

In the Spotlight: SOBER Saturdays

High school senior Ali Stone put together an exceptional alternative for 8-12th graders looking for a weekend activity that does not involve alcohol. Her events, "SOBER Saturday Nights" are all hosted here at KEVA Sports Center and have an exciting variety of sports, music and games.

"I came up with this because I thought everyone would be able to enjoy things at KEVA," said Ali, "At each event we will also have something that isn't sports: Wiis, board games, inflatables..."



"My goal is to spread the message that you really can have fun, have friends, and have things to do while being sober"

*Ali Stone
SOBER Saturday Organizer*

Ali is the president of Jules Group at Middleton High school which serves to spread awareness about drug and alcohol abuse. The group formed five years ago after a student of Middleton High School died of a drug overdose. Ali explained that this had a great impact on her, "I decided I wanted to stay sober after that happened," she said, "I became active in Jules Group as soon as I entered high school."

Jules Group plans sober events on the weekends for Middleton High School students, but Ali found that students of nearby high schools did not offer anything similar. She explained, "I heard from many of my friends who don't go to Middleton that they wish they had events like ours, so I decided to do something open to kids all around the city."

As a result, Ali chose to reach out to all Madison-area teens separate from Jules Group efforts, and created exciting weekend events for all students in 8-12th grade. Ali partnered with KEVA and advertised her Sober Saturday Nights through a "Kick it at KEVA" Facebook group, posters and local newspapers. Each event costs \$5, which includes a variety of activities, and food. The Ballweg Family of Dealerships have

generously sponsored the food for each SOBER Saturday Night at KEVA.

The first event took place on January 9, 2010 and brought in close to 60 teens. The two highlighted activities, badminton and volleyball proved to be a great time. After seeing the result of all her hard work Ali said, "My favorite part of the night was watching all the kids have fun, it made me so happy to see that it was such a success!"

Future SOBER Saturday Nights are planned for March 6, April 3, and April 24 at KEVA Sports Center with more fun, games and surprise celebrity guests! According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 49% of high school students in Wisconsin report having consumed one alcohol drink in the last 30 days. These reports prove how necessary planned sober alternatives are. Thanks to Ali's efforts, teens in the Madison area have exciting events to look forward to once a month, and a great example to follow.

Ali expressed, "My goal is to spread the message that you really can have fun, have friends and have things to do while being sober."

By Samantha Ganz