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Marin IJ Readers' Forum for July 18

Curb alcohol if you care about youth

The recent article on the state of alcohol use in Marin County is eye-opening and startling. It is time to put policies, behaviors and attention on this issue throughout our county for both youth and adults.

Youth are influenced by adults and what they experience.

Youth in Marin grow up watching adults consume alcohol in a variety of settings including youth-focused sports events and celebrations, birthday parties, homecoming and graduation parties. These events are primarily about the youth but parents turn it into a party for them. It is no wonder our kids grow up wanting to drink.

When they reach their teen years they are wired to take risks and try on adult behavior. There are many solutions and suggestions to changing our culture.

The article points to some great ideas focused on retail responsibility.

Parents can help. Modeling healthy behavior and showing you can have fun while not drinking is one way.

Being engaged with your teen, setting appropriate boundaries, guidelines and consequences around alcohol, not permitting consumption in your home and talking to your teen about the negative impact of underage consumption are just a few suggestions.

Protecting our youth is important and parents are still the number one influence on their kids in high school.

I applaud the information in the article presented by Alcohol Justice. Limit access to alcohol in both retail and social settings by making it difficult for them to acquire.

Retail establishments can put in barriers to shoplifting, ban the sale of youth-focused "alcopops" and parents can lock up alcohol.

Let's work together to protect our youth and allow them to reach their full potential.

— Linda Henn, Kentfield, Program Coordinator, Twin Cities Coalition for Healthy Youth