

# NEWS



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## 06-02-11 THIS WEEK IN ORANGE COUNTY BY EDWARD A. DIANA

June's arrival means it's time for moving up ceremonies, recognition days, and graduations for students at schools throughout Orange County. Congratulations to all of the 2011 graduates! I wish our students much success as they take the next step in their educational journey. I hope you will join me in encouraging students of all ages, from elementary school through college, to enjoy their learning adventure and to take advantage of all the educational opportunities with which they are presented. As an educator for more than 30 years, I have seen first-hand the life-changing effect education can have on a young person's life. And, it can go even further than that, Nelson Mandela once said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." I wish our graduates well as they make their mark on the world.

As we recognize the successes of our students, I urge our high school and college graduates to use caution and common sense as they enjoy their celebration. Too often, we've seen a bright light snuffed out too soon because of reckless driving or driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol. It's important to remember that the legal drinking age is 21. Tragically, alcohol-related car crashes are the number one killer of young people ages 15-24 and beer is the alcoholic beverage consumed most often before a fatal car crash. Also, be mindful that wine coolers, hard ice teas, hard lemonades, and the like are still alcoholic beverages – they are not alternatives for teens.

To help avoid tragedy this summer, Orange County Stop DWI offers these tips for having safe parties:

- Have a theme for your party so that alcohol is not of primary importance
- Collect car keys at the start of your party
- Serve plenty of food
- Have a variety of non-alcoholic beverage choices
- Have one person making drinks (She/he controls the strength of drinks and can keep track of those who will need a ride home)
- Do not feel that you have to push drinks to be a good host/hostess.
- Serve cake and coffee, ice cream or fruit near the end of the evening.
- Check each guests' ability to drive home.
- Drive anyone who is intoxicated home yourself or let him/her sleep at your home.

For more information, visit [www.orangecountystopdwi.com](http://www.orangecountystopdwi.com).

If you're looking for programs and activities to keep your students sharp (and out of trouble) this summer, visit the Orange County Youth Bureau's pages on our Orange County website [www.orangecountygov.com](http://www.orangecountygov.com) or give them a call at 615-3620.

Until next week, wishing you good health and happiness,

Edward A. Diana  
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