

Rural Enforcing Underage Drinking Laws (REUDL): Challenges and Successes in a Rural Setting

Presented by

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and

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Manager**

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Sebastopol CA

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- ↪ Number of alcohol outlets (n= 82)
- ↪ In the third year of its REUDL program

Rural Communities

Rural communities present a unique and sometimes challenging setting to conduct an environmental prevention program.

Unique Opportunities

- A small community lends itself to close working relationships; implications for coalition partners

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- A small community lends itself to close working relationships; implications for coalition partners
- Building and maintaining relationships with individuals who are still able to support the work of the coalition

Coalition Partnership

- Sebastopol Police Department
- West Sonoma County Union High School District
- Department of Health Services
- ABC
- Juvenile Court Services
- WCCS

Initial Challenge

Fundamental shift in perspective: “individual”
to “environmental prevention”

- **Overcoming resistance to new approaches**

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- Suspend judgment to grasp the environmental approach
- Develop a willingness to see familiar people in a new role

Pacing

Too often community members want to “do” something, and struggle with what seems like inactivity, as the program unfolds with seemingly slow-moving strategic components.

Strategic Plan

The coalition understood the value of:

→ **Coalition development**

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- Work plan (data driven)
- Considering how success is measured

Coalition Development

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- Recognized the need to expand our knowledge of environmental prevention
- Utilized available community resources
- Worked together to gain an understanding of our own community norms and practices that supported and prevented underage drinking

Community Assessment

We took 6 months to complete our initial community assessment knowing that our work plan and future policy development required a comprehensive community assessment.

Community Assessment

1) Law Enforcement

- **Police and Sheriff (alcohol related arrests; calls for service re: nuisance, DUI; alcohol related traffic accidents; shoulder-taps)**

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- **Police and Sheriff (alcohol related arrests; calls for service re: nuisance, DUI; alcohol related traffic accidents; shoulder- taps)**
- **Challenges to enforcing existing laws as perceived by officers**
- **ABC (number of licensed outlets/alcohol violations/license suspensions/problem outlets)**

Community Assessment

2) **Health and safety**

- **Hospital records re: alcohol related injuries and fatalities**

Community Assessment

2) Health and safety

- Hospital records re: alcohol related injuries and fatalities
- Merchant Surveys/Risk Assessments of off-sale outlets
- Interviews with store managers

Community assessment

3) Education and Related Problems

- **CHKS (5th, 7th, 9th, 11th grade)**

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- **Student Surveys (9th and 11th grade)**
- **Student focus groups**
- **School policy on AOD**
- **Interviews with school personnel**

Community Assessment continued...

4) **Public Policy**

- **What state, county, and local laws currently exist?**
- **How do members of the City Council view underage drinking?**

Community Assessment continued...

5) **Media**

- **What gets reported and how often are alcohol related incidents in the media?**

Community Assessment continued...

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- **What gets reported and how often are alcohol related incidents in the media?**
- **How are incidents related to underage drinking framed in the media?**
- **How is the media contributing to underage drinking in our community (e.g. sponsorship)**

Community Assessment continued

6) **Adult Perceptions/Norms**

- **Key informant interviews and survey (police, sheriff, health and mental health care providers, school personnel)**
- **Parent surveys**

Community Assessment continued

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Community Assessment continued

7) Youth Perceptions/Norms

- **Student focus groups**
- **Student surveys (9th and 11th grade)**

Accessing Community Resources

- Sonoma County Department of Health Services, Dept. of Prevention and Planning engaged in a county-wide AOD assessment and utilized our data.
- In turn, we were offered outside consultant from OJJDP to complete our data analysis.

Data Analysis

Together the data sources provided an informed basis for further investigation and strategizing of prevention policies.

Commitment to positive working relationships and mutual support

Coalition members recognized the need for positive working relationships between:

- ⇒ **Law enforcement and the broader community**
- ⇒ **School representatives to support parent involvement in multi-year efforts and goals**
- ⇒ **ABC and the coalition**

Key Factors for REUDL Success

- **Selection of coalition members**
- **Positive working relationships with people across disciplines**
- **Commitment to a comprehensive community assessment**
- **Capacity for patience and flexibility**
- **Shared values**

Key Factors for REUDL Success (continued)

- **Courage to challenge community norms publicly and privately**
- **Ability to leverage additional resources to implement a more comprehensive approach**
- **Consistent and ongoing law enforcement operations**
- **Strategic use of the media**

SONOMA WEST TIMES & NEWS

A8 October 11, 2007

NEWS

Sonoma West Times & News

Coalition targets teen drinking prevention, seeks pledges

Pledge letters being sent to high school parents

by George Snyder
Sonoma West Staff Writer

SEBASTOPOL — Anti teenage drinking pledge letters are on their way to West Sonoma Union County High School District parents asking them to promise to keep alcohol and other drugs from youths during events in their homes and on their property.

The letter, signed by district superintendent Keller McDonald, is part of an effort by the West County Coalition to Prevent Underage Drinking to keep kids off the bottle, drugs and out of trouble.

"The concentration here is

to prevent underage drinking and decreasing youth access and consumption," said Diane Davis, program manager at West County Community Services, one of the coalition members. "If we make it hard for youths to get alcohol, then underage drinking goes down."

Other coalition partners include the Sonoma County Department of Health Services, the Sebastopol Police Department, the state department of Alcohol Beverage Control, the Sonoma County Sheriff's office and Sonoma County Juvenile Court.

Although the 3-year effort to cut underage drinking, funded with federal money through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency

Prevention, has been around for nearly two years, up until now the emphasis has been on catching illegal alcohol sales to minors.

The letter, and a push to hold adults more accountable for underage drinking at home is a new wrinkle in the effort, which is aimed at prevention primarily through all access, including the home.

"The coalition is providing a lot of resources," said Alfano, adding that even if the letters only come back sporadically, the fact that parents are getting them should them more aware of the problem.

"Superintendent Keller said that even if the parents don't sign and mail back the pledge, at least they will know in the back of their minds that there is a problem."

He added that cities including Petaluma and Rohnert Park "have also been locking at a social host ordinance that would hold people more accountable for providing alcohol to kids."

"Right now in Sebastopol," he added, "the ordinance basically deals with nuisance situations. If a party is noisy the police just come to ask people to tone it down then leave. A social ordinance would have more teeth in it, possibly with fines or civil liability."

"Especially," he said, "if the hosts of a party have to pay, for example each time police have to come, it will act as a deterrent to the social access for minors and alcohol which will help efforts against commercial access."

The key word in all of this

is deterrence, according to Davis.

"We did a community assessment of the cultural norms around alcohol in the district," she said. "It was a random survey and had a pretty good return of about a third of those contacted. We found from parents that alcohol is easily accessible in their own homes either because of stealing, siblings or parties."

Both of them said research has shown that trying to educate youngsters about the dangers of underage drinking is not particularly effective.

"We need to look at the environment and policies in the community and have a switch in focus to prevention, the effort needs to be stepped up a notch to address the broad range of access to alco-

hol by youngsters," said Davis.

Sebastopol Police Chief Jeff Weaver said his department has been working with West County Community Services for nearly two years now on federal grant money targeting underage alcohol access.

"Thus far," he said, "the grant has paid for Sgt. Ken Troutfetter, Officer James Conner and I to attend training in Baltimore, in 2006, and Orlando, Florida, this year on enforcement of underage drinking laws and enactment of Social Host and Deemed Approved ordinances."

Weaver said locally the grant has paid for Shoulder Tap operations, Minor Decoy operations, DUI patrols, and

hol by youngsters," said Davis.

[Pledge] continues on page A9

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bicycle patrol around Analy High School and Laguna High School during after school hours.

He said that in the next month or so, "WCCS and I intend to bring a Social Host ordinance before the Sebastopol City Council, holding adults responsible for hosting events where minors consume alcohol."

Weaver said the WCCS youth/alcohol poll included a review of the California Health Kids Survey, a supplemental survey questionnaire, and focus groups held at local schools.

The survey, he said, came up with the following:

The percentage of 9th and 11th graders in the West Sonoma County High School District reporting alcohol use in the previous 30 days increased between 2001 and 2005, with the 2005 numbers passing the state averages.

He said 37 percent of 9th graders reported drinking in the last 30 days. Local youths identified the ages 12 to 15 as when they first consumed a full drink of alcohol.

Those who acknowledged drinking, he said, reported frequent negative or risky behavior, including, getting drunk or sick, driving under

the influence, having problems in school or at home.

"It is my hope," said Weaver, "that we address the problems associated with

[Women] from page A1

of so many women involved in such momentous events was an awakening. Women had a long proud history which had been indivisible in my schooling," said Ruthsdotter.

It was at that point that Ruthsdotter became committed to bringing women's history into public consciousness.

Ruthsdotter co-founded the National Women's History

Project (NWHP) in 1980. As projects director Ruthsdotter gained funding for materials and worked with students, teachers, librarians, parents, workplace organizers and the media. She produced curriculum units, organizing guides, teacher training sessions and videos on US women's history. She wrote press releases and made packets for radio, television, magazines and newspa-

per. underage alcohol consumption three ways. Those additional education in the school, in the community, and among alcohol retailers with additional enforcement including

Shoulder Tap operations, minor decoy operations and compliance with local ordinances as well a Social Host

It was the production and distribution of information, made possible by the ability to work together, regardless of differences, which gave the Women's Movement life, SSU students have discovered in the latest work for the project. If this work continues, women will have a voice, and their contributions to society will serve as models for future generations, she added.

Ordinance and a Deemed Approved ordinance."

*Comments: email
george@sonomawest.com*

"We asked the students several different forums, what they thought was the biggest benefit to them. They universally said that the project made history real to them. They enjoyed talking with the women, hearing their stories, and learning about the things these women did that changed the world the students live in," said Jolly.

SONOMA WEST TIMES & NEWS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

OPINION

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Coastal cash needed

EDITOR: As a West County resident and Palm Drive Hospital "meeting watcher," I am dismayed by the lack of representation both physical and financial from the Sonoma Coast population.

Unless I am mistaken, only a few of them can afford to charter a private helicopter or ambulance. Lest we forget, Palm Drive is the closest emergency room in our part of the county between Bodega Bay and Santa Rosa.

The Golden Hour still has only 60 minutes, and the 10 miles between Sebastopol and Santa Rosa takes a big chunk out of that time.

I am well aware of Palm Drive's financial problems, and it's about time our coastal cousins kicked in some cash.

John A. McDonald
Sebastopol

and applaud the 11 ABC licensed establishments that participated in the past two LEAD trainings hosted by the coalition totaling 20 individuals.

These included: Andy's Produce, Casino Bar, Fast & Easy Mart, Martha's Old Mexico, Old Main Street Saloon, Round Table Pizza, Russian River Pub, Sequoia Market, Sushi Hanna, Underwood and Willow Wood.

Jeff Weaver,
Sebastopol Police Chief
Diane Davis, Program Manager, West
County Community Services

Anti-teen drinking efforts

EDITOR: The West County Coalition to Prevent Underage Drinking recently hosted a prevention and education program for retail alcohol licensees and their employees at the Sebastopol Police Department. Jeff Weaver, Sebastopol Chief of Police, sent letters to over 100 licensees in the Sebastopol, Graton and Forestville area inviting owners, managers and employees to attend Licensee Education on Alcohol and Drugs (LEAD) training.

This training was provided by an investigator with Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC), Chief Weaver and Diane Davis, Program Manager at West County Community Services and Coordinator of the West County Coalition to Prevent Underage Drinking, provided information on their collaborative project aimed at reducing underage commercial and social access of alcohol through implementation of local policy and other strategies.

This local federally funded grant project seeks to change community attitudes and practices that currently support underage drinking.

The serving and selling practices in commercial establishments contribute to a community's alcohol environment that directly impacts the health and safety of employees, patrons and the community at large. The West County Coalition to Prevent Underage Drinking has been tracking violations for "sales to minors" in both off-sale and on-sale licensed establishments in West County for the past year. In January and February 2008, for example, two minor decoy sting operations conducted by ABC in the West County cited nine out of 27 outlets for selling to minors.

These violations took place in both on-sale and off-sale outlets and indicates the need for a commitment by licensees and managers to develop and enforce their own house policies that promote compliance with State and local laws and that promote responsible sales and service of alcohol.

Participation in LEAD or other responsible beverage service training provides owners, employees and applicants with information on State laws regulating sales and service of alcohol and practical information on serving alcoholic beverages safely, responsibly, and legally, in addition to strategies to prevent illicit drug activity at the licensed establishment.

Emphasis is placed on refusing service to underage and intoxicated patrons as the norm, checking age identification, recognizing false or altered identification, appropriately refusing sales, and handling difficult situations that commonly arise.

The West County Coalition to Prevent Underage Drinking would like to recognize

Sustainability

Coalition's commitment to creating lasting change beyond the funding period:

→ **Using ordinances**

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Sustainability

Coalition's commitment to creating lasting change beyond the funding period:

- **Using ordinances**
- **Strategic use of the media**
- **Use of additional grant funds to support a comprehensive approach to address underage drinking**