

## **April is Alcohol Awareness Month**

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April is the 27th Annual Alcohol awareness month sponsored by the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD). The theme this year is: "Help for Today, Hope for Tomorrow."

No substance is more widely used and abused by America's youth than alcohol, making alcoholism and alcohol-related problems the number one public health problem in the United States. Despite the legal drinking age of 21, 51.9% of youth in Caddo County reported drinking alcohol in their lifetime, and 7.4% reported drinking and driving.

Addressing this issue requires a sustained and cooperative effort between parents, schools, community leaders, and our youth. The widespread prevalence of underage drinking and the negative consequences it creates remain a stubborn and destructive problem despite decades of efforts to combat it.

Yet, there are four areas that have proven to be effective in prevention of this problem: Curtailing the availability of alcohol to underage populations; Consistent enforcement of existing laws and regulations regarding alcohol purchase; Changing cultural misconceptions and behaviors about alcohol use through education; and Expanded access to treatment and recovery support for adolescents and their families.

But, time is running out. Studies reveal that alcohol consumption by adolescents results in brain damage – possibly permanent – and impairs intellectual development.

So, let's get started providing "Help for Today, Hope for Tomorrow." We can't afford to wait any longer. For more information on NCADD visit [www.Ncadd.org](http://www.Ncadd.org). For more information on how to get involved in the prevention of underage drinking please contact the SPF-SIG Coordinator for Caddo County, Rob Bennett, at (580)323-9784 or [robertb@red-rock.com](mailto:robertb@red-rock.com).