

Booze-party sentence
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A Little Ferry woman was sentenced Friday to three years' probation for allowing underage teens to drink and smoke at her daughter's 16th birthday party, where another girl was sexually assaulted.

"Nobody has to be dragged through this anymore," a tearful Kerry Green told a judge at her sentencing in Superior Court in Hackensack. "I am ready to take whatever you decide to impose."

Green was also ordered to perform 90 days of community service and undergo substance-abuse evaluation. The sentence was imposed despite vigorous arguments by prosecutors that Green must serve at least six months in jail.

"This is a reasonable request that public policy is demanding," Assistant Bergen County Prosecutor David Calviello said. "This is the perfect case to send a message. Parents need to know that when you do this, you go to jail."

Prosecutors say Green threw a party for her daughter at her apartment and later drove some of them to a liquor store, where she bought alcohol and cigarettes. Several teens who attended the party were drunk in Green's presence, they said.

A 21-year-old man, Sonny DeCastro, later showed up at the party and had sex with a 15-year-old girl, they said.

DeCastro, who pleaded guilty to sexual assault, was sentenced Friday in another courtroom to three years in prison as family members watched in tears.

"This will never happen again," DeCastro said. "I am sorry."

DeCastro must also register as a sex offender under Megan's Law and will be subject to lifelong parole. As a Colombian national and non-citizen, he could face deportation upon his release.

DeCastro could have received a much stiffer sentence had he been convicted in a trial. He was offered a deal with a lesser sentence because he cooperated with authorities and helped solve the case against Green, Superior Court Judge Patrick Roma said.

Roma also rebuked Green for serving alcohol to teens at the party.

"You can't even call it a party," he said. "It was a night of tragedy."

At Green's sentencing, Calviello argued that Green was beyond reckless when she served alcohol to children at a time when communities throughout the country are tightening laws against underage drinking.

"How many more children have to die?" Calviello said, citing underage-drinking cases that led to fatal drunken-driving incidents.

He said Green should at least be placed on house arrest if the judge did not impose a jail term.

Superior Court Judge Harry G. Carroll, however, said Green was a first-time offender who was likely to respond well to probation.

Green's attorney, Frank Lucianna, said his client "has gone through hell," mostly because prosecutors tried to make an example out of her case.

"This whole case is not even a criminal case," Lucianna said. "It's just a case of poor judgment."

Green's teenage daughter wept in the back of the courtroom and left in tears as Calviello began arguing for a jail term.

Green's mother, Pat O'Brien, said Green was very remorseful and tried to apologize many times to the family of the girl who was sexually assaulted.