

It's easy to get alcohol

One of the region's top contributing factors around underage drinking is the ease in which underage youth can access alcohol. According to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, almost 70% of area youth report alcohol as "sort of" or "very easy" to obtain. Though this number may seem shocking to some, we merely need to look at our culture and attitudes around drinking to see why this statistic, though alarming, should not be a surprise.

Though the purchase of alcohol through the use of fake ID's has not completely gone away, it is a very rare occurrence thanks to strict laws, educated store owners, and the diligence of our law enforcement to routinely conduct compliance checks. In fact, our region, and the state of NH, have some of the highest compliance rates in the nation around not selling alcohol to minors.

So where are youth getting alcohol? The answer is simple. Youth get alcohol from their own homes and from other siblings and friends. Most parents would never think of promoting the use of alcohol in their own home, however, ask your child if he/she knows where the alcohol is within the house and most likely, the answer is yes.

If you're a parent, know how much alcohol you have in the house and if you're leaving for a trip or vacation, get rid of the alcohol. Also, talk to your older sons/daughters about the dangers and potential legal ramifications of providing alcohol to their younger siblings.

In an effort to educate adults in the community on the ease in which youth obtain alcohol, Makin' It Happen has embarked on a Social Access campaign. One component of the campaign is creation of billboard messages that will display messages and graphics around youth access to alcohol.

The billboards will be on display from early June through September on Queen City Ave. So should you find yourself driving down that busy stretch of road, please take a look at our billboards. Should your child(ren) be in the car with you, I hope the ads will spark a meaningful conversation between around alcohol.

For more information on statewide drug and alcohol data, please visit our website at www.makinithappen.org

Sincerely,
Kelley Hobbs
Executive Director
Makin' It Happen, Manchester