



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

April 11, 2007

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COUNTY WARNS ABOUT DANGERS OF UNDERAGE DRINKING; URGES ADULTS NOT TO PROVIDE ALCOHOL TO MINORS

April is Alcohol Awareness Month

SAN DIEGO—After the tragic alcohol-related death of a local college student, San Diego County officials are reminding people of the dangers of underage and binge drinking and urging adults not to provide alcohol to minors.

“Minors are not allowed to buy alcohol, period. Whenever minors drink, one question must be asked: ‘Who provided the alcohol?’” said Supervisor Dianne Jacob, a member of the Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) Advisory Board. “If adults acted responsibly, alcohol-related deaths of minors could be prevented. Families and communities should not have to suffer the devastating consequences,” Jacob said.

Earlier this month, Salvador Lopez died of “acute alcohol intoxication over a period of several hours,” according to the County’s Medical Examiner. He was only 19, yet he and his friends had access to “a large amount of alcohol.”

“April is Alcohol Awareness Month and we’re reminding adults that it is dangerous to provide alcohol to a minor,” said Susan Bower, Acting Deputy Director for the Health and Human Services Agency Alcohol and Drug Services division. “Giving alcohol to a minor can lead to criminal penalties or, worse, the loss of a loved one.”

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among youth ages 15 to 20. Underage drinking also leads to increased rates of suicide, sexual assaults, and high-risk sex. Also, young people who begin drinking by age 15 are five times more likely to abuse or become dependent on alcohol than those who begin drinking after age 20.

Statistics show that one third of 6th and 9th graders get alcohol from their own homes; and many teens cite other people’s homes as the most common setting for youth consumption of alcohol.

It is against the law for young people to drink, yet almost 10 percent of the nation’s 113 million drinkers are underage. Any person who sells or provides an alcoholic beverage to a minor can receive a fine up to \$1,000 and up to 32 hours of community service.

Established in 1987, Alcohol Awareness Month encourages local communities to focus on alcoholism and other alcohol-related issues.

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