

**EVALUATION OF THE WHITECOURT
"RIDE HOME PROGRAM"**

Submitted to:

**Whitecourt Ride Home Program Coordinators
Whitecourt, Alberta**



Submitted by:

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INTRODUCTION

In December 2003, Whitecourt P.A.R.T.Y. coordinators teamed up with SADD groups from Hilltop High School and St. Joseph School, and Ken's Cabs to initiate a program called Ride Home. It has now been in operation for a little over two years. The community partnership program was a result of the leadership and initiative shown by P.A.R.T.Y. coordinators Sharon Shannon (Whitecourt Community Services), Michelle Standish (Whitecourt R.C.M.P.), and Gail Bablitz (Aspen Health Services), and a number of concerned volunteers. There was a consensus that the time was right to undertake a formative review and evaluate the program to help administrators make decisions on the program's future.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

A meeting between Peter Rothe (ACICR) and the three P.A.R.T.Y. Program coordinators took place on March 1st, 2006 in which the following program objectives were discussed:

1. To reduce drinking and driving in the Whitecourt region
2. To provide safe alternative transportation home for teens aged 13 – 20 who find themselves in situations where they need a safe ride home
3. To encourage young people who have been drinking alcohol to decide on safe transportation home

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The P.A.R.T.Y. Program has a contract with Ken's Cabs, to provide taxi drivers for young people at a flat fee of \$2.00 per trip. Ken's Cabs then charges the Ride Home Program for the full fare minus the two dollars paid by the customer. The program runs nightly from Thursday through Sunday, from 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. Each cab driver has a cell phone, supplied by the Ride Home Program, to which a young person in need can call directly for a ride. The phone numbers are separate from the company's dispatch line. The program serves 13 to 20 year olds in Whitecourt and surrounding area. The service is intended to provide users with a safe ride home after they have been drinking. The program spends approximately \$1,000.00 per month in cab fare subsidies.

The program is supported financially and through in-kind contributions by 13 different local sponsors. Sponsors include industries (e.g., Millar Western Forest Products), businesses (local bars, media), community organizations (e.g. Knights of Columbus), official agencies (e.g. RCMP, EMS), and others. Support includes such things as donations and space to advertise the program. The success of the program hinges on the continued support of community partners.

EVALUATION FOCUS AND METHODOLOGY

The evaluation was designed to measure both intended and unintended program outcomes. Research literature has shown that parents and community citizens often perceive ride home programs as unintentionally legitimizing and encouraging alcohol abuse among teens. Hence, research questions were defined that addressed the program coordinators' needs for both practical program information and information on potential unintended outcomes.

The following evaluation questions guided the selection of data collection methods, the formulation of specific queries, and the subsequent analysis.

To measure intended outcomes:

- How aware are teens of the Ride Home Program?
- What does teen use of the program look like?
- To what extent has the program become the alternative transportation of choice?
- How have program partners, parents and other relevant members of the community responded to the program?

To measure unintended outcomes:

- Is the program contributing to young people drinking at an earlier age?
- Is the program contributing to young people drinking earlier in the evening?
- Is the program allowing parents to defer their responsibility for providing their children with safe transportation?

The evaluation was structured on the concept of complementarity, namely the idea that both qualitative methods (e.g. focus groups) and quantitative methods (e.g. surveys, data base analysis) contribute to a more complete understanding of the issue being investigated.

The evaluation methodology used for this research consisted of student surveys, analysis of taxi receipts, parent focus groups and one-on-one interviews with partners and community representatives including taxi drivers, local business managers/owners, and employers.

Student Survey

Sample Selection

To help streamline the data collection process and to provide maximum student involvement, the entire Whitecourt student population from grades 9 to 12 was included in the sample population. This included 400 students at Hilltop High School (public) and

160 at St. Joseph School (Catholic). The total population frame was, therefore, 560 high school students between the ages of 13 (and under) to 18 (and over).

Questionnaire Development

The survey included fifteen questions based on four themes:

1. teens' views about teen drinking and driving in Whitecourt generally;
2. teens' awareness of the program;
3. teens' use of the program; and
4. the potential for increased teen alcohol consumption because of the program.

Data Collection

A research assistant traveled to the two schools in Whitecourt and distributed packages of questionnaires prepared for specific teachers and grades. The teachers were given time by the principal to have their students complete the questionnaires in class. The research assistant had two members from the Ride Home Program help organize, distribute and collect the surveys. The survey was completed in one day on December 2nd, 2005.

Data Entry and Analysis

The data for each respondent was entered onto a custom designed ACCESS database. The data file was subsequently transposed into SPSS 11.5 and all analyses were conducted with this program.

Questions were cross tabulated by age, grade, gender, location of residence and school district (public or separate/Catholic). Results are presented in the results section of this report.

Analysis of Taxi Cab Receipts

So that Ride Home coordinators have some data on program use, each taxi driver is required to complete a receipt with specific information for each young person who receives a cab ride in the program. Ride receipts are collected by the Ride Home Program committee. The receipts contain the following information:

- Date
- Project Name
- Gender
- Age
- Amount of fare
- Location of pickup (vicinity, not specific address)
- Destination
- Driver First Name

program users are not required to provide the cab driver with their name or the specific address where they are to be picked up or dropped off.

From the 2,000 receipts collected between over the span of two years, 660 were selected according to season (165 per season). Information from the receipts was entered into an ACCESS database by a member of the ACICR research team. No names were included. In some cases information was missing, or estimates of age were given as a range (e.g. 16-17). The rule invoked was that the lower number be used.

A basic descriptive analysis was performed in SPSS to establish how many young people used the service, during what season and days of the week, their gender and age, and the average cost of a taxi fare.

Personal Interviews

To gather data on how the community views the Ride Home Program, 15 community members were interviewed on a one-on-one basis. The interviewees represented local business owners, employers and social/community/emergency services personnel.

All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. Data analysis involved identifying recurring categories of information and organizing these into thematic groupings.

The purpose of all interviews was to gather respondent input on impaired driving in Whitecourt generally and on their involvement or potential involvement with the Whitecourt Ride Home Program specifically.

The interview protocol consisted of the following semi-structured questions: The wording of the questions for each group was altered slightly for appropriateness (see Appendices) but all were based on the same fundamental queries:

- Is teenage drinking and driving a problem in the Whitecourt community?
- What is your role in/experience with the program?
- Do you think the program is meeting a community need?
- Do you think the program has reduced drinking and driving in the community?
- Do you think the program is abused by teenagers who want to drink?
- Do you think the program is abused by parents who no longer need to take responsibility for their children's drinking driving?
- What do you think are the strengths of the program?
- What are its weaknesses?
- How could it be improved?

Parent Focus Group

Seven parents of students attending Hilltop High School participated in a focus group in which they were asked questions similar to those asked in the individual interviews (see Appendices). Parents of St. Joseph's students were also invited, but none participated.

RESULTS

Study results are presented according to the method of data collection. Information from the individual interviews has been combined with findings from the parent focus group.

Student Survey

The survey was administered to 466 of a possible 560 students. Unless otherwise noted, results are reported as frequencies and proportion of the total sample (466). Significant differences ($p < .05$) by age, grade, gender, location of residence, and school board were identified; few significant differences were found.

Sample Description

VARIABLE	Description	Frequency	%
AGE	<=13	118	25.3
	14	105	22.5
	15	90	19.3
	16	88	18.9
	17	57	12.2
	18	7	1.5
	>18	1	0.2
	Total	466	99.9
GRADE	9	151	32.4
	10	124	26.6
	11	115	24.7
	12	71	15.2
	missing	5	1.0
	Total	466	100.0
GENDER	Male	243	52.1
	Female	221	47.4
	missing	2	0.4
	Total	466	100.0
LOCATION OF RESIDENCE	In town	348	74.7
	Out of town	113	24.2
	Both	1	0.2
	missing	4	0.9
	Total	466	100.0
SCHOOL BOARD	Public (Hilltop)	357	76.6
	Separate (St. Joseph)	109	23.4
	Total	466	100.0

Analysis by Survey Question

Students were asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed with various statements about drinking and driving. The tables below show the percentages of students who definitely agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or definitely disagree with each statement. Results for the remaining survey questions are also presented in table form with discussion following.

Table 1: Community attitude toward drinking and driving

Definitely agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Definitely disagree	Missing	Total
9 (1.9%)	49 (10.5%)	114 (24.5%)	292 (62.7%)	2 (0.4%)	466 (100%)

Q2. The general feeling in Whitecourt is that it is OK to drink and drive.

Just over 87% of the students disagreed with the statement that that it is the general feeling in their community that it is OK to drink and drive. There was no significant difference between age groups, grades, genders, location of residence or school boards at $p < .05$.

Table 2: Is drinking and driving a problem in Whitecourt?

Definitely agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Definitely disagree	Missing	Total
67 (14.3%)	223 (47.9%)	138 (29.6%)	34 (7.3%)	4 (0.8%)	466 (100%)

Q3. Whitecourt has a problem with teens drinking and driving.

Just over 62% of the students agreed that Whitecourt has a problem with drinking and driving (Definitely agree: 14.3%; Strongly agree: 47.9%). Further analysis showed that, proportionately, in-town students (36.8%) were more likely to disagree with the statement that Whitecourt has a problem with drinking and driving than out of town students (29%). The difference is significant at $p < .05$. Furthermore, of all grade 9 students were more likely to agree with the statement (71.5%) than grade 10 (52.4%), 11 (61.7%) or grade 12 students (69.9%). The difference is significant at $p < .05$.

Table 3: Danger to sober drivers driving drunken passengers

Definitely agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Definitely disagree	Missing	Total
38 (8.2%)	100 (21.5%)	132 (28.3%)	195 (41.8%)	1 (0.2%)	466 (100%)

Q4. It is dangerous for a **sober teenage** driver to drive drunken passengers

The findings in Table 4 indicate that 70% of the students disagreed with the claim that it is dangerous for sober teenage drivers to drive drunken passengers. There was no

significant difference between age groups, grades, genders, location of residence or school boards at $p < .05$.

Table 4: Teens living in the Whitecourt area can easily find transportation after they had been drinking alcohol.

Definitely Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Definitely Disagree	Missing	Total
139 (29.8%)	246 (52.8%)	64 (13.7%)	15 (3.2%)	2 (0.4%)	466 (100%)

Q4. Teens living in the Whitecourt area can easily find transportation after they had been drinking alcohol

The majority of students (82.6%) definitely agreed or somewhat agreed that teens living in Whitecourt can easily find transportation after they have been drinking alcohol. There was no specification as to what that transportation may be.

A second question pertaining to driving home after drinking alcohol was included in the questionnaire. It asked, “How did you get home the last time you were drinking alcohol?” Of the 364 students who consumed alcohol and received a ride home, 19% “got a ride with someone else who was at the event and had a vehicle”, 18% walked home, 17.8% used a designated driver and 12% took a taxi with the Whitecourt Ride Home Program. When all of the questionable forms of transportation were combined (“I drove myself home”, “A least drunk person drove me home”, “The person who drove me to the event drove me back” and “I got a ride with someone else who was at the event and had a vehicle”) results showed that 25.8% of the students who had been drinking last month received a ride home that was potentially high risk, in spite of the presence of the Whitecourt Ride Home Program.

Table 5: Familiarity with program

Very well	Pretty well	A little	Don't know the program	Missing	Total
70 (15.0%)	130 (27.9%)	183 (39.2%)	82 (17.6%)	1 (0.2%)	466 (100%)

Q5. How well do you know the Whitecourt Ride Home Program?

Success of any program depends in large part on people’s awareness of it. Hence, students were asked how well they know the Whitecourt Ride Home Program.

Table 5 shows that 42.9% of the students know the program pretty well or very well. 39.2% know it a little and 17.6% do not know it at all. Further analysis by grade shows that the largest percentage of grade 12 students know the program very well or pretty well (63.0%), followed by grade 11 students (49.5%), grade 10 students (43.5%) and grade 9 students (27.1%).

Table 6: Does the program make drinking easier?

Yes	No	Total
211(54.6%)	176(45.5%)	386(100%)

Q6. Do you think that the Whitecourt Ride Home Program makes it easier for you to drink alcohol?

Students were asked if they feel the Ride Home Program makes it easier for them to drink alcohol. Of those who were familiar with the program (n=386), 54.6% thought that the program made it easier to drink alcohol.

Statistical analysis of the responses to the question asking students if they had ever received a ride with the Ride Home Program, showed that 42.0% had. Based on the data the ideal type student who used the Ride Home Program is in grade 10, 15-16 years old attending Hilltop High School. One difference did occur with St. Joseph's, where the ideal type student who most likely used the program is in grade 11 and 16 years old. All differences were significant at $p < .05$.

Table 7: Number of times students used the program after being drunk

	Never	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	>10	total
n	309	46	29	23	16	11	4	5	4	1	3	12	463
%	66.7	9.9	6.3	1.8	3.5	2.4	0.8	1.1	0.8	0.2	0.6	2.6	100.0

Q9. In the last month how many times have you received a ride from the Whitecourt Ride Home Program because you were drunk?

Students were also asked how many times they had received a ride from the program in the last month because they had consumed alcohol. Results indicate that the majority of students have never used the Ride Home Program (66.7%) for this purpose.

Table 8: Number of rides taken by drinking students

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	>10	total
n	46	29	23	16	11	4	5	4	1	3	12	154
%	29.9	18.8	14.9	10.4	7.1	2.6	3.2	2.6	0.6	1.9	7.8	100.0

When students who have never used the program were removed from the sample, the numbers showed that of the students who used the program in the last month because they were drunk (N=154), nearly 10% used it ten or more times. Based on these calculations, 36.3% (n=54) of those using Ride Home are using it four or more times per month – an average of once a week or more.

Table 9: Number of times used the program in an unsafe situation

	Never	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	>10	total
n	378	41	24	7	1	4	1	0	0	0	1	5	462
%	81.8	8.9	5.2	1.5	0.2	0.8	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	1.1	100.0

Q10. In the last month how many times have you received a ride from the Whitecourt Ride Home Program because you were in an unsafe situation that had nothing to do with alcohol?

Some teens used the Ride Home Program to get themselves out of a situation they felt was high risk or unsafe but that did not involve alcohol. The majority of students never used the program for the purpose of safety outside of consuming alcohol. However, six students indicated that they had used the program this reason ten or more times in the last month. It is not possible to tell if participants were responding honestly and that they really are repeatedly getting themselves into difficult situations that require cab rides home.

Table 10: Making plans prior to drinking

All of the time	Some of the time	Seldom	Occasionally	Never	Missing	Total
60 (12.9%)	109(23.4%)	52 (10.9%)	65 (13.9%)	175(37.6%)	6 (1.3%)	466(100%)

Q8. Generally speaking how often do you “plan” on using the Whitecourt Ride Home Program before you go out drinking?

Students were asked how often they plan on using the Ride Home Program before they go out drinking. 36.3% of the students answered “All of the time” or “Some of the time” when they were asked how often they plan on using the program before they go out drinking. A similar proportion (37.6%) answered that they never make plans to use the program prior to going out drinking. The latter statistic can be interpreted as being positive or negative, depending on the perspective one takes. It is positive in the sense that students may not need this program because they have other modes of transportation or they do not drink alcohol. The finding may be considered negative in that students, who don’t plan for use of this program may be using alternative modes of transportation that include drinking and driving.

Table 11: Use of a designated driver

All of the time	Some of the time	Seldom	Occasionally	Never	Missing	Total
112(24.0%)	117(25.1%)	37(7.9%)	42 (9.0%)	150(32.2%)	8 (1.7%)	466(100%)

Q11. How often do you use a designated driver (e.g., parents or friends) other than the Whitecourt Ride Home Program when you go out drinking?

Use of designated drivers is a popular prevention strategy that is promoted by many community organizations. It appears that about half (49.1%) of students use a designated driver all of the time or some of the time after they have been drinking alcohol. The

“Never” category does not specify whether students have never used a designated driver after drinking, or if they have never used a designated driver because they do not drink.

Table 12: Satisfaction with taxi service

Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Total
72(25.0%)	119(41.3%)	53(18.4%)	44(15.3%)	288 (100%)

Q13. Think about the last time that you used a taxi from the Whitecourt Ride Home Program. How satisfied were you with the service?

Of the 288 students who used the Ride Home Program, 66.3% were satisfied or very satisfied with the service they received. A sizable minority (33.7%) were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the service they received.

Analysis of Taxi Cab Receipts

The taxi receipts variables were aggregated and grouped into six major variables listed below.

- **Age:** in years, starting at “13 years and under”. Because students are not required to give cab drivers their name or age, age was estimated in some cases.
- **Gender:** male or female.
- **Season:** receipts recorded the date of the ride. Dates were grouped into four seasons as follows:
 - Winter = January to March
 - Spring = April to June
 - Summer = July to September
 - Fall = October to December
- **Location:** the distance traveled by the participants to and from their destination according to residence (out of town and in town). The data describes the overall distance traveled *to* and *from* town. The data was summarized by looking at the addresses of departure and destination within Whitecourt (in town residence) or outside of Whitecourt (out of town residence)
- **Average cost per taxi ride:** the amount participants paid per dollars while using Ken’s taxi services for the Whitecourt Ride Home Program. The lowest fare recorded was less than \$4.90 per ride, and the highest fare exceeded \$37.00.
- **Number of participants per taxi ride:** the number of people per taxi ride from the departure area to the destination area. The number of people per taxi ride is described as follows. Five or more riders was coded as “5”.

Table 13: Taxi receipt analysis by variable

VARIABLE	DESCRIPTION	Frequency	Percent
AGE	<i>13 and under</i>	12	1.8%
	<i>14-15</i>	137	20.7%
	<i>16-17</i>	324	49.0%
	<i>18-19</i>	137	20.7%
	<i>20+</i>	3	.04%
	<i>Age not specified</i>	47	7.1%
	TOTAL	<i>660</i>	<i>100%</i>
SEASON	<i>Winter</i>	179	27.1%
	<i>Spring</i>	181	27.4%
	<i>Summer</i>	180	27.2%
	<i>Fall</i>	120	18.1%
	TOTAL	<i>660</i>	<i>100</i>
GENDER	<i>Male</i>	415	60.1%
	<i>Female</i>	236	34.2%
	<i>Gender not specified</i>	39	5.6%
	TOTAL	<i>690</i>	<i>100%</i>
LOCATION/ DISTANCE	<i>In town</i>	485	70.80%
	<i>Out of town</i>	200	29.20%
	TOTAL	<i>685</i>	<i>100%</i>
AVERAGE COST PER RIDE	<i>\$1-\$4.90</i>	169	25.6%
	<i>\$5-\$8.90</i>	264	40.0%
	<i>\$9-\$12.90</i>	101	15.3%
	<i>\$13-\$16.90</i>	80	12.1%
	<i>\$17-\$20.90</i>	29	4.3%
	<i>\$21-\$24.90</i>	7	1.0%
	<i>\$25-\$28.90</i>	4	.60%
	<i>\$29-\$32.90</i>	4	.60%
	<i>\$33-\$36.90</i>	1	.15%
	<i>\$37+ (i.e. \$45.00)</i>	1	.15%
TOTAL	<i>660</i>	<i>100%</i>	
NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS PER CAB RIDE	<i>1</i>	494	73.5%
	<i>2</i>	134	19.4%
	<i>3</i>	32	4.7%
	<i>4</i>	7	1.0%
	<i>5+</i>	5	.74%
	TOTAL	<i>672</i>	<i>100%</i>

Users of the Ride Home Program were most likely to be 16 – 17 years of age (49.0%), male (60.1%), and traveling alone (73.5%). The majority of rides took place in town (70.8%), and cost under \$9.00 (65.6%). Travel was fairly evenly spread across the seasons, however there was a slight drop in fall (18.1% compared with about 27% in each of the other seasons).

Personal Interviews and Parent Focus Group

The results of the personal interviews with community partners and the parent focus group are presented according question.

Is teenage drinking and driving a problem in Whitecourt?

Community Partner/Participant Interviews

The dominant answer was “Yes”, teenage drinking and driving in Whitecourt is a problem. The reasons or underlying rationale for the judgments varied. One was experience. People have lived in the community for a period of time and they have read, witnessed or heard about fatalities among young persons due to drinking and driving.

I would say yea. You know you look at a lot of the injury accidents and fatalities that have been in the area. I've been here about 10 years and there's always somebody in the news somewhere in the year where there's a fatality and alcohol has been related, so, definite concern.

We used to see a lot of a, of young people, not necessarily teenage/ well, yea, you, a lot of teenagers, um in the Police Court News for, impaired and one, and one thing and another. So, yea, it's a problem.

Yes it is. Um, my son was killed. From a, all five children were, his girlfriend and three buddies were killed drinking and driving and um, my youngest son was drinking and driving, he was a sleep when he did it but however, he a, was just yards away from where the first son was killed when he was stopped by the police and charged. He was 17 at the time and that was tragic.

Um, I believe that there's lots of kids who use alcohol. I'm not sure lots of them, many of them have their drivers but, license, but there is, I think alcohol is one of the main problems in Whitecourt.

House parties and special events like graduation parties were featured as specific trouble spots for teens.

Yes. I think there's house parties where and I think that's a big part of it. Kids will be kids. Teenage being anybody under age, they can go out and

get drunk elsewhere. I think most business are pretty responsible. I think there's maybe a few issues out there but Whitecourt as a whole, there's so many house parties like Graduation for example, they graduate from, some kids from grade 9 all the way to grade 12. Is it wrong? I think so. So they go to all the after Grad parties, the Grad parties...

One cab driver had a different point of view on the potential problem of teen drinking and driving in the community. He suggested that cab drivers' response to calls for rides plays a role in the assessment of a problem. Cabbies may get called to a site and the callers are not there for a ride. How did the teens get home? Furthermore, according to the cab driver, if the Whitecourt Ride Home Program, run through the services of a taxi company was not present, then the problem would surely be more severe.

I would say to a certain point, yea. Well, these kids they have parties out in the bus and everything you know, and like, I know, like from driving cab and going to pick them up, like, we can't be there just "bang". A sometimes those kids wait up to an hour for a ride, the time you get out there and they're/ of course by the time you get out there and nobody wants a ride. So where'd these kids go. Now I mean I can't really say that they're driving but they're not there when we get there.

Another taxi representative offers a point regarding the logistics of picking up fares on a weekend night when teens are having a bush party. Rather than have a number of teens getting together for a ride, most of the teenagers want to travel independently which, according to the taxi representative, is logistically impossible.

A problem is parties out at certain gravel pits...there could be up to 50, 60 kids and they've all got cell phones, and they're all phoning, so a driver goes out, there's a group of them an nobody gets in, cause they're still partying. They figure "OK, well, we're not going to go home now." We have to bill somebody for that which we do if it's an empty ride. But instead of getting together, we've got maybe 40 to 50 calls coming, which'll happen, where as four or five of them we're together, that would ease, ease up very much for us, we could get them home. But by the time you get one home, it might take you half an hour to get back out and get the other ones. I don't know what you can do in the mean time. Some of them might get fed up and just leave themselves, we can't control it, just can't.

Another point of view includes comments that generalize teen drinking and driving in Whitecourt as a problem that is similar to other communities in Alberta. Whitecourt does not need to be singled out. Several comments illustrate the issue.

I think it's a problem in all communities in Alberta or most communities in Alberta. I don't, I think it's a problem, I don't think a, significantly more

of a problem in Whitecourt than it would be in another community, but I think it's a typical community related problem.

I think it's a, a problem in any community so I think, I don't think that we're any worse or, or better than any community. I think it's there. It's a concern.

Parent Focus Group

For some parents the issue was clear – parents contribute to the local teenage impaired driving problem.

I think parents contribute to teens drinking? Yes, I, I've heard that through other parents saying that their children have been at um, after event parties, and a parents have contributed, have offered alcohol to underage people.

Some of the parents' comments suggested a kind of ambiguity about parents contributing to the teen drinking and driving issue. There was solid agreement that there is a teen impaired driving problem in the town and that some parents provide teenagers liquor. However, they didn't necessarily feel that providing teens liquor contributed to impaired driving.

Do I think parents contribute to it? I know there are parents in this town who offer it where underage kids drinks at their homes, but I don't know if it leads to the drinking and driving or not, but it, I'm sure it could contribute to it.

I DO feel that there's a lot of parents in our area and probably every where, who contribute to underage drinking but whether or not that contributes to drinking and driving? I'm not sure.

A common theme in the data was that the problem of teenage drinking and driving has been reduced with the introduction of the P.A.R.T.Y. Program generally and the Ride Home Program specifically. Some parents voluntarily referenced the program when they discussed the issue of teenage drinking and driving in Whitecourt.

...My kids as well, know about the P.A.R.T.Y. Ride Home Program and um, if they go with somebody to a party and a, were expected to get a ride home with somebody, they would call the P.A.R.T.Y. Ride Home if that person had had a drink. They're aware of the program and would use it, so. I, I don't know how many are out there but.

...I'm not sure that I feel drinking and driving is a problem. I think, from what I know, that the kids today are a little um smarter about designated

drivers. Um, and they do take, take precautions towards that or use the P.A.R.T.Y. Ride Home Program or arrange a ride of some kind...

I think since they've had this P.A.R.T.Y. Ride program, I think um, I can't say for everyone's kids but I know my kids for sure they, you know, any time, like, her children, they phone the P.A.R.T.Y. Ride, they don't ever drink and drive. Um, and as far as the, like, parents attributing to it, I think that um, there are parents that will offer kids drinks...

...With the P.A.R.T.Y. Ride, my son does use it when he does go to party. And as far as the parents giving the kids alcohol, yes, it is going on.

There was agreement that there appears to be teenage drinking problem in Whitecourt, but that parents are not responsible. The real issue was felt to be peer influence.

I think it's more peers and other things. I personally don't drink and my son does, at 17 or at 16. So he hasn't learnt that from me.

How are you involved in the Ride Home Program?

Community Partner/Participant Interviews

One form of partnership between Industry/employer/municipal groups and the Ride Home Program is financial assistance. Some partners contribute to the program because they acknowledge that their employees have children who are at risk of becoming a drinking and driving statistic. By helping with a community program they are helping their employees.

It is interesting to note that among organizations that contribute to the program, at least some of the individual representatives of those organizations have personalized the issue. Discussions about reasons for becoming involved in the program often mentioned personal experiences. As some industry representatives explained:

My kids have grown up so I want to see the opportunity that they can go home. As parents, I think we need to take an active part. You know, we had a deal with our kids that they could phone me whatever time of the night and I would get dressed and go pick them up cause we lived out of town or if they didn't have the money, I'd pay the cab when they got home. Some people don't have that kind of relationship with their kids so, I think this gives kids a great opportunity to do something other than drink or drive or get in with somebody that's been drinking. I've picked up kids who were at a party out our way... Some kids come and knocked on the door to see if they could phone their parents or whatever and I just gave them a ride a home. I said why wake your parents up. I'm up, I'll give you a ride home.

...Because I have two children that are in the police force and grandchildren that are 18, 19, and 20 and I'm very concerned with kids... I worry about people, I worry about kids whether they're mine or not and I want to see them safe.

We supported them financially and we encourage teenagers and kids around the community to use the program... I was a teenager once, and I know exactly what's going on and I've raised three teenagers and I know that it's critical that these kids have an option to get them home safely.

I guess because I've lost three members to a drunk driver in my family and so I'm very supportive of people not drinking and driving because it's affected my life personally.

Depending on the business or industry, involvement with the Ride Home Program was also defined as offering available business resources. For example a liquor sales outlet allows use of the business for hanging posters and other anti drinking and driving literature. The business also operates a free courtesy van which can be used for transportation home. Another, similar, business in the community does not offer such a service.

Interviews with several industry members suggested that before they became involved in the program they had reservations or, in some cases, major questions pertaining to potential abuse and unintended consequences. One funder commented:

There was a concern, whereas we didn't mind contributing to the P.A.R.T.Y. Program and for all it did because that is an excellent program, the Ride Home Program. Most of what I heard and what we felt was why should we pay for them to go and get drunk and, and why are parents abdicating their responsibility and why are teens actually, getting a little more drunk because they have a Ride Home Program. That didn't sit well.

At the beginning of the Ride Home Program the above funder fully supported the program and its ideals:

I remember when it was discussed on what this program was to be for and the purpose of the program was admirable and, we really were behind it, because that's who we were looking for.

Later he and his colleagues found out how the program was misused by students “as a group, all go out like a taxi service, they'll call them and they'll all pile in.” It was considered to be out of control.

As a result of the issue of potential abuse, the above funder is no longer prepared to provide donations to the Ride Home Program. The money will go to the P.A.R.T.Y. Program instead.

And as far as making a donation, we want our donation to go to the P.A.R.T.Y. Program and not the Ride Home part any more. We just see it more and more as parents abdicating their responsibility and more and more students just abusing it, rather than it being for what it was meant to be - when you're put in a position where you're in difficulties, use the program and not to be planning your drunk up around "well, we have a guaranteed ride home.

Would you be prepared to increase your involvement in the Ride Home Program?

Community Partner/Participant Interviews

The typical response from the community interviews did not include potentially increased funds for the Ride Home Program. However, some did offer to become volunteers or extend their volunteer time.

A respondent from one of the liquor sales outlets indicated that although the business can be used for raising greater program awareness through posters, a donation to the program would/could be considered.

Would I give them a donation? Yes. Would I do any more than what I do as far as putting up posters, because I have my own in-house program of a courtesy ride. Where I don't charge anybody anything. If they want to leave a tip to a driver that's fine. But because I do that already, I think that's self-sufficient as far as my, my responsibility as a good business owner...

A respondent from another liquor outlet described the need for alternative transportation home and the need for safety for drinking patrons of all ages. This particular business once provided taxi coupons to drunk patrons. The manager checked the names of users and found that the program was abused. It is no longer in place.

Well they should have a ride home program for any age. Not just teenagers. You hear about that somebody that's my age or your age or - they're not teenagers, but you know, when somebody has a couple of drinks or whatever, they think they're invincible or they think they're perfect or they think they're ok and they're probably not. But I mean they're not teenagers. But I mean you can't say ok, well, for everybody we're going to have this program. It would go belly up. Because I mean you can't, it would be abused. We used to have coupons here a couple of years ago, and we had free ride home where I covered the cabs costs. But it got abused by people that were older that should know better. I would

come in the morning and I see the slips that are signed and I see who these people were that took the free ride home and some of them don't even drink. Or they don't drive. I remember some examples where I'd see the people's name on the slip, cause I mean, I got the girls to write who the cab driver was and the waitress always signed it, and the next morning I looked through them and there was people that took free rides home that I know they don't have drivers licenses. To me that was very unfair because they would normally take a cab and pay for it, now why are they using my free cab ride home, which is supposed to be reserved for people that have really drank too much...

It appears that the threat of abuse of a program is ever present, regardless of age or circumstances.

Is the program meeting a need in the community?

Community Partner/Participant Interviews

There was unanimous agreement that the Ride Home Program was meeting a community need. There were only some reservations as to the potential abuse that would mitigate the success of the program.

Parent Focus Group

There was a consensus among parents who participated in the focus group that the Ride Home Program meets a community need. While some participants provided short, cryptic responses, others reasoned their opinions. One form of reasoning was that the cost of the Ride program pales against the cost of traffic deaths and injuries. They felt that it is a community's responsibility to initiate and support such programs.

I think the community has a responsibility to provide programs like this. There's lots of programs that Whitecourt provides for this or that. There's a cost to the community every time there's an accident. There's a cost to your ambulance services, your police services to the, to the person that has to sit and wait because they can drive on a certain road, there's lost of costs around that. But there's also an emotional cost every time there is a teen who gets hurt in an accident or killed in an accident, a HUGE emotional cost to a community so I think there is a need for a community to take this on and to look at this as a community responsibility because of some of those things.

Some parents connected the fulfillment of community need with the involvement of the taxi company. They thought that the local cab company was supplementing or subsidizing the student fares.

You also have to realize, like the amount of money the local cab company is putting out and that's why if the cabs driver realizes it's a P.A.R.T.Y. Ride Home that cab driver is getting less and I've made very big commitment with my kids if they ever use it, I will go back the next day and pay the cab company a regular fair cab for my kids to donate it back to them because they've donated their time to the community.

I think there were, I think the P.A.R.T.Y. Program is supplementing with the cab company with the kids.

Has the Ride Home Program reduced teenage drinking and driving in Whitecourt?

Community Partner/Participant Interviews

There was a feeling that the Ride Home Program has reduced teenage drinking and driving, but a reminder was offered that there is still too much of it happening in Whitecourt. Hence more education needs to be done.

Well, I think from a usage perspective, I think it has helped. I think kids are using it. I think there's still an issue out there where kids drink and drive but I think it's a matter of continuing education and keeping the alternatives there and just keep selling it.

Some comments suggested a duality. Whereas the program has reduced drinking and driving, it has increased alcohol use amongst teens:

It has not reduced the drinking. It's increased it. The drinking and driving I think it has helped. When I see everybody that's using the cab, how many at a time, then I know they're not on the road themselves driving their own vehicles and there's an awful lot of them.

One cab driver felt that, judging by the number of teens s/he drives in a night, those numbers would likely show up in drinking and driving.

Oh, sure. Just the number of a impaired people that we take home. If we do 30 or 40 a night, or 50 a night, um, there's potentially 50 accidents or what not, so. Yea, I'm absolutely positive it's reduced drinking and driving.

Parent Focus Group

Discussion of Whitecourt's Ride Home Program and its impact led to questions about the program's contribution toward reduced drinking and driving in the community. Most parents said they felt the program did reduce drinking and driving. Their reasoning was that if a service is provided to help prevent a problem and that service is accessible, people will choose to use it, resulting in a reduced problem.

Yes. Because I think its accessible. If they have access they're going to make choices and if the choice is not to drink and drive, I think most of young people are responsible and they don't want to be drinking and driving and I think if they have an opportunity to get a ride, they would take it.

I definitely believe it's helping because of the number of people that are using it. If they weren't using it what would they be doing? And I know adults in the bar, a lot of them call and it's for them as well, for the \$20 to get their car home because a lot of times they'll take the cab home but they don't want to leave their car behind and their car is coming so then they feel better calling. Absolutely!

An additional age-related theme appeared in the data. Although there was a feeling that there is less teen drinking and driving, the drinking and driving of older drivers has not been reduced.

I agree (teenage drinking and driving has been reduced), but I also think that there's still a lot drinking and driving going on but I don't think it's this age group. I think it's my age group and older people that haven't been raised with the mentality that our children have been raised with.

I feel that it's helping out youth. Like our youths are using it and I think there's less drinking and driving amongst youths. But I think older people are doing the drinking and driving. If you read the Court Reports, there's always 40 year olds drinking and driving and getting caught with impaired driving...

What are the strengths of the Ride Home Program?

Community Partner/Participant Interviews

One of the strengths mentioned by community participants is the program's personnel. According to one community respondent the "three ladies" running the program personify the strength of the program:

I think the strengths of the Ride Home Program are the three ladies that are running it. They believe very strongly in what they're doing, as do we, and they, they are really genuinely concerned that we're going to have to do something to reduce the fatalities. They do the fundraising. They've convinced a lot of the industries in town that it's a worthwhile thing and they support it.

Another strength is the program's accessibility to teens:

I think the strength of it for the kids would be that, it's open, it's accessible, and there's no strings attached. That's what would be the strength of it for the kids.

Strength was not only focused on the teens' well being, but also on the fact that the Ride Home Program is community-based. Everyone benefits because everyone uses the roads, and hence their health and safety is being promoted.

Well I think it's just a community benefit. I think it's there's a big safety and health risk to others, to other people so, even to the person that's drinking or whatever at that point so. It works; it's a win, win situation on every front.

Parent Focus Group

A generalized strength mentioned by parents is that the program is a unique service offered to local people. It fills the vacuum of not having a public transportation system in the town.

I think the strengths is that to me, I think it's unique program. I've not heard of another community that has it and I, you know, because we don't have a public transportation system...

A key strength of the program according to parents is that it eliminates labeling or stereotyping teens for their actions.

They can phone at any time and they're not going to be be-rated or judged by the cab company, at least I don't think they are, but if they are, and that concerns me if some of these youth are being/ it's like you know, a teenager walking into a store and an adult walking in who gets served first. Like that worries me if they're being treated differently than a regular adult paying customer.

A cab driver recognized the difference between teenagers who have been drinking and other fares. He uses specific measures with severely drunk teenagers. If the behavior is really bad the rider will be asked to get out of the vehicle.

Well, I've had one or two that have actually just about passed out on me, on the way home and that is really scary cause if you don't know where that kid lives and you can't get him awake, what are you going to do with him? You only have one other option, that's go to the RCMP Office. Sometimes they get a little abusive. But that's just liquor talking and you know, any of the cab drivers that have any experience at all know how to deal with stuff like that. I have had it about two or three times, it's got to the point where a "You're walking from here Bud!" You know what I

mean? Cause they just don't, they just won't settle down or don't feel they should have to or whatever.

A third strength provided by a focus group member is that students are generally aware of the program and they can use it appropriately:

I think the kids know about. It's out there, the kids are aware of it. They know they can call and I think that's another strength that the advertising has been appropriately used.

What are the weaknesses of the Ride Home Program?

Community Partner/Participant Interviews

A weakness mentioned by some community people is the timing of taxis to come pick up teens. Young people tend to be impatient, and they are more willing to travel with someone else if a cab does not arrive at a certain time.

Age for program users was mentioned several times as a major weakness that contributed to abuse. The rationale was that many young people aged 18 to 20 work and earn good salaries. Their transportation should not be subsidized by the community.

I think the weaknesses are, the big one, with me is, people who are 18 years of age, probably have a job, probably make more money than any of the cab drivers, are allowed to go into a bar and they do, and they drink, and get a ride home for \$2 and that's not the way the program should run. I think this 20 and under is, in my view, ludicrous.

A third theme was limited finances for the program. Because the program has limited finances it is limited as to how much it can do. In fact, without adequate resources like money or personnel, the program is always in jeopardy.

The cost. I think our weakness is generating the funding for the program.

That's our fear I think, is that we won't be able to continue the program because of the cost. Um, ya, the, the weakness of the program is, is because it's still generated and pushed by volunteers, so if you have a change in people moving out of your community that are, or just the focus of the group, if it changes then the program could die. You know, any time you deal with volunteerism and driven, but it's just a risk of things like that can happen.

Money. Money, money.

Some comments pertaining to weaknesses of the program actually touched on abuse. That is, teens from out of town use the service at high cost to the program and they use it too often. A respondent from the cab industry had this to say:

...A huge amount of our bill is for people going out of town, a HUGH amount. Those are the 50 and \$60 dollar taxi rides. If you taking four people home, one West Mountain Road, one at East Mountain Road, one at Tower Road and one out at Robison, you're, you're burning up money like crazy. And those are regular riders most of them. One individual that I think is, I think his is only 13 to \$15 but he's a three nights a week, four weeks a month.

Parent Focus Group

A key weakness discussed by parents is the potential abuse of the program. That is, parents suspect that some teenagers use the program to go party hopping and to go partying.

Any, any social program is going to have abuse but you know, the kids know it's abused and if there was some way to discourage the abuse maybe, without intimidating the kids that would be intimidated to use it, so it isn't to go party hopping, and I know that's supposed to be the focus that it isn't, but we know that that is happening. Um, so we don't want to be encouraging kids to be getting rides to parties, but I don't know, so I think that's it, one of the drawbacks.

Another form of potential abuse mentioned by parents is that money teens or their parents could use for a cab is used to purchase liquor. They felt that well-off parents should take greater responsibility for providing for their teens.

Kids who are using it that could afford to pay their own cab fare um, and are just choosing not to because they're buying alcohol with it or whatever, whatever they do with their money. It's kind of a wishy washy situation. We know a lot of well off people in this community and I think if your kid needs 10 bucks to get a ride home then that's what should be done.

One participant suggested that when students and parents abuse the program, they are actually abusing the local businesses who support it. As one parent said:

They're taking advantage of the businesses who help support an alternative... They're taking advantages of local businesses who are putting out their money out their pockets to try and help the youth. They got to stop it and realize what they're doing to businesses or the businesses will stop donating to the program.

Parents also raised questions about how good the service was that teens were receiving. Some wondered if there were long waiting periods between placing a call and the cab arriving. Others wondered if teens were treated differently than other fares. Still others raised concerns about how the teens were behaving in the cabs.

I would say, probably just the waiting is one of the weaknesses. But I guess it's not all the time that they're waiting. I mean there are some night's that I guess they are busier than others.

Well, I know one night my son waited til, he phoned him at 1:30 and he waited until 4:30 in the morning and they still hadn't come.

The waiting time probably and like I was saying about them being treated differently, but also we don't seem to care the other side of the story of how the kids are treating them when they get in the cab. The first thing is, is there swearing, is there puking, is there the extremes that these kids have gone?

I know a couple of times these kids have gotten into the cab and then puked in the cab, you know, so I mean like that's not why the cabs are coming.

The suggestion that teens who use the Ride Home Program are treated the same as other fares was disputed among parents. Here is a piece of the debate:

- P1 *It's a separate number...like when you phone P.A.R.T.Y. Ride Home, it's not just Ken's Cabs, you phone a different number so they would know right off the bat. As soon as they make the phone call they know because it's a different number, it's a different number than then cab company.*
- P2 *My brother says is that they, they, kind of put it behind the other regular fares, but I don't know.*
- P1 *No, but they're saying that they're treated differently.*
- P3 *Oh, well that could be accurate.*
- P1 *Once they know that they're not with, you know that they could be phoning them don't say they're with the P.A.R.T.Y. Program or the Ride Home or whatever, and they're treated different then saying that we need a P.A.R.T.Y. Ride Home, they're treated differently.*

A member from the taxi industry mentioned that there are frequently times when demand outweighs ability to respond. Weekends are traditionally busier and people have to wait longer for service.

I'm all for the idea behind the P.A.R.T.Y. Program. But the problem is that the hours that those kids are riding home, on a busy Friday and Saturday night, is the also the hours that we're busy with people going out to the bars. If we have customers waiting 20 minutes, half an hour, I'm sorry,

they're going to wait 20 minutes, half an hour. I'm not going to drop everything just... and from what I understand we're only supposed to have one vehicle for them any way.

One of the drivers provided an example of the difficulties inherent in trying to serve teens while needing to attend to other customers.

These kids have parties out in the bush...there's one area out down the Flats Road that, where they have a party at quite often. It take 15 minutes just to get there and one night I picked up a group of kids there and from the time I left town to go out and get them and dropped the last one off, I was tied up for an hour and three quarters. And when you get one car tied up that long, well naturally they're going to be waiting for cabs. Yea, well, the kids themselves, they're calling for rides, they're going to be waiting because you know, if you have five cars out there, you can't dedicate all the cars just to the kids, because you do have other customers.

Have your sons/daughters used the program? How well did it work?

Parent Focus Group

Some parents' teenage children who used the program seemed to like it. For example:

Yea, he told me he liked it. That's what I know of it any ways and I think it's great.

Yea, my son has used it and he thinks it's great

The program is specific in that it is meant to cover the partial cost of a cab for are young person who has been drinking or who is a high risk situation. Respondents said, however, that they were aware of "illegitimate" uses of the program. One parent told how her teenager's friends had used the program to return home from basketball practice. There was no mention of risk or danger.

They know of a, a couple of friends that have used it to get home from the volleyball or basketball game or practice. Yea, they got home from the basketball practice, they didn't say if they had to wait.

Some parents indicated that their teens had not used the program, but that they would not hesitate to use it if, or when, the need arose:

My kids have never used it but I've told them if you're ever in a situation, don't hesitate to, if you can't get a hold of us. But mind you, they know so many parents in the community they'd probably phone each one first any way. So, no, they've never used it but they wouldn't hesitate.

The issue of waiting time arose again. Some parents complained that the wait was too long:

If I can even make a point where there was one kid who was saying that they were waiting and waiting and the cab wasn't coming and it was a friend of a parent. I said "Phone the cab company. See if they had been called out there?" They hadn't been so I said, suggested from them on when you're kid's really to call, come home, you phone the cab company pick you up, them up at that certain time for the P.A.R.T.Y. Ride Home. And they been picked up on time.

Others suggested that they did not mind the longer wait, because the teens could use the extra hour to stay out:

My daughter uses it and her friends use it and its great other than you know, waiting, long waits. Again sometimes you wonder if it's because you know it just means that they can stay out later - and that's a great excuse but anyways. They do use it and it's worked, it's worked great...

My son has used it and he thinks it's just a fabulous program. I asked him just before I came here what they thought of it and your son. They both said "Oh, it's a great program, it's wonderful. She said, it's the waiting you know, but it does give them an opportunity to stay out a little bit longer and blame it on the Ride Home Program. But even if it meant they were an hour late that they got home safe rather than driving with someone who's been drinking. Just because that person will get them home faster doesn't mean they'll get them home safer. I'd just as soon have them wait that extra hour or whatever. And I mean, let's face it, most of our kids have cell phones so if they're going to be late, they can call us and let us know. We don't have to be pacing the floor or whatever, you know

Is the program letting young people off easy for drinking alcohol?

Parent Focus Group

Parents were asked to respond to the question: "Does the Ride Home Program allow teens off easy for drinking alcohol?" The dominant answer was "No." One line of reasoning was that teens will drink anyway and that intention will not change because of the program. The program only provides teens a safe alternative.

I don't think so. They're still going to drink if that's what they want to do. I don't think it lets them off easy. I think it provides a safe alternative to get home. I don't think it motivates them to drink more than they would otherwise. I don't think kids think that far ahead, really. If they're going to drink, they're going to drink.

No, I don't think it's getting them off the hook you know, if they're going to drink and that's what they're setting out to do, that's what they're going to do and yea, this is just a great alternative or a social measure for them to get home.

I don't think it is going to stop them from drinking if you take the program away. I think it's just going to make our streets worse.

One respondent thought that by teens seeking cab rides after drinking alcohol, teens establish a positive pattern of behaviour in their lives.

I think it might be actually teaching them to be a little more responsible in, in taking a cab um, to get home after a party as opposed to planning on driving or just might set that behaviour pattern in place.

I want to add one more piece. My, my oldest is 19 and he, because of the P.A.R.T.Y. Program in grade 9, because of using this particular program has always, now, planned his partying, he does, he does have access to our vehicle when he asks, will not take our vehicle if he plans on drinking on a, on a night when he's going out and he does go out lots of times and doesn't drink, but he plans his drinking and he will not take the car and he will take the cab a, no matter what, home. Like it's that particular behaviour has been set for him and he's using good practices or probably more common sense than his Dad did at that age.

Another perspective on role modeling is the suggestion that the development, implementation and evaluation of the Ride Home Program sends a practical message to the teens that their parents are concerned and that their support of the program is a form of role modeling preferred behaviours. As one mother said:

I think that's a message thing that as adults we're providing for them, is we feel so strongly about it that we're actually going to go and have focus groups and find funding for them because it's so important for us... and this is one way of reinforcing again, modeling messages to our young people that you need to find a safe way home and you shouldn't be getting in a car with someone who's been drinking. We feel so strongly we have this program for you and we're going to stand behind it, so again it's the message, the role modeling, the providing alternatives I think is such a strong message.

Is the program being abused by teenagers and parents?

Community Partner/Participant Interviews

In general, respondents felt that there will always be some abuse of the program, as there always is of social programs. They felt, however, that the possibility of saving someone from harm mitigated possible abuses.

It doesn't matter what kind of program you have there's always some level of abuse. You're going to get 5, 10, 15% that are going to take advantage of the system. I guess if we can prevent one fatality or, or injury, a significant injury, a life altering injury to somebody, then I think it's well worth it.

Taxi drivers noted instances of users abusing the program. They felt that some people had used the program as a regular taxi service rather than limiting their use to instances where they had been drinking or were in a high risk situation.

There's a lot of kids that have part time work are using that P.A.R.T.Y. ride as a ride home from work. Which I don't really agree with because that's not what the program is for.

It's been abused I believe to the, it was put out there to stop the drinking and driving, right now it's being used for people going home from work and this is 19 and 20 year olds too. Pay \$2 and get ride home and a couple of them are out in the country. So I think the hours should be shortened. I think maybe from 10 to 3 am. That's long enough for kids to be out there. They're out any longer than that, then the parents best step in. But it's too long, they don't need that length of time to go out and drink is what I'm saying.

Taxi drivers also felt that parents made demands of them that were questionable and possibly an instance of abusing the program. One questionable expectation is that cab drivers will take teens to a party.

Absolutely. I've had phone calls from irate parents that on one or two occasions we've been told that we didn't pick the, the kid up, in time and during the course of the conversation, found out that the kid was at home and was wanting to go to party and some parents will argue with you that that's our function. We're supposed to take them to the party as well as take them home from the party. Not a lot but some. Um, we get a lot of parents phone, or make comments when they're in the cab a, at other times, that a "Well, my, my kid had to wait for 30 minutes for a taxi and it was cold" and, and, and I don't know what the other drivers but I just ask "Well, do you have a vehicle?" "Yea." "Well, why didn't you go pick him up?" And they "That's your job." So!

Some of the interviewees did not know of any abuse of the program but they expressed hope and trust that it was not being misused. For example:

I don't know. I would hope not. I would think that hopefully they're using it when you know it's an option for them to use it, if they can't get a ride from their parents or somebody else, but I mean I hope they're not abusing it but I don't know.

One participant responded cryptically that the program was worthwhile, regardless of whether the parent was a “full blown idiot.”

Is the P.A.R.T.Y. ride program a good option to have? Even if the parent is a, is a full blown idiot? Absolutely, ha! That may save somebody's life.

From the point of view of another industry official, the abuse is not practiced by teens who have been drinking. Rather, it is used by teens as a routine cheap ride taxi ride.

I don't think it's abused by people who want to drink. I think there are some people abusing it just to get around town where they don't really need the ride home or just, I mean just from what I've heard a few people say that they “Oh, just call the P.A.R.T.Y. Ride Home, they'll get you there, it's a cheap ride.” But I do think that the people who are drinking, I don't think they're abusing it if they're using it.

Parent Focus Group

Some parents believed that teens were abusing the program, but they reasoned that if the program was not available the consequences for teens would be severe. The program is used as a means of transportation for young people. It is not a last resort after all other options have been exhausted.

There are certain kids that, in my opinion, are abusing it. However, if they didn't have a program, would they then be drinking and driving and killing someone? So it's a catch 22. Are they abusing it because they know it's out there? Probably, but what's the alternative. They're using it as a means rather than an alternative figuring “K, I'm going out, I have a ride home for two bucks.” But like that, it, it's a very tricky question. What do you call abuse if it might be saving somebody's life? So, are they using it frequently? Yes. Should they be u/ using it as an alternative? Yes. Are they? Sometimes No, they're using it as a means.

One set of responses focused on the degree to which older people, not necessarily parents, provide liquor to young teens. Respondents felt those who provide liquor to children other than their own should be held criminally accountable.

We all know of parents that are providing alcohol for underage children and we've all talked about how they're starting earlier and earlier, well

how do they get it earlier and earlier. If parents are offering to kids that are underage, and I'm not talking about your personal children, I think that's a different matter. I'm talking about if somebody, your neighbour, or their friends come over and you provide them with alcohol and they're underage, to me it's criminal. Even if they don't drive, there's something wrong with that. You're giving them the message that it's ok to drink underage. Yes they will find a way to, to get alcohol, I agree, but if they're getting it from responsible adults providing it to them, to me it's the message, it's not the action, it's the message that's being passed on wrong and I think that's more of a concern than having a safe alternative for them to get home.

Some parents suggested that teens are using the service to save money.

...She could call a cab and pay regular fair but she doesn't want to because she doesn't want to spend that money. I think it's being abused in that sense.... She could just pay for a cab, we've had some issues with that.

Another set of responses suggested that students used the program not to save money but to avoid being picked up at a party by their parents. Some would consider getting a ride from a parent not to be cool, or they may not want their parents to see them drunk.

I do think that it's being abused in a sense that there are kids taking it to have a pocket full of money and my daughter being one of them and not that she has a pocket full of money, but she has a job and she can certainly pay for a cab or she could call me. I think it's being abused in the sense that she doesn't want her Mom to pick her up at a party cause that's not cool.

One parent described how her son abused the program to sneak to a party without her permission. If the Ride Home Program had not provided him with accessible transportation he may not have attended the party where he drank alcohol.

I just recalled a year ago, my son was probably 15, it was the first time he ever snuck out of the house and snuck back in and when he got caught, because he wasn't real good at sneaking back in, was, I said "How did you get to the party?" and that's how he got to the party. If he wouldn't have had the ride, the P.A.R.T.Y. Program or the ride home, he wouldn't have went to the party. Well, he still, some how the managed if it was another/ he went three doors down and said I live at such and such a place and got a ride to the party. Whereas he wouldn't have been able to get a ride there.

Several parents did not think that there was much abuse of the program by parents because few are aware that it exists. As one parent stated:

I don't think they are because I don't think a lot know about it. More kids know about the program and um, I don't even know if the, some of the parents know if their kids are coming home with a \$2 cab ride or a \$15 cab ride. You what? I was shocked at how many people... never heard of the P.A.R.T.Y. Ride Home Program and I was SHOCKED...

Some parents questioned the term abuse. They felt that if the program was used many times by the same student, but one day saved that student's life, then it should not be considered abuse.

...Abuse, like I said, if one kid uses it 15 times and if that one time a, that kid could have been killed or killed someone else, then it's not abuse.

Other parents talked about their teens not abusing the program. Their sons and daughters only use it when necessary. The term "necessary" was used to indicate times when parents were unable to pick up their teens after they had been drinking alcohol. For example:

Now I can only go my kids and I don't feel that with my children abuse it at all. Um they use it, well he doesn't go out partying all that much so he, he uses it when necessary..., I know about the program and I know that if I'm able to go and get XXX, we live out of town so, I mean a couple of times he's actually used it to come home. But it's only when we couldn't go get him so, I don't feel like we're abusing it.

Is the program is abused by parents?

Community Partner/Participant Interviews

There was a level of agreement among community partners and participants that the program, though beneficial, allows parents to avoid taking responsibility for their children.

I would think there's probably a, some of that thought process out there. You look at some of the adults in the community and how they behave and I would say that's probably a valid point. There's probably some merit there.

A taxi cab representative was adamant that parents no longer take responsibility for their teens. Taxi drivers have taken on this role.

Absolutely. Just what I did just previous that a, the kids have a license now 'Hey they got twelve hours' they can go out and dope it up if they want to a, which I know some of them do, and they can drink and party and kihi

around and they got a way home. Responsibility is not the parents any more. The responsibility would be ours when they phone.

Parent Focus Group

One set of answers suggested that the possibility exists for parents to shirk their responsibility yet still provide their teens with safe transportation.

I think it's in the back of their mind, and I'm that it, it's a, sort of a consolation that yea, I know my kids drinking, so it's ok now for me to offer them alcohol cause they're going to go to a party now and I know they'll get a ride home. I don't know if that's the case, but it does open it up and as a parent we want our kids to be safe. It's possible and, and I mean I hate having to judge on this one because it is sounding judgmental.

Another way parents described shirking responsibility was that the Ride Home Program provided them with a way out. They are assured that their teens will get home safely without having to worry or do much about it – they can just go to bed.

Well I think it definitely gives parents an out you know, like you can you know, "Oh, I know she's going to get home, I'm just going to bed." or you know, and I, I know that there's parents that do that...

How could the Ride Home Program be improved?

Community Partner/Participant Interviews

When community participants were asked to suggest improvements to the program, the issue of actual fare vs. teen payment was discussed. In short, the cost of a cab fare was disproportionate between teens living in and out of town. According to one of the cab drivers, teens living on acreages out of town are heavy users of the program. They take advantage of the \$2.00 cost to cover fares that can easily cost \$56.00. In order to save money, the program personnel may think about restricting the program to in-town teens.

There's a lot of the kids that live out on acreages, and they're the ones that are using the P.A.R.T.Y. ride home weekends because they know it's there and it only costs them \$2 a head. Like last weekend, I had two kids that I picked up on the hill here. By the time I got the second one home it was a 56 dollar cab fare. Well, it would be unfortunate for the kids who live out on the acreages, but maybe it should be limited to in town kids only or something like that - a certain amount of kilometers from the city - from the town. It's not fair to the kids that they should have to wait that hour, hour and a half whatever, but by the same token, like I said, you can't just dedicate all your staff that you have out, just to give these kids a ride home.

Another change suggested by community participants was that the program's hours of operation should be restricted. It was argued that the extended hours of operation give teens the green light to become involved in partying without having to take any responsibility. A comment made by someone from the taxi industry explains this nicely:

It's abused... The hours for the program from six in the evening to six in the morning is a 12 hour period. That's far too long for the Ride Home. It's giving kids a license to go out and say "Hey, we can go out early, we got twelve hours, we can get home at five o'clock in the morning." And my drivers do not know when they pick a kid up, whether they're taking him to the party or not...It's when they get a call maybe one or two o'clock in the morning, take them home that "Oh, oh! I brought this kid here." We don't have any way to monitor this. Plus, I won't, don't want them (cab drivers) involved to that degree because of all the violence that teenagers are doing. I don't want to put them in a spot where they can get hurt. The hours should be shortened. I think that twelve hour stint is telling the kids "Hey let's go out and party." If it was shortened they would know that "Hey, we better not start so early." Or "Hey, we have to be home at three o'clock." Because the cabs quit. It gives them a deadline to get home.

A third suggested improvement is that a monitoring mechanism be devised to help ensure that teens are not driven to a party. The program is only intended to drive teens home after they have consumed alcohol.

The age for use should also be changed. As one of the interviewees suggested it should be reduced from 18 and older to 17 years maximum.

And the age limit should not be, it should be 17 years of age and under. The 18, 19 and 20, there's quit a few of them where we pick up at a bar and take them home. Now because they're up to 20 years of age, they can afford to go to a bar, they can afford to take a cab home and pay their own. This should be for the people that really need it.

Several interviewees suggested that to take care of non-student use of the program, or use by teens that are over the age 17, an identity card could be required.

That's easy. 17 and under, student card, picture ID. Got to show it when you're getting picked. And I, I know that, that everybody's all hung up on this privacy and confidentiality, well, ok. If you want to go into a bar you've got to show ID. If you have a student card with picture ID, I think 80% of your problems are going to disappear.

An entirely different point of view was presented that suggested the Whitecourt Ride Home Program should be expanded throughout the province and that it should try to gather more industry financial support in the future, especially around the Christmas holidays.

I just think it's a good program and I believe Whitecourt's the first one to have started it so I think it would be well worth getting it out all through the province and, and um, having maybe more of the businesses maybe support it or the large industry businesses and stuff, I think that they would, that would be good for them, especially around this time of year too with Christmas and everything, parties and//

A member of the RCMP suggested that s/he would like to see a tracking system in place so that the program personnel can identify multiple users over a period of time. Furthermore, the police should be more informed about the program and be provided program cards with phone numbers that the police can hand out to people. It would provide greater awareness of the program.

I think that there's no tracking system to say that 'hey' that 'this kid' you know is using us to go to all these different places you know, I, one kid could use it every night of the week or every couple of nights, not necessarily in an emergent or because they absolutely need to but because they're using it as a, abuse of it, just as way to get places. And I don't think there's any tracking system for that right now. I would like to see the RCMP given a card with the number on it because some people know the card, some members don't know the card, some members will tell people about it and other won't. So I think it should be a little bit more high visibility than what we're seeing. Although it sounds like the kids know about it. So it's just, it would be nice for us to be able to refer it to have some sort of card to keep track of what the number is.

Parent Focus Group

A key improvement discussed by parents is that young people should be made more aware of how the program operates and how it is funded.

I'd like to see more education a, as what XXX mentioned about you know, um, concerns that cab drivers may have that teens using it should be respectful and appreciative of the program because may/ they don't probably realized where the money is coming from to support this and they need to realize the consequence that the program can be taken away. So that kind of education I think needs to get out there. Now, now that they know it's a great program ok, now if you appreciate it than respect it.

More awareness or education should be offered to parents about the true objective and value of the program.

And for the parents I'd like to see more education for the parents about the program, is for and it's not a cheap alternative, it's an alternative that's for safety.

It would be nice to have more parents aware of it.

*Just educate with them and say how much it does actually cost a month.
Like I didn't even know how much it costs.*

Almost as a continuum, creating greater awareness should be directed to the whole community:

All agree with XXX um, like the kids being educated on where the money is coming from to run this program and on a, just generally educating everyone on the program again so we're all aware of what's going on.

Greater awareness should also include greater appreciation of the businesses that support the program.

And maybe appreciating the community organizations, the businesses that are supporting it, cause I don't know who they are but I'd like to go up to them and say thanks, you know.

Specific recommendations for business appreciation were mentioned.

If the sponsors are comfortable with being um, you know, if they're anonymous that's fine, if they don't mind their name being recognized, then having some teens maybe go up and say "Hey thank! I've used the program!"

If they put up all those posters cause I know they all have those signs with P.A.R.T.Y. Ride Home, maybe if they had the sponsors names on there that they are appreciative of it you know.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

Student Survey

Just over 62% of students who participated in the survey agreed that Whitecourt has a problem with drinking and driving.

Proportionately more in-town students (36.8%) disagreed with the statement that Whitecourt has a problem with drinking and driving than did out of town students (29%). More grade 9 students (71.5%) agreed with the statement than did grade 10 (52.4%), grade 11(61.7%) or grade 12 students (69.9%).

The majority of students (82.6%) definitely agreed or somewhat agreed that teens living in Whitecourt can easily find transportation after they have been drinking alcohol. There was no specification as to what kind of transportation that is.

Of the 364 students who consumed alcohol in the last month and received a ride home, 19% “got a ride with someone else who was at the event and had a vehicle,” 18% walked home, 17.8% used a designated driver and 12% took a taxi with the Whitecourt Ride Home Program. If all of the questionable forms of transportation are combined (“I drove myself home,” “The least drunk person drove me home,” “The person who drove me to the event drove me back,” and “I got a ride with someone else who was at the event and had a vehicle”) it shows that 25.8% of the students who had been drinking in the last month received a ride home by potentially high risk means.

Just over 40% (42.9%) of students know the program pretty well or very well. 39.2% know it a little and 17.6% do not know it at all. Further analysis by grade shows that a higher proportion of grade 12 students know the program (63.0%), than grade 11 students (49.5%), grade 10 students (43.5%) or grade 9 students (27.1%).

There appears to be the perception amongst students that the Ride Home Program makes it easy for teens to drink alcohol. Of the teens that do know the program, 52% thought that the program makes it easier to drink alcohol.

42.0% of the students stated that they had received a ride with the Ride Home Program. The ideal type student who used the Ride Home Program is in grade 10, 15-16 years old attending Hilltop High School. One difference did occur with St. Joseph’s, where the ideal type student who most likely used the program is in grade 11, 16 years old.

The majority of students responding to the survey had never used the Ride Home Program (66.7%). Of those who have, nearly 10% use it ten or more in the last month. More than a third (36.3%) of students used the program for four or more rides in the last month.

The majority of students never used the program for the purpose of safety outside of consuming alcohol. However, six students indicated that they had taken cabs for these reasons 10 or more times in the last month.

36.3% of the students answered “All of the time” or “Some of the time” when they were asked how often they plan on using the program before they go out drinking.

49.1% of the students used a designated driver all of the time or some of the time after they had been drinking alcohol.

The data show that 66% of the students who used taxi cabs through the Whitecourt Ride Home Program were satisfied with the service. Still, one third were dissatisfied – a sizeable minority.

Analysis of Taxi Cab Receipts

The typical user of the Ride Home Program is a 16 to 17 year old male, who spends up to \$8.90 per ride and is a lone passenger.

Personal Interviews and Parent Focus Group

The dominant view among respondents was that teenage drinking and driving is a problem in Whitecourt.

For some parents the issue was clear – parents contribute to the local teenage impaired driving problem.

A common theme was that the problem of teenage impaired driving has been reduced with the introduction of the P.A.R.T.Y. Program generally and the Ride Home Program specifically.

Industry/employer/municipal government/local business involvement in the program includes financial assistance. One reason for their financial support is that they, as employers, recognize that their employees have children who are at risk.

There was little mention of increased funds from present funding partners or other industry/employer/municipal government/local business involvement.

There was a consensus among parents and community respondents that the Ride Home Program meets a community need.

Some community participants answered that although the program has reduced drinking and driving, it has increased drinking alcohol among teens.

Parents fully agreed that the Ride Home Program has reduced drinking and driving among teens in their community.

program strengths mentioned by community participants were the program's personnel, accessibility for students and increased safety for the community.

program strengths mentioned by parents were that it fills the gap of not having public transportation, avoids labeling teens who use it and awareness of the program provided to teens.

Weaknesses mentioned by community people are the timing of taxis to come pick up teens, high age for use, long hours of use, limited finances for the program and overall abuse of the program. Taxi drivers mentioned difficulty in logistics with too many teens needing rides at busy times and not enough vehicles on the road to meet the demand.

Weaknesses mentioned by parents are different forms of program abuse and length of waiting time for taxis.

Parents do not think that the program lets teens off easy for drinking alcohol. The program offers a suitable role model for teens. However, some community people do think that teens are let off easy; in fact it may support maximum drinking without consequences.

It appears that parents do not want their children to take a vehicle to a drinking location. They do not stop them, but they appreciate that their children make a decision, and that decision is to take the Ride Home Program taxi. It appears that although the teens are being responsible, the undertone is that the program subsidizes the decision beforehand, rather than the consequences after the fact.

There was widespread support for the idea that the program is or has the potential to be abused by teens and/or parents unless program administrators make changes. Some parents thought that potential abuse is worth it if lives are saved with the program.

There was some agreement amongst parents and community participants that the program, although beneficial, allows parents to side step responsibility for their children

There was complete consensus amongst parents that the program is a safe valuable program for the community. Common descriptors were “great”, “excellent” and “terrific.”

IMPROVEMENTS

In order to save money, program personnel may think about restricting the program to in-town teens.

The hours of operation should be shortened. The long hours give teens the green light to become heavily involved in partying without having to take any responsibility.

There should be a mechanism in place that assures that teens are not driven to a party. The service is only there to drive them home.

The age for use should be reduced from 18+ to 17 maximum. To help assure that this takes place an identity card should be used.

The Whitecourt Ride Home Program should be expanded throughout the province and that it should try to gather more industry financial support in the future, especially around the Christmas holidays.

A central focus for parents was that young people become more educated on the organizational features of the program, especially that others are funding teen safety.

More awareness or education should be offered to parents about the true objective and value of the program

APPENDICES

- A. Explanation of Study – student survey
- B. Explanation of Study – parent focus group
- C. Explanation of Study – personal interviews
- D. Parent Consent Form – student survey
- E. Consent Form - other
- F. Parent Focus Group Questions
- G. Taxi Driver Interview Questions
- H. Industry/Organizational Partner Interview Questions
- I. Local Business Interview Questions
- J. Emergency Services Interview Questions
- K. Student Survey



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Evaluating The Whitecourt Ride Home Program

Principal Investigator: Dr. Peter Rothe, Assistant Professor,
Alberta Centre for Injury Control & Research,
University of Alberta

What Is This Study About And Why Are You Doing It?

The Whitecourt RIDE HOME program offers local youth access to affordable and safe transportation home. As it has been operating for a little more than a year, the program staff has asked me to do an evaluation of the program.

What Are You Asking Me To Do If I Agree To Be In The Study?

I would like to get your permission to have your son or daughter answer some questions about the program in a short questionnaire. The questionnaire will take approximately 5 minutes to complete. Your child's school has given us permission to have the students fill it out during school time – this will be done at a time that will be the least disruptive to their studies.

Your child is not being singled out for this study. We want to give the questionnaire to all students at your son or daughter's high school. No personal information will be asked on the questionnaire.

Why Should I Be In This Study? What Are The Benefits?

The results from this study will help the Whitecourt RIDE HOME team know how well the program is working and how they can make improvements to the program.

Are There Any Risks Or Can I Get Hurt By Being In The Study?

I cannot think of any risk in taking part in this study. If your son or daughter feels uncomfortable answering any of the questions, they do not have to answer anything they do not want to.

I would like to get your permission to have your son or daughter answer some questions about the program in a short questionnaire. The questionnaire will take approximately 5 minutes to complete. Your child's school has given us permission to have the students fill it out during school time – this will be done at a time that will be the least disruptive to their studies.

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Are There Any Risks Or Can I Get Hurt By Being In The Study?

I cannot think of any risk in taking part in this study. If your son or daughter feels uncomfortable answering any of the questions, they do not have to answer anything they do not want to.

Confidentiality/Privacy

- We will keep your son or daughter's information confidential.
- Their name or any other identifying information will not be attached to the questionnaire. Their name or information that may identify them will never be used in any presentations or publications for the study results.
- The information they provide will be kept for seven years after the study is done and then destroyed in a confidential manner. The information will be kept in a locked filing cabinet, and I will be the only one who will have access to it.
- All information will be kept private except on a rare occasion that professional codes of ethics or the law requires reporting.

What Else Do I Need To Know?

- Your decision to allow your son or daughter to participate in this study is voluntary.

Confidentiality/Privacy

- We will keep your son or daughter's information confidential.

- Their name or any other identifying information will not be attached to the questionnaire. Their name or information that may identify them will never be used in any presentations or publications for the study results.
- The information they provide will be kept for seven years after the study is done and then destroyed in a confidential manner. The information will be kept in a locked filing cabinet, and I will be the only one who will have access to it.
- All information will be kept private except on a rare occasion that professional codes of ethics or the law requires reporting.

What Else Do I Need To Know?

- Your decision to allow your son or daughter to participate in this study is voluntary.
- Your son or daughter can refuse to answer any questions on the questionnaire, and they can stop answering questions on the questionnaire at any time.
- You may also refuse to give permission for your son or daughter to be involved in this study at any time.
- The information collected from the questionnaires will only be used for the Whitecourt RIDE HOME program. The information will not be given to any other person, agency or department.

Who Can I Contact With Questions Or Concerns?

If you have questions, please do not hesitate to call me, Dr. Peter Rothe at (780) 492-7066. If you have concerns about the study, please call the University of Alberta Health Research Ethics Board at (780) 492-0302 (out of town callers can call collect).



Evaluating The Whitecourt Ride Home Program

Principal Investigator: Dr. Peter Rothe, Assistant Professor,
Alberta Centre for Injury Control & Research,
University of Alberta

What Is This Study About And Why Are You Doing It?

The Whitecourt RIDE HOME program offers local youth access to affordable and safe transportation home. As it has been operating for a little more than a year, the program staff has asked me to do an evaluation of the program. I am asking for you to participate because you are a parent of a 15-18-year-old student.

What Are You Asking Me To Do If I Agree To Be In The Study?

You will take part in a discussion with 7 – 9 other parents. The discussion, called a focus group, is meant to last 1 hour. We will talk about the Whitecourt RIDE HOME program. You can answer and discuss these questions with others in the focus groups. The session will be tape-recorded. We will transcribe (write onto paper) the tape recordings and remove any information that could identify you, such as your name. These are standard procedures for focus groups.

Why Should I Be In This Study? What Are The Benefits?

The results from this study will help the Whitecourt RIDE HOME team know how well the program is working and how they can make improvements to the program.

Are There Any Risks Or Can I Get Hurt By Being In The Study?

There is a small chance that someone may guess your name because you are known to think or behave in a certain way. You could also feel uncomfortable answering some of the questions. You do not have to answer any questions you do not feel comfortable answering. If there is something you would not like to be discussed or known, please do not feel any pressure to share it with the group.

Confidentiality/Privacy

- I will keep your information confidential.
- Before the group discussion begins, the researcher will remind the group that what is said needs to remain confidential. However, due to this, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus groups.
- Your name or any other identifying information will not be attached to the information you give. Your name or information that may identify you will also never be used in any presentations or publications for the study results.
- The information you provide (including audiotapes and transcripts) will be kept for seven years after the study is done and then destroyed in a confidential manner. The information will be kept in a locked filing cabinet, and I will be the only one who will have access to it.
- All information will be kept private except when professional codes of ethics or the law requires reporting.

What Else Do I Need To Know?

- Your decision to participate in this study is voluntary.
- You may leave the group at any time.
- You may also refuse to be in this study at any time.
- The information gathered from the focus groups will only be used for the Whitecourt RIDE HOME program. The information will not be given to any other person, agency or department.

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What Is This Study About And Why Are You Doing It?

The Whitecourt RIDE HOME program offers local youth access to affordable and safe transportation home. As it has been operating for a little more than a year, the program staff have asked me to do an evaluation of the program. I am asking you to participate because you have personal involvement with the program.

What Are You Asking Me To Do If I Agree To Be In The Study?

I would like to ask you some questions about your experiences with the program in a one-on-one interview. The interview will take approximately 1 hour to complete. The session will be tape-recorded. We will transcribe (write onto paper) the tape recordings and remove any information that could identify you, such as your name.

Why Should I Be In This Study? What Are The Benefits?

The results from this study will help the Whitecourt RIDE HOME team know how well the program is working and how they can make improvements to the program.

Are There Any Risks Or Can I Get Hurt By Being In The Study?

There is a small chance that someone may guess your name because you are known to think or behave in a certain way. You could also feel uncomfortable answering some of the questions. You do not have to answer any questions you do not feel comfortable answering.

Confidentiality/Privacy

- We will keep your information confidential.
- Your name or any other identifying information will not be attached to the information you give. Your name or information that may identify you will never be used in any presentations or publications for the study results.
- The information you provide will be kept for seven years after the study is done and then destroyed in a confidential manner. The information will be kept in a locked filing cabinet, and I will be the only one who will have access to it.
- All information will be kept private except on a rare occasion that professional codes of ethics or the law requires reporting.

What Else Do I Need To Know?

- Your decision to participate in this study is voluntary.
- You can refuse to answer any questions.
- You may also refuse to be involved in this study at any time.
- The information collected from the questionnaires will only be used for the Whitecourt RIDE HOME program. The information will not be given to any other person, agency or department.

Who Can I Contact With Questions Or Concerns?

If you have questions, please do not hesitate to call me, Dr. Peter Rothe at (780) 492-7066. If you have concerns about the study, please call the University of Alberta Health Research Ethics Board at (780) 492-0302 (out of town callers can call collect).

PARENT CONSENT FORM

PROJECT TITLE: Evaluating The Whitecourt Ride Home Program

**Principal Investigator: Dr. Peter Rothe, Alberta Centre for Injury Control & Research,
University of Alberta. Phone: (780) 492-7066**

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| Do you understand that your child has been asked to be in a research study? | Yes | No |
| Have you read and received a copy of the attached Information Letter? | Yes | No |
| Do you understand the benefits and risks involved in taking part in this research study? | Yes | No |
| Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss the study? | Yes | No |
| Do you understand that you are free to withdraw your child from this study at any time without having to give a reason? Withdrawal or not allowing your child to participate in this study will not impact their academic standing. | Yes | No |
| Has the issue of confidentiality (how your child's information will be kept private) been explained to you? | Yes | No |
| Do you understand who will have access to your child's information? | Yes | No |
| Do you understand that your child is free to refuse to answer any questions asked of him/her? | Yes | No |

Child's Name _____

I agree for my child to take part in this study: Yes No

Signature of Parent of Guardian

Printed name

Date

I believe that the person signing this form understands what is involved in the study and voluntarily agrees to participate.

Signature of Investigator or Designee

Date

PROJECT TITLE: Evaluating The Whitecourt Ride Home Program

**Principal Investigator: Dr. Peter Rothe, Alberta Centre for Injury Control & Research,
University of Alberta. Phone: (780) 492-7066**

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| Do you understand that you have been asked to be in a research study? | Yes | No |
| Have you read and have you received a copy of the attached Information Letter? | Yes | No |
| Do you understand the benefits and risks involved in taking part in this research study? | Yes | No |
| Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss the study? | Yes | No |
| Do you understand that you are free to refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without having to give a reason? | Yes | No |
| Has the issue of confidentiality (how your information will be kept private) been explained to you? | Yes | No |
| Do you understand who will have access to your records/information? | Yes | No |
| Do you understand that you are free to refuse to answer any questions asked of you? | Yes | No |

This study was explained to me by: *Terri Kokotilo, Research Assistant, (780) 492-9222*

I agree to take part in this study: **Yes** **No**

Signature of Participant

Printed name

Date

I believe that the person signing this form understands what is involved in the study and voluntarily agrees to participate.

Signature of Investigator or Designee

Date

Parent Focus Group Questions

Purpose of the Meeting

- To gain parent input on impaired driving in Whitecourt generally and impaired driving with their teenage sons and daughters specifically to help evaluate the community program entitled **the Whitecourt Ride Home Program**.

Questions

- Do you think that teenage drinking and driving is a problem in the Whitecourt community? If yes, why is it a problem? Do parents contribute to the problem?
- What is a parent's role in solving the teenage drinking and driving problem?
- What do you know about the Whitecourt Ride Home Program? **(If no one knows – read the consent form description and explain a little)**
- To what extent is the Ride Home Program a safe alternative of transportation for young people who have been drinking alcohol?
- Do you think the program is abused by teenagers who want to drink? By parents who no longer need to take responsibility for their children's drinking and driving?
- Have your sons/daughters ever used the Ride Home Program? If so, how well did it work? **(Count the yes and nos)**
- Do you think that the Ride Home Program is allowing young people off easy for drinking alcohol?
- Do you think that Ride Home is meeting a community need?
- Do you think that the Ride Home Program has reduced drinking and driving in the community? If yes, what makes you think so? If no, why not?
- What do you think are the strengths of the Ride Home Program?
- What do you think are the weaknesses of the Ride Home Program?
- How can the Ride Home Program be improved?

Taxi Driver Interview Questions

Purpose of the Interviews

- To gain taxi industry input on impaired driving in Whitecourt generally and servicing **Whitecourt Ride Home Program** specifically

Questions

- Is teenage drinking and driving a problem in the Whitecourt community?
- Do you think that the Ride Home is meeting a community need?
- How would you describe your role in the Ride Home Program?
- Is it personally worthwhile for you as a taxi driver to be involved in the Ride Home Program?
- Do you think that the Ride Home Program has reduced drinking and driving in the community? If yes, what makes you think so? If no, why not?
- Do you think the program is abused by teenagers who want to drink? By parents who no longer need to take responsibility for their children's drinking and driving?
- What do you think are the strengths of Ride Home?
- What do you think are the weaknesses of Ride Home?
- How can Ride Home be improved?
- How do you feel giving a ride to a teen who is completely drunk?

Industry/Organizational Partner Interview Questions

Purpose of the Interviews

- To gain local employer and municipal input on impaired driving in Whitecourt generally and the involvement of the **Whitecourt Ride Home Program** in the community specifically

Questions

- Is teenage drinking and driving a problem in the Whitecourt community?
- How are you involved or how do you support the Ride Home Program?
- How did you get involved? Why did you get involved?
- Is it personally worthwhile for you to be involved in the Ride Home Program?
- Do you think that Ride Home has reduced teenage drinking and driving in the community? If yes, what makes you think so? If no, why not?
- Do you think the program is abused by teenagers who want to drink? By parents who no longer need to take responsibility for their children's drinking and driving?
- What do you think are the strengths of the Ride Home Program?
- What do you think are the weaknesses of the Ride Home Program?
- How can the Ride Home Program be improved?
- How prepared are you to increase your involvement/support of the Ride Home Program

Local Business Interview Questions

Purpose of the Interviews

- To gain local industry and business input on impaired driving in Whitecourt generally and potential involvement of the **Whitecourt Ride Home Program** in the community specifically.

Questions

- Is teenage drinking and driving a problem in the Whitecourt community? If yes, why do you think that is so?
- Are you aware of the Ride Home Program? (How much do you know about it?)
- Are you involved in some way with the Ride Home Program?
If yes, how? If no, why not?
- Do you think that businesses like yours share the responsibility to reduce local drinking and driving?
- Do you think that Ride Home has reduced or has the potential to reduce teenage drinking and driving in the community? If yes, what makes you think so? If no, why not?
- Do you think the program like this has the potential to be abused by teenagers who want to drink? By parents who no longer need to take responsibility for their children's drinking and driving?
- What do you think are the strengths of a program like the Ride Home Program?
- What do you think are the weaknesses of a program like the Ride Home Program?
- Would you be prepared to become or increase your involvement/support of the Ride Home Program?

Emergency Services Interview Questions

Purpose of the Interviews

- To gain emergency service input on impaired driving in Whitecourt generally and potential involvement of the **Whitecourt Ride Home Program** in the community specifically.

Questions

- Is teenage drinking and driving a problem in the Whitecourt community?
- How are you involved or how do you support the Ride Home Program?
- How did you get involved?
- Why did you get involved?
- Is it personally worthwhile for you to be involved in the Ride Home Program?
- Do you think that Ride Home has reduced teenage drinking and driving in the community? If yes, what makes you think so? If no, why not?
- Do you think the program is abused by teenagers who want to drink?
- Do you think the program is abused by parents who no longer need to take responsibility for their children's drinking and driving?
- What do you think are the strengths of the Ride Home Program?
- What do you think are the weaknesses of the Ride Home Program?
- How can the Ride Home Program be improved?
- How prepared are you to increase your involvement/support of the Ride Home Program?
- Any additional comments or questions?



WHITECOURT RIDE HOME PROJECT: STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction

The Whitecourt PARTY program committee asked us to do an evaluation for the Whitecourt Ride Home Project. The committee members need information so that they can better address Whitecourt's drinking and driving problem.

The survey only takes about 8 minutes to complete.

(This survey will remain anonymous. Please do not write your name anywhere on the form. You may stop the survey at any time and you don't have to answer any questions you are not comfortable answering.)

Overall

Please check [✓] the answer that best describes you at this time.

In what grade are you? [] 9 [] 10 [] 11 [] 12

How old are you? [] 12 [] 13 [] 14 [] 15 [] 16 [] 17 [] 18
[] Older than 18

Are you? [] Male [] Female

Where do you live? [] In town [] Out of town

General Views about Drinking and Driving

Please tell us the amount you agree or disagree with the next four statements? We would like you to check [✓] whether you, "Definitely Agree," "Somewhat Agree," "Somewhat Disagree," or "Definitely Disagree" with each statement.

1. Teens living in the Whitecourt area can easily find transportation after they had been drinking alcohol.

[] Definitely Agree [] Somewhat Disagree
[] Somewhat Agree [] Definitely Disagree

2. The general feeling in Whitecourt is that it is OK to drink and drive.

[] Definitely Agree [] Somewhat Disagree
[] Somewhat Agree [] Definitely Disagree

3. Whitecourt has a problem with teens drinking and driving.

[] Definitely Agree [] Somewhat Disagree
[] Somewhat Agree [] Definitely Disagree

4. It is dangerous for a **sober teenage** driver to drive drunken passengers.

[] Definitely Agree [] Somewhat Disagree
[] Somewhat Agree [] Definitely Disagree

Views about the Whitecourt Ride Home Program

Put a check [✓] beside the answer that best describes how you feel.

5. How well do you know the Whitecourt Ride Home program?

Very Well Pretty Well A Little Don't Know the Program

6. Do you think that the Whitecourt Ride Home program makes it easier for you to drink alcohol?

Yes No Don't Know the Program

7. Have you ever received a ride with the Ride Home Program?

Yes No

8. Generally speaking how often do you "plan" on using the Whitecourt Ride Home Program before you go out drinking?

All of the time Seldom Never
 Some of the time Occasionally

9. In the last month how many times have you received a ride from the Whitecourt Ride Home Program because you were drunk?

Once Six times More than ten times
 Twice Seven times Never used it
 Three times Eight times
 Four times Nine times
 Five times Ten times

10. In the last month how many times have you received a ride from the Whitecourt Ride Home Program because you were in an unsafe situation that had nothing to do with alcohol?

Once Six times More than ten times
 Twice Seven times Never used it
 Three times Eight times
 Four times Nine times
 Five times Ten times

11. How often do you use a designated driver (e.g., parents or friends) other than the Whitecourt Ride Home Program when you go out drinking?

All of the time Seldom Never
 Some of the time Occasionally

12. Has the Whitecourt Ride Home Program made you more aware about the need for a safe ride after drinking alcohol?

- Yes Definitely Yes Somewhat Yes A Little
 Definitely Not

13. Think about the last time that you used a taxi from the Whitecourt Ride Home Program. How satisfied were you with the service?

- Very satisfied
 Satisfied
 Dissatisfied
 Very dissatisfied

Please explain: _____

14. How did you get home the **last time** you were drinking alcohol? (**Mark only one answer**)

- I don't drink alcohol
 I drove myself home
 I took a cab with the Ride Home Program
 I took a cab without the Ride Home Program
 I phoned someone to pick me up
 A designated driver drove me home
 A least drunk person drove me home
 The person who drove me to the event drove me back
 I walked
 I got a ride with someone else who was at the event and had a vehicle
 Other (Please explain) _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP