

Police and prosecutors can help Cobb adults and youth learn important lessons!

When will we all learn it's not cool to let teens drink alcohol, and understand that alcohol causes more harm to teens than all illegal drugs, combined? Kim Isaza's 2/13/10 article *Cobb Police bust teen drinking party*...highlights the fact that some adults in our community persist in holding onto a variety of mistaken beliefs about underage drinking. The first is that drinking is a rite of passage to adulthood. Another is that teens will drink alcohol and there's nothing that adults can do about it. Many adults who subscribe to these attitudes and beliefs, do the youth of our community a disservice by enabling them to engage in behaviors that are detrimental to their own health and safety, as well as putting all citizen's safety and quality of life at risk.

This story just scratches the surface of the issue, and calls attention to an all too common reality in Cobb County. According to the 2008 Georgia Student Health Survey, Cobb students binge drink at a friend's house on the weekend more than other students in the state. We all need to support enforcement efforts and implement new policies here in Cobb if we want to change the current norm. I applaud law enforcement for enforcing the law equally without prejudice or favoritism. I hope the special prosecutor appointed to this case will conduct a thorough review of the investigation and will move to hold accountable, equally and without prejudice, any adults who furnished alcohol illegally and any youths who possessed or consumed alcohol illegally – no matter who they are.

In the future, if social host ordinances were adopted by local governments, when police discover an underage drinking party - they could issue a citation to any host who permits underage drinking on his/her property, allowing public safety agencies to recover response costs from the offender, and imposing escalating fines for repeat offenders. A ripe idea for Cobb County – are we ready yet?

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