

Oklahoma's Social Host Law

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Underage alcohol use should be unacceptable, especially by adults, but most youth obtain alcohol from siblings, other relatives, and other adults they know aged 21 or older. Many youth are also reporting that they drink at a friend's house. This should be of great concern. Not only does providing minors with alcohol, or a place to consume it, send a message that breaking the law is acceptable, but it can also damage youth's brain development and could even lead to their death. An example of which was in 2004 when Cody Greenhaw died after a party at a friend's house where the parents knew that the youth there were using drugs and alcohol. Because of his death, Cody's family was able to successfully advocate for the first Social Host Law in Oklahoma to be passed, also known as "Cody's Law." This law held individuals criminally liable if a child died as a result of drinking or using drugs at that adult's home with their knowledge. In 2007 and 2011 the law was strengthened to include serious bodily injury, not just death, and graduated penalties for those that host a place for underage drinking to occur. According to the law now, if someone were to be found guilty of violating the Social Host Law they would receive a fine of up to \$500 for the first offense (a misdemeanor), \$1000 for the second offense (a misdemeanor), and \$2,500 and 5 years in prison for the 3rd and consequent offenses (felonies), not to mention the possible lifelong memory of a teen that was injured or killed because they were provided a place to consume alcohol.

All who are interested in how they can help prevent underage drinking in Caddo County can be directed to SPF-SIG Coordinator Rob Bennett at 580-323-9784 or robertb@red-rock.com.

Underage drinking is a serious problem in Caddo County, but together we can make a difference. Let's work on underage drinking together... "Because Caddo County deserves better."