



## The Extra Mile

Advocating for evidence-based policies and practices to prevent and reduce alcohol-related harms



### Miles to Go: Alcohol Compliance Checks Saw 23 Businesses Sell Alcohol to Minors

From our December 10, 2024 Press Release: OMAHA, NEB -- As youth are gearing up to celebrate the end of their first semester and the holiday season, local and state law enforcement agencies conducted compliance checks on December 4th and 5th in Douglas and Sarpy counties to ensure that retailers continue to refuse the sale of alcohol to minors.

"I was kind of shocked about how easy it was to buy the alcohol. They asked for my ID and about ten seconds later I had a beer in front of me," said one youth that helped conduct the checks.

Other youths were met with more scrutiny. One business had multiple employees triple check the ID and despite the business's ID scanner indicating that the youth was too young to purchase alcohol, they sold to the minor anyway.

"Law enforcement understands that minors attempt to get their hands on alcohol as their winter break approaches," said Lt. Jason Sharp with the Papillion Police Department. "Compliance checks help remind retailers to check and verify IDs and refuse the sale of alcohol to minors. We all need to do our part to keep kids safe."

Overall, 23 (9%) out of 249 businesses checked in Douglas and Sarpy counties were cited for selling alcohol to minors. A summary sheet of the enforcement results and a full list of

businesses checked are [available here](#). One of the businesses cited is facing enhanced penalties due to a prior sale to minor within the last four years -- the time frame used by the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission (LCC) to assess penalties:

- Kwik Shop, 5929 N 72nd St, Omaha (5/23).

To read the rest of the press release [click here](#).

---

## Project Extra Mile to Celebrate 30 Years!

*Twelve honorees recognized for going the extra mile*

Project Extra Mile will host its 30th anniversary Recognition Dinner on **Wednesday, March 12th at 6:00 p.m. at Champions Run in Omaha**. The event will celebrate thirty years of advocating for evidence-based strategies to prevent alcohol-related harms in the Omaha area and across the state. We will celebrate and honor individuals and organizations that have demonstrated a commitment to public health and safety in their communities.

This month, we are highlighting several of the awardees that will be recognized in March. The remaining honorees will be included in our February newsletter. We hope you can join us on March 12th in Omaha to recognize their extraordinary accomplishments. To learn more and to register, please [click here](#).



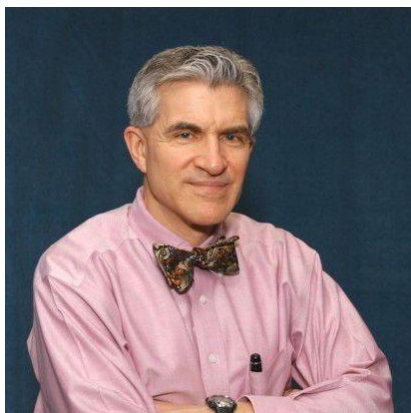
Special thanks to our event sponsors

 **UNMC**<sup>SM</sup>  
COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

 **FLOWERAMA**

Interested in becoming an event sponsor? Contact us today to learn more!

### **Diane Riibe Going the Distance Award: Tom Safranek**



Dr. Tom Safranek has devoted his professional career to promoting public health in Nebraska by serving as the Nebraska state epidemiologist for 30 years. Since his retirement from the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Dr. Safranek has increased his participation in the Project Extra Mile coalition through his role as coalition chair, board member, and now board president. He has answered the call by spending his some of his February afternoons at the General Affairs Committee to share his wealth of knowledge on the negative health and safety impacts that excessive alcohol consumption has on our state. He has been an expert voice of reason when it comes to alcohol policy in Nebraska.

### **Marty Conboy Public Advocate Award: Maggie Ballard**

Maggie Ballard is a Prevention Specialist with



Prevention Means Progress and Legislative Advocacy Facilitator with Heartland Family Service. In these roles she spends a lot of time reviewing policies that can contribute to substance abuse and advocating for the health and wellbeing of all Nebraskans. Maggie has been an active member of the PEM Policy Work Group, a partner willing to share information about conversations she's had with policymakers that can help Project Extra Mile achieve its mission, and a collaborator in every sense of the word. Maggie will drop everything to ensure that policymakers understand the consequences of bad policies and urge them to follow the science -- whether her audience is city councilmembers, elected officials at our state's

universities, or state senators.

**Law Enforcement Agency Award: Blair & Plattsmouth Police Departments and Cass County Sheriff's Office**



These agencies are being recognized for their commitment to preventing underage drinking and the tragedies that can occur when that behavior is allowed to take place. Within the last few years all of these agencies have reengaged in compliance checks after a long absence from these interagency operations which are so important

to reducing youth access to alcohol. By participating in compliance checks in their jurisdictions, they are sending a message to both businesses, adults, and youth that underage drinking is unhealthy, unacceptable, and illegal and they are not going to stand for it. We're grateful for their partnership and look forward to future collaboration.

**Media Award: Bella Caracta & John Chapman**



Bella Caracta and John Chapman with WOWT are being recognized for their comprehensive coverage of alcohol-related problems in Nebraska and potential solutions to those problems. Instead of glossing over the subject and moving on to the next story, they dug deeper in order to provide the public with the information needed to better understand the issue, its causes, and potential solutions. A better-informed public is essential when it comes to building support for oftentimes difficult policy changes. We appreciate their dedication to improving the

public's awareness of the problems that face our communities.

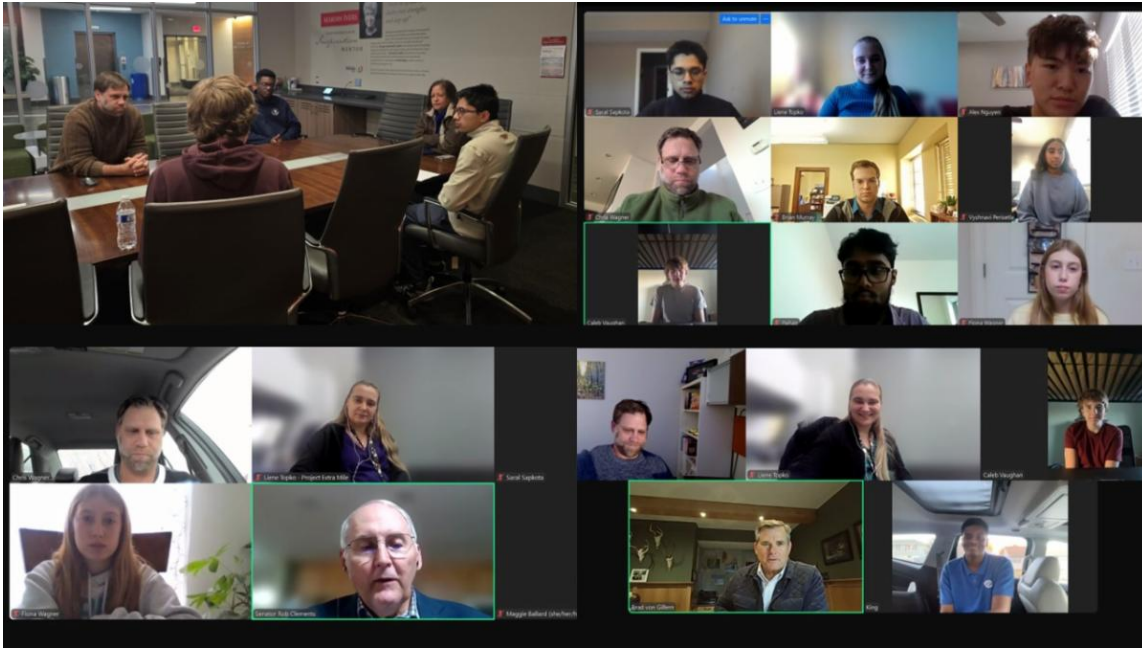
We hope you're able to join us on March 12th to celebrate these individuals and organizations and others we'll be recognizing next month.

**Going the Distance: Youth Encourage Legislators to Strengthen Alcohol Policies**

The Youth Leadership Network continues to work toward increasing the price of alcohol to prevent and reduce harms resulting from excessive consumption. After reviewing the science of what is proven effective in reducing this behavior and the harms in other states and countries, the youth voted to advocate for creating an alcohol-specific sales tax in

Nebraska. Such a tax would work just like the normal sales tax but would be applied only to alcoholic beverages. Businesses that sell alcohol would simply collect this tax at the point of sale on behalf of the state.

The Youth Leadership Network youth met with several senators, their staff, and the governor's office during 2024 to propose this solution. They were successful in having an interim study (LR 353) introduced to examine alcohol pricing and taxation but due to the special session, the hearing was indefinitely postponed. After last year's elections, the youth continued their meetings with returning and incoming senators to advocate for this solution. Senators have appreciated hearing from youth and how this issue impacts them, their families, and their neighborhoods. Many expressed their support for the idea of increasing alcohol taxes to both reduce harms and raise revenue.



---

## Research Brief:

The newest [Monitoring the Future survey data](#) has been released and indicates that more American teenagers are decreasing their substance use such as drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes, and marijuana use. Since a spike in 2020, past 30-day use has declined from 9.9% to 4.9% among 8th grade students, 20.3% to 11.3% among 10th graders, and 33.6% to 21.7% among 12th graders. Binge drinking rates are seeing similar declines during the same timeframe; 4.5% to 1.7% among 8th graders, 9.6% to 4.7% among 10th graders, and 16.8% to 8.8% among 12th graders. The [2023 Nebraska Risk and Protective Factor Student Survey](#) indicates that 8.6% of 8th grade students currently use alcohol and 1.2% binge drink, 14.3% of 10th graders currently drink and 5.1% binge drink, and 26.0% of 12th graders currently drink and 11.5% binge drink, all above the national rate except 8th grade binge drinking.

---

## Youth Corner

*Written by Caleb Vaughan, junior at Millard West High School*

Even at just 16 years old, I'm able to see how prevalent and impactful binge drinking is in our community. Through the Youth Leadership Network and my daily experiences, I realize how it can take a serious toll on people's health. [Research has connected excessive alcohol use](#) to liver disease and several types of cancer. Because of alcohol's effect on people's judgment and cognitive ability, with it comes an increased chance of unnecessary risk-taking in affected individuals. This can lead to acute harms like overdoses and blackouts as well as harmful or fatal consequences like falls or car crashes. Binge drinking can also result in risky sexual behavior that could cause the spread of STDs as well as accidental pregnancy.

Adolescents like myself are far too often exposed to alcohol and the dangers that come with drinking it at such a young age. This isn't hypothetical, either— a [2023 study](#) shows that 14.6% of youth ages 12-20 have reported consuming alcohol in the past month. I've heard many stories about classmates who consistently drink and end up getting in trouble with either the school or the law. Underage drinking is a real issue that can lead to serious consequences. Consuming alcohol at such a young age increases the risk of alcohol problems later in life and compromises brain development, leading to cognitive/learning problems. It also can prompt trouble at school and with the law, making it harder for adolescents to succeed later in life.

We as a community must make an effort to curb underage and binge drinking. The Youth Leadership Network has guided me on how to achieve this through our activities and legislative meetings. Still, anyone can make a difference by advocating for change and supporting those affected by the consequences of excessive alcohol consumption. Together, by increasing awareness and calling for change, we can encourage one another to make healthy decisions and ensure a safer future for all.

---

**Please Join Us!**

## Coalition Meeting

**Wednesday, January 22, 2025**

UNO's Community Engagement Center

**Room 201**

9:00 a.m.



For more information: 402-963-9047





Meetings are held at  
UNO's Community Engagement Center  
6400 University Drive South



### 2025 Meeting Dates

January 22nd

February 12th

Join us at our  
30th Anniversary  
Recognition Dinner  
on March 12th

April 9th

May 14th

June 11th

No Meeting in July

August 13th

September 10th

October 8th

November 12th

December 10th



Project Extra Mile | 6001 Dodge Street CEC 228 | Omaha, NE 68182-0600 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!