

Letters, 3-26-09

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Project fights underage drinking

Robert Kennedy once said, "Tragedy is a tool for the living to gain wisdom." So today, as we mourn the deaths of four young high school students allegedly caused by a drunken driver, we need to learn something from what seems like a senseless tragedy.

Did you know that Macomb County is ranked third in the state of Michigan for the number of people killed or seriously injured in alcohol related traffic crashes? Did you know that in 2005, Macomb County had 945 alcohol related traffic crashes?

Did you know that 74 percent of Macomb County students reported that it is sort of easy or very easy to get alcohol; 42.5 percent of students reported ever having been drunk; and 27.3 percent of students reported riding in a car or other vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol? (This data was reported by Macomb County students in the 2008 Michigan Profile for Healthy Youth.)

It would be an even greater tragedy to ignore these facts. We need to work together as a community to address these issues, which is why a new initiative — Project Remedy — was recently launched.

Project Remedy is a collaborative effort of area communities mobilizing Macomb County to reduce underage drinking and drinking and driving crash fatalities. The goal of Project Remedy is to utilize community coalitions to create environmental change. One of the initial strategies has been to engage law enforcement and the legal community in dialogues focused on these issues.

The project is being funded through the Macomb Community Mental Health Office of Substance Abuse and is a collaborative effort between CARE (Community Assessment Referral and Education) and the Traffic Safety Association of Macomb.

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