

## *Alcohol & Youth*

Alcohol use by young people is extremely dangerous, both to themselves and to society, and is directly associated with:

- Traffic fatalities
- Violence
- Suicide
- Educational failure
- Alcohol overdose

While the issue of underage drinking is a complex problem, one that can only be solved through a sustained and cooperative effort between parents, schools, community leaders, and the children themselves, *there are three areas which have proven to be effective in prevention of underage drinking:*

1. Curtailing the availability of alcohol;
2. Consistent enforcement of existing laws and regulations, and
3. Changing norms and behaviors through education.

The alcohol beverage industry also has a responsibility to discourage underage drinking and curtail advertising and marketing that appeal to underage youth.

*(NCADD 2015 Alcohol Awareness Month)*

**Help prevent underage drinking**



**Illinois Churches In Action**  
1132 West Jefferson Street  
Springfield, IL 62702

**Phone: 217-546-6871**  
**Or 877-204-6863**  
**Website: [www.ilcaaap.com](http://www.ilcaaap.com)**



# **April is Alcohol Awareness Month**

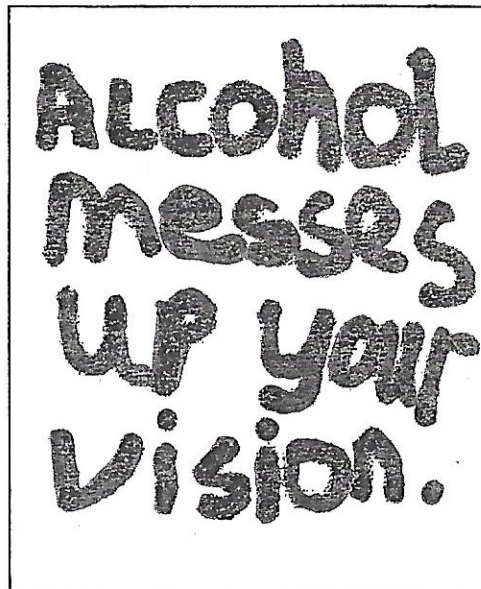


Artwork designed by  
Hannah Crider  
Lincoln, IL

# Alcohol & Youth

- Alcohol is not just a beverage, it is a drug that alters the way people think, feel, and behave.
- Alcohol is the most commonly used and abused drug by young people. Alcohol is responsible for more than 4,300 annual deaths among underage youth. Although drinking by persons under the age of 21 is illegal, youth aged 12 to 20 drink 11% of all alcohol consumed in the United States. (*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*)
- Underage drinking cost residents of Illinois \$2.9 billion in 2010. These costs include medical care, youth violence, traffic crashes, youth property crime, alcohol poisoning, and Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. This translates to a cost of \$2,270 per year for each youth in the State. In 2009, 2,549 youth 12-20 years old were admitted for alcohol treatment in Illinois, accounting for 12% of all treatment admissions for alcohol abuse in the State. (*Pacific Institute for Research & Evaluation September 2011*)
- Youth who began drinking alcohol before age 15 are four times more likely to become alcohol dependent at some point than those who started at 21, are more likely to have the more severe and recurring kind of alcoholism. (*NIAAA*)

- The brain isn't fully developed until a person reaches 23, and when teens and young adults consume alcohol, studies show it can lead to a myriad of brain-related deficiencies, including concentration problems, poor memory retention and discipline issues.
- Alcohol use by young people is often made possible by adults. A majority of underage current drinkers reported that their last use of alcohol in the past month occurred either in someone else's home (54.4 percent) or in their own home (31.4 percent). (*Facts in Underage Drinking, SAMHSA, October 2013*)



## What parents can do:

- Let your child know you disapprove of underage drinking.
- Talk to children early and often about the dangers of alcohol and other drugs.
- Set clear rules and be consistent in discipline
- Show your children love and help them find meaning in life.
- Monitor children's activities and provide adult supervision
- Socialize and have fun without alcohol. Children do what you do!

## What churches can do:

- Give encouragement to youth and involve them in church activities.
- Educate about the problems of alcohol and impact on the family.
- Inform people that abstinence from alcohol is an acceptable lifelong decision.
- Pray for those experiencing problems with alcohol and for their families

## What communities can do:

- Make it more difficult for young people to obtain alcohol and use compliance checks.
- Strictly enforce underage drinking laws
- Limit the availability of alcohol.
- Initiate alcohol-free community events.
- Limit alcohol advertising and promotions in the community.