Time to party – without the booze

Event for women aims to spread message of responsible drinking

BY TAY SUAN CHIANG

A FUN night out with friends need not include getting dead drunk.

This is the “responsible drinking” message four undergraduates of the Nanyang Technological University want to push through at a free-entry, outdoor, alcohol-free party at the youth hangout Scape tonight.

The organisers are targeting the event at women aged 18 to 25, although those of the opposite sex are also welcome.

The organisers hope to attract 800 to 1,000 young women to the event, called Ladies Night Out! 2012.

Ms Angeline Tan, 24, one of the quartet behind the event, said: “Campaigning on responsible drinking usually targets both genders, but we find young women more susceptible to the ill-effects of overdrinking.”

She and three fellow organisers are all final-year students from the NTU’s Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information.

Figures from the National Health Survey 2010 indicate that 12.2 per cent of women here between the ages of 18 and 29 binge-drink.

Binge-drinking is defined as downing four or more alcoholic drinks in one drinking session; for males, five or more drinks in one session qualifies as binge-drinking.

Research has shown that women are more susceptible to overdrinking because they have a smaller body size and lower levels of an enzyme that helps break down alcohol.

They thus get drunk faster.

Women alcoholics suffer brain damage sooner than their male counterparts do.

The organisers said they understand that vehement “Do not drink” messages do not work on young people when they are out at a party.

One of them, Ms Clarice Koh, 24, said: “Instead of hard-selling our cause, we have organised a social event to build a community of responsible drinkers who will be aware of the ill-effects of overdrinking and encourage their friends to keep their alcohol level to a minimum.”

Fellow organiser Denise Kwok, 24, said that holding Ladies Night Out! 2012 at Scape from 6pm to 10pm was a way to show that young people do not need to be in an environment serving alcohol to have fun.

Popular and up-and-coming local bands such as A Vacant Affair, 33A, Zsa & Claire, Shill & Adal with All Of The Above, and Natalie Hong will perform.

There will also be free photo booth sessions and goodie bags containing non-alcoholic drinks to take home.

The $100,000 event has the support of the Health Promotion Board, the Central Singapore Community Development Council Mayor’s Imagine Fund and private companies.

Ms Carina Koh, 23, the fourth organiser, said: “As long as we are with good company and there are great activities such as good music and friends, attending a party without drinking can most definitely be fun.”

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