

Shocking responsibility: Keeping alcohol out of the hands of youth

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Kenyon-Wanamingo High School junior Brianna Miller, 17, puts underage drinking awareness stickers on product at the Kenyon Municipal Liquor Store. (Corey Butler Jr./Kenyon Leader)

Ana Guerrero doesn't want to see her peers make the same mistakes other teenagers have made.

The Goodhue County Chemical Health Initiative reports that alcohol is pretty easy for minors to get.

According to a study released last week, the group says alcohol abuse by minors is an issue because it's perceived as a social norm, a right of passage or as a temporary escape.

No reason is acceptable, says Guerrero.

On Friday, Guerrero, 17, was joined by fellow Kenyon-Wanamingo High School junior Brianna Miller in tagging several of the alcoholic products at the Kenyon Municipal Liquor Store.

The two marked cases of beers, bottles of vodka and six-packs of malt liquor with red stickers imploring buyers not to give alcohol to minors.

The red stickers shone brightly on the Bud Light blue packaging, making it hard to miss.

"It's good to make a difference," said Miller, a member of the school's Students Against Drunk Driving.

SADD had members doing the same in Wanamingo liquor stores.

The sticker placement is part of Project Sticker Shock, a warning to those considering providing alcohol to minors.

Detailed on the sticker are the ramifications of being caught: Fines up to \$2,500, one year in jail and a loss of a driver's license for up to one year.

Without a source, minors can't get alcohol, advocates say.

The program carries more importance as it comes on the heels of several Minnesota teenager deaths last month in car wrecks connected to alcohol.

An HCI survey of more than 300 Goodhue County adults show they think nearly 69 percent of youth have a moderate or severe problem with alcohol use.

Of those asked, 8 percent said youth who experiment with alcohol or drugs "almost always grow out of it" and 14.3 percent said drinking among teenagers in their community is acceptable.