



Galveston County Community Coalition



Bringing the pieces together to protect our youth and communities from substance abuse

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### **Cops Make Arrests for Selling to Minors - Compliance Checks Conducted Among Area Alcohol Retailers**

On Saturday July 11<sup>th</sup>, in a coordinated effort with the Galveston County Community Coalition, the Galveston Police Department conducted an undercover operation of alcohol retailer “compliance checks” among ten establishments licensed to sell alcoholic beverages across the island.

A compliance check is a tool for law enforcement to identify retail alcohol establishments that sell alcohol to underage youth. While police officers wait both inside and outside the premises, a 16 to 18 year old youth volunteer working together with the police, attempts to illegally purchase an alcoholic beverage.

Of all the establishments checked in Galveston, **50% retailers refused to sell to the underage buyers.** We want to commend the following businesses who demonstrated responsible alcohol sales during our compliance checks: **7AM Food Store**, 2728 Broadway, **St. Joseph Food Store**, 1702 23<sup>rd</sup>, **Broadway Food Mart**, 3001 Broadway, **South Island Food Mart**, 3927 Broadway, **One Stop**, 1902 45<sup>th</sup>.

The 50% of retailers who did sell to underage buyers were immediately arrested and referred to the proper authorities where administrative and criminal charges were filed for failing to comply with the state’s alcohol laws. In addition to being arrested, the clerk faces a Class A Misdemeanor resulting in up to \$4,000 in fines and up to 1 year in jail. The Texas Alcohol Beverage Commission is also empowered to suspend or cancel business permits and revoke licenses to sell alcoholic beverages.

“The sale of intoxicants to juveniles is clearly a disheartening situation, but the silver lining remains within the fact that Galveston Police Department will continue our active pursuit of criminal events in the community. Through combined efforts and continued diligence, such violations will not go undiscovered for very long,” said Sergeant Maggolino.

Law enforcement officers conduct compliance checks because they have shown to be an effective strategy in reducing underage drinking. Binge drinking—having five or more drinks on one occasion—was reported by 23% of high school students in Texas. We want to reduce underage drinking because

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we know that it contributes to car crashes, injuries, addiction, vandalism, unwanted sexual encounters, teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and death by alcohol poisoning. By themselves, compliance checks will not eliminate youth access to alcohol, but when combined with a comprehensive community approach can help keep alcohol out of the hands of kids.

Sergeant Maggiolino said, “The Coalition is making every attempt to not only educate, but offer preventative measures regarding issues of underage drinking and substance abuse. Our involvement serves only to compliment the Coalition’s effort through proactive intervention and enforcement action.”

He adds, “Though the Coalition is primarily concerned with the ill-affects of alcohol and drugs on our youth, they have provided a model indicative of a community, working together, to ensure the safety and well-being of our youth. The Galveston Police Department is proud to participate in this multi-agency effort.”

The Coalition believes through continued education, community collaboration, policy development, and training, the community will see a reduction in youth access to alcohol in our county. For more information of the coalition’s efforts contact Jennifer Hart, Coalition Coordinator, at 409-939-9192 or [Galveston\\_CCP@bacoda.com](mailto:Galveston_CCP@bacoda.com). The Coalitions department is a part of the Bay Area Council on Drugs and Alcohol (BACODA). BACODA has provided comprehensive prevention services for over thirty years.

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