people believe if they make a mistake, that they are stupid. An old approach might be to say, “It’s okay to make mistakes.” But a better approach is, “It’s not okay—it’s required!” The important point is that they need to learn how to make them—skillfully.

If we don’t show our mistakes and how we handle them, three problems arise:

- ❶ If we’re perfect, then students are much less likely to tell us when they have made mistakes or are lost;
- ❷ Students won’t learn how to act then they make mistakes; and
- ❸ We get uptight because we feel this pressure to always do everything perfectly.

So not only is it okay for adults to make some mistakes in front of children, they **must** show how they respond to mistakes, out loud. This doesn’t mean we must do this with all mistakes—appropriateness will always be our guide. We can give young people the opportunity to learn what to do when they make mistakes.

Successful LEAD programs promise more to come

LEAD continues to offer, often co-sponsored with other community organizations, quality parenting and community interest programs relating to healthy family relationships and helping our youth avoid risky behaviors.

The first Monday of every month, September to May at Gorton Community Center, features a speaker on topics of particular interest to parents.

In April, Susan Beacham presented “How to Raise A Money Savvy Kid.” Over 70 participants learned how early

education coupled with real-world implementation activities has begun to turn the tide for young students. Practical suggestions were offered on what parents can do at home to help young children manage the money choices in their lives responsibly.

An Alcohol Awareness Panel on Drunk Drivers—Impact on Victims was co-sponsored by LEAD and Lake Forest Hospital, Lake Forest High School SADD and Lake Forest High School APT. Two people who have been personally affected by the actions of a drunk driver told the story of how drunk driving affected their family. The panelists of this powerful presentation were from AAIM (Alliance Against Intoxicated Motorists).

Former Winston Man Dave Goerlitz presented a program called *Lifting the Smoke Screen* at several area schools. His lively, down-to-earth presentation caught the attention of the students and parents who heard him speak. Through his

Modeling talk

Calmness/humor:

oops/good one/that was one of my best this week/this was Olympic class

Accept responsibility:

sorry/I apologize/my fault/I did it/I shouldn’t have done that

Problem-solving:

How can I fix this? What are my options? What else can I do?/ I wish I’d done this instead of that/I’m going to try this again/ Rewind!

Don’t forget to say:

I almost made a mistake

Dealing with worry or fear:

this is scary/I’m worried .../I’ve never done this before/I’m not sure.../I’m mad (or frustrated, upset, sad, disappointed, etc.)

Dealing with challenge:

this is hard for me/this is harder than I thought/this will be tough

Students need to learn how to make mistakes—skillfully.

personal experiences, Dave’s key objective was to change the associations commonly made between glamour, slimness, being part of a select group and tobacco products. Attendees will never look at tobacco advertising in the same way again!

Rosalind Wiseman, author of *Queen Bees and Wannabees*, signed copies of her book at Gorton Community Center on May 8. Over 150 people attended the presentation and signing. The May 8 event was co-sponsored by Lake Forest Book Store.

Students and parents attended “Surviving the Transition to High School” at Deerpath Middle School in May. The challenges of moving into high school were frankly discussed by the panelists, who included Lake Forest High School staff, students and parents, Deerpath Middle School staff, and community representatives from CROYA and LEAD. A parent who attended said, “It was very informative for new parents.”

The first Monday of every month, from September to May at Gorton Community Center, features a speaker on topics of particular interest to parents.

“Zippers” call for new vigilance

Relatively new to the alcohol scene are “Zippers,” gelatin shots that contain 12% alcohol, 4 proof and come in flavors such as Vodka Splash, Rum Rush, Whisky Drop and Tequila Tea. They’re in containers that look like a snack pack or an after-school snack that might go in a lunch box.

Marketed on the Internet by BPNC, Inc. a small company in Toledo, Ohio, Zippers are sold in 26 states including Illinois.

They are the first commercially produced version of “Jell-O shots,” the sweet, chilled alcoholic drinks popular at beach bars and college parties. The Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) says, “Zippers are being marketed in ways that appeal to an underage audience.”

If Zippers are not properly coded as alcohol products in grocery stores, underage youth may be able to buy them.

Additionally, Zippers may be extremely enticing to young drinkers who do not like the taste of beer or hard liquor because they mask the taste of the alcohol flavored Jello. Some of the new flavors are Blue Hawaiian, Melon Head, Purple Hooter and Fuzzy Navel, many of which taste like Kool-Aid.

It is important that we as a community are vigilant about this product. Zippers are sold at grocery stores, bars, convenience stores and liquor stores.

This information was obtained from Join Together Online (www.jointogether.org), a project of the Boston University School of Public Health.

The gelatin shots are packaged in containers that look like a snack pack or an after-school snack that might go in a lunch box, and they are being marketed in ways that appeal to an underage audience.

Parent University 2003
Saturday, March 8, 2003
Don't miss it!

Save the date

Jim Fay will be the main presenter at Parent University, March 8, 2003.

Jim has worked with children, schools and families for over 47 years. He is an award-winning educator who has dedicated his life to helping children develop character and responsibility.

He is one of America's best storytellers. However, Jim does not tell stories for story sake; he has discovered that stories are still the most effective technique for learning. His delightful sense of humor and storytelling style has made him a favorite personality on hundreds of radio and talk shows.

Jim is the co-author of *Love and Logic: Raising Responsible Kids Without Raising the Roof*. The Love and Logic process incorporates two main themes: Love allows children to grow through their mistakes; Logic allows them to learn from the consequences of their choices.

Jim Fay's Love and Logic process incorporates two main themes: Love allows children to grow through their mistakes; Logic allows children to learn from the consequences of their choices.

Support LEAD

I/we would like to help LEAD continue its efforts toward building healthy families and fighting substance abuse. Enclosed is a tax-deductible contribution of:

- \$100 \$50 \$25
 \$10 _____

LEAD may contact me for donations of gifts and/or services

I want to volunteer with LEAD

Name/s _____

Phone _____

Address _____

Please make checks payable to LEAD and mail to P.O. Box 61, Lake Forest, IL

60045. Thank you!



LEAD

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In this issue... Results of the Alcohol & Drug Study!

LEAD's
Mission
Statement:
LEAD is a
community
organization
dedicated to
parents and
other adults and
their role in the
promotion of
healthy family
relationships
and the preven-
tion of alcohol,
tobacco and
other drug use
and risky
behavior by
youth.

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Don't miss it...

The LEAD Clambake!

Friday, September 13

at Harrison Conference Center

Watch for details!

This third annual Clambake will be a fun-filled goodbye to the summer at the beautiful Harrison House. Join us in tasting the terrific seafood and chicken and have a great time dancing and playing boardwalk games. Need an invitation? Call 847-295-9075.

To join us,
please
phone
847-295-
9075.