

Keep parties safe, legal when honoring graduates

By Karen Merryman
Regional Prevention Center

As the school year winds down, graduation is rapidly approaching. A traditional part of this event is the after-graduation celebration.

Sadly, every year some parents who hold these parties choose to serve beer or other alcoholic beverages to guests, including minors. Some feel these events are a rite of passage and no harm can take place as long as they are monitoring the event. Each year teens die from alcohol poisoning, vehicle crashes and other untimely deaths due to alcohol consumption.

Much of the problem is due to misinformation about alcohol and its effect on the teenage brain and body. Teenagers, unlike adults, have a much higher risk when drinking alcohol. The teenage brain is not fully developed and is vulnerable to poor decision making.

Research shows that the longer a young person delays using alcohol the less likely he or she is to become alcohol dependent. The risk for alcohol dependency decreases by 14 percent with each year drinking is delayed after the age of 15. It is estimated that 3 million U.S. teens between ages 14 and 17 are alcoholics. Another 1.5 million are problem drinkers.

Many adults have adopted the philosophy that they drank as teenagers and they survived. The U.S. Surgeon General reports that life expectancy has improved in the U.S. over the past 75 years for every age group except one. The death rate for 15 to 24

year olds is higher today than it was 20 years ago. The leading cause of death is driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

When a parent or adult family member encourages a teen to drink, they are inviting them into a world of alcohol abuse and destructive lifestyle choices. Underage drinking is a contributing factor to teen pregnancy, academic failure, vehicle crashes, death, depression and other mental illnesses.

Research shows youth who drink alcohol are 50 times more likely to use cocaine and 7.5 times more likely to use any illicit drug than young people that never drink alcohol.

Adults who hold alcohol parties are also breaking the law. Adults who are hosts for underage drinking are subject to fines of up to \$2500 and up to one year in jail. They are also subject to civil prosecution by family members of any minor injured or killed as a result of alcohol consumption.

Most parents responsibly plan graduation parties with age-appropriate activities. There are many alternatives available for a fun and safe celebration without the use of alcohol. Alcohol-free cocktail mixes are available at most stores. The Internet has many alcohol-free party ideas, including drink recipes.

For information on ideas for alcohol-free parties contact the Northwest Kansas Regional Prevention Center at (785) 460-8177.

Parents have a great deal of influence on their teens. By demonstrating that alcohol is not necessary to have a good time, parents encourage young people to choose a healthier lifestyle.



SHANDA MATTIX/Colby Community College

Colby Community College equestrian team member Faye Miller competed at Zone competition. Coach Shanda Mattix and members of the equestrian team will be teaching the Horsemanship Camps scheduled in June at the college farm.

On the Beat

COLBY POLICE Thursday

- 12:31 a.m. – Report filed for incident of narcotics violation.
- 1:08 a.m. – Security check at Twister's.
- 2:15 a.m. – Officer reported someone laying in the middle of the 100 block of W. Fourth with other subjects attending to him. Everything OK, those subjects will take care of it.
- 3:16 a.m. – Caller reported fireworks going off in the northeast corner of town. Unable to locate anything.
- 12:16 p.m. – Criminal damage to door. Report filed.
- 12:49 p.m. – Caller reported pickup parked in handicapped

stall. Written warning issued.

- 3:39 p.m. – Subject came to law Enforcement Center to report someone missing. Subject located, everything OK.
- 4:55 p.m. – Caller reported two motorcycles eastbound on Fourth St. traveling at a high rate of speed. Subject was cited for no motorcycle endorsement.
- 6:34 p.m. – Provided motorists with directions to the Catholic Church.
- 6:49 p.m. – Unattended death: caller requested welfare check of subject. Report filed.
- 6:57 p.m. – Items in roadway removed.
- 9:44 p.m. – Security check at Colby Community College.

THOMAS COUNTY SHERIFF Thursday

- 12:41 a.m. – Report filed for narcotics violation incident in Colby.
- 11:49 a.m. – Report of lost handicapped placard for vehicle. Report filed.
- 2:38 p.m. – Released Travis James Graves.
- 5:17 p.m. – Caller reported two male subjects carrying a barbecue across reporting party's back yard. Spoke with subject.
- 5:21 p.m. – Violation of protection from abuse order report filed on Travis Graves.
- 8:51 p.m. – Booked Graves.

Funds limited for biomass crop assistance

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Biomass Crop Assistance Program will be limited to \$112 million for the current fiscal year.

The program supports agricultural and forest land owners and operators two ways, said Adrian J. Polansky, Kansas state executive director of the Farm Service Agency.

The first uses an approved project area to support production of energy crop feedstock. Sponsors must submit proposals to Rod Winkler of the Farm Service Agency, 3600 Anderson Ave., Manhattan, Kan., 66503, phone (785) 564-4769, by Friday, May 27.

These participants may qualify for assistance un-

der a contract agreement with the federal Commodity Credit Corp. Through this agreement, money is provided to establish a crop and for annual contract payments.

The second process involves matching payments for collection, harvest, storage and transportation of biomass to a biomass conversion facility. Currently, only herbaceous species are eligible, Polansky said.

"Both matching payments and annual payments will be affected by the reduction in program funding," said Polansky. "At this time, matching payments for woody biomass have not been authorized."

Horsemanship camps have openings

Colby Community College Equestrian Coach Shanda Mattix says a few openings remain in the Horsemanship Camps scheduled in June.

The Beginner Day Camp will be Thursday, June 9. The camp for more experienced riders will be Sunday through Wednesday, June 5 to 8.

Riders will stay in the college residence halls and evening activities will be included.

This is an opportunity to learn from one of the leading experts in equestrian riding skills.

For information, contact Mattix at (785) 460-5464.

New cardiac catheterization technique at Hays

HaysMed DeBakey Heart Institute is leading the way with an innovation that uses a small hole near the wrist to make a common, but often urgent, cardiac catheterization procedure easier for many patients.

Dr. Richard Markiewicz, interventional cardiologist at the institute, offers this cardiac catheterization technique that uses the patient's wrist to access blood vessels leading to the heart. Radial access catheterization is widely used in Europe and Japan but is only offered at select hospitals in the United States.

There are about 1.2 million car-

diac catheterizations done in the U.S. each year. Cardiac catheterization is used to diagnose and treat certain heart conditions utilizing a thin plastic tube (known as a catheter) that is inserted into an artery or vein and from there into the chambers of the heart or the coronary arteries.

Traditionally the catheter is inserted through the patient's groin area, but Markiewicz says that cardiac catheterization through the wrist can be better for some patients by reducing the risk of post-surgery bleeding and increasing patient comfort. Most patients can sit up and walk immediately

after the procedure and may have a faster recovery period overall.

Some patients are not good candidates for the radial procedures. It is important to recognize that this option may not be for everyone. Whenever possible, patients and their physicians should discuss which method is appropriate.

For more information contact the DeBakey Heart Institute at (888) 625-4699.

Program on urology concerns

This week's *Doctors on Call* on Smoky Hills Public Television will feature Dr. Wallace Curry of Western Kansas Urology answering live viewer call-in questions about urology disorders and con-

cerns.

The half-hour program will air at 7 p.m. Tuesday and will be rebroadcast at 3:30 p.m. Sunday.

For information, visit www.smokyhillstv.org.

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