

Letter to Editor,

**Let's keep the conversation going...**

Talia Mollet's article *Talking to kids about alcohol – it's crucial*, covered some good ideas for how informed parents can help change the status quo where underage drinking is concerned. However, research over the past two decades demonstrates that enforcement and policy reforms are most effective for reducing underage drinking. Such environmental prevention strategies are vital and complimentary to education.

Stopping adults from providing alcohol to minors is up to adults. I hope no one thinks we can change that behavior by talking to our kids. Let's get more adults talking with each other and having conversations about their beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors regarding mixing alcohol and kids. And, don't forget how important reporting illegal alcohol provisions (commercial or social) to law enforcement can be. Parents and adults need to know the law and share in the responsibility for enforcing it!

In our recent survey of Cobb citizens, 93 percent of respondents agreed that laws prohibiting adults from providing alcohol to minors should be strictly enforced, yet when asked if consequences for adults who provide alcohol to minors are weak and inconsistent, 28 percent answered "don't know" and 59 percent agreed. Consequences can not be strictly and consistently enforced if they are not reported to the proper authority. Does under reporting contribute to Cobb's underage drinking problems? Yes. Strengthening and consistently enforcing consequences allowed by law is worthy of additional conversation, and considering effective new policies is another.

Cobb Alcohol Taskforce hopes the MDJ will help to further these conversations. We are an alliance of individuals and organizations which mobilizes and challenges Cobb County adults to reduce underage drinking and youth binge drinking, by advancing strategic enforcement, policy and education goals. For more information visit the website at [www.cobbat.org](http://www.cobbat.org) or call 404-791-7406.

Regards,

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