

For 31 years, yes, 31!, Natick has led the way in establishing an exciting, and growing, trend across the region: the After Prom Party (APP). This safe, fun and free event is **open to all** Natick High Juniors and Seniors, **regardless of whether or not they attend the prom**. The APP, held from midnight to 5 am, includes music, dancing, food, activities, games and raffles. Increasingly well-attended, **2018's event drew nearly 600 students** to an inclusive, all-night celebration free of alcohol and drugs including for students who cannot attend prom due to financial affordability issues or social anxiety issues at a couple-centric, formal event. This is especially important given the current opioid epidemic across our state and often hitting home here in Natick.

Broad community support from a wide range of corporate sponsors, retail businesses and civic organizations helped us raise close to \$30,000 last winter/spring, for which we are truly grateful. Other donations came from municipal and religious groups as well as from school and student organizations. This kind of community engagement is one of the things that makes Natick such a great place to work and live. We all understand the dangers and consequences of underage drinking and substance use, and the increasing pressure on young people to participate. Not only does the APP provide a safe, no-cost, inclusive event in a safe, well-chaperoned venue, it also demonstrates firsthand to our students that alcohol or drugs are not required to celebrate and have a good time, instilling lifelong healthy habits and making our community safer.

In 2019, the prom is planned for May 24, with the APP to be held in the early morning hours of May 25. This event is 100% volunteer run. Dozens of volunteers work for 8 months to plan, organize, fundraise, and chaperone this celebration which is free for all students, but costs nearly \$30,000 annually.

Please send donations to Natick APP c/o Natick High School, [15 West St.](#)