

Approximately \$24,300.00 each year was spent for 2009 and 2010 to keep 776 seniors and their guest safe in 2009 and 790 in 2010 by entertaining, feeding and helping these students learn to have a great time without drugs or alcohol at EHT's Project Graduation. It is an event that is organized by the Project Graduation Committee of the EHT Home and School Association (HSA), and has been a tradition in Egg Harbor Township since 1994. It takes anywhere from 125 to 150 volunteers the night of and numerous people behind the scenes from the early planning stages in October to the final product on graduation night.

Project Graduation is a supervised, alcohol-free, drug free, all- night celebration that all seniors and their guest are invited to attend. Everyone in attendance experiences the High School (or Fernwood Ave. Middle School if the High School has construction going on) being totally transformed with the theme picked for that year. Big blow-up activities, volley ball or basketball games fill the gyms, carnival games, fortune tellers, crafts, and lots of entertainment.

Food and drinks are available in abundance as we're very aware we are feeding teenagers! Project Graduation is lucky as many of the local restaurants donate or give food at cost, so there's quite a variety to choose from.

\$6008.00 was spent in 2010 on prizes – Seniors had a chance to win gift certificates, TV's, GPS systems, refrigerators, cameras, and the list goes on. It cost \$2500 for T-shirts specially printed with the theme as each senior and their guest received one to take home.

It's hard to picture if you haven't experienced Project Graduation. Check out <http://projectgrad.scottmahrer.com/activities.html> or <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Egg-Harbor-Township-High-School-Project-Graduation/336910542963?v=wall> to see for yourself.

Why share all these facts and figures? Money is raised for Project Graduation through a raffle being held right now. First prize is \$5000.00, Second prize \$3000.00 and third prize is \$2000.00. Only 200 tickets are sold, making the odds 3 in 200! Each ticket is \$100.00 which is a bit pricey in today's economy but consider splitting a ticket with 4, 5, or 10 friends, family or co-workers. Receiving \$1250 for contributing \$25 is great return on your dollar and the original \$25 is tax deductible!

Last year, when discussing what Project Graduation meant with my son and some friends, they summed it up by saying your senior year is so much pressure – got to apply to colleges, wait to find out if you got into college, figure out what you're going to major in, make the grades, and get to graduation night in spite of senioritis. Suddenly it's all over and you have all this energy. It's great to have a place to go to just to cut loose playing all sorts of games and being left with the memories of seeing all your classmates smiling, laughing and just having a great time.

If you want to keep EHT graduating seniors and their guest safe by continuing this tradition, contact me at SRfromEHT@aol.com, or home 653-2009 to purchase a ticket or volunteer to help. What would happen to Project Graduation if everyone leaves it up to someone else and no one does anything? Please do your part today.