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**CONTACT:**

**Lt. Ron White, Chief of Police Services**

**949.635.1819**

**Mark Garcia, Keena•Thomas Communications**

**949.455.4600**

***“Is Your Teen at Risk?”***  
**Community Forum Slated for April 30**

**Rancho Santa Margarita, CA** – Growing up is risky business. All too often newspaper headlines tell of teens whose bodies have been mangled or whose lives have been ended by a few drinks and a short drive in a fast car.

Being a teenager can be difficult. Good kids who are eager to grow up sometimes fall in with the wrong crowd, are confronted with situations they don't know how to handle, or end up in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Parenting a teenager can be equally challenging. When should the answer be yes? When should it be no? And what are the early warning signs that a teen is in trouble and needs help?

Now there is a place where both teens and parents can find answers to their questions. That place is a community forum called “Is Your Teen at Risk?” which will be held on April 30, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., at the Bell Tower Regional Community Center, 22232 El Paseo in Rancho Santa Margarita.

Sponsored by the City of Rancho Santa Margarita, in conjunction with the Orange County Sheriff's Department, California Highway Patrol, Orange County Fire Authority,

Capistrano Unified and Saddleback Valley Unified School Districts, the Bell Tower Foundation and several other community organizations, this event will bring together several invited speakers to talk about the risks teenagers in south Orange County face every day and the programs available to help them deal with specific problems.

The forum will not only address the consequences of bad life choices such as alcohol, illegal drugs and street racing, but also introduce programs to help teens avoid needless risk and become productive adults.

“Every teen in modern-day society is at risk. The challenge we adults face is one of making teens aware of the risks before they make the kinds of bad choices that can ruin their life, or even end it,” said City of Rancho Santa Margarita Mayor Tony Beall. “The ‘Is Your Teen at Risk?’ forum will help parents recognize the signs of trouble at an early stage, when they can avoid a problem or prevent it from becoming more serious, and will make teens and their families aware of the numbers they can call and the services they can use when they do need help.”

Topics include substance abuse, street racing, and much more. Following the presentations, parents and teenagers are encouraged to visit the many community resource booths where information will be available and professionals will be on hand to answer questions.

Among the special guests scheduled to appear are Orange County Sheriff Mike Carona and Orange County Fire Chief Chip Prather.

For more information, call (949) 216-9700 or email [outreach07@cox.net](mailto:outreach07@cox.net).

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