

June 25, 2008
Beverage Server Training for Howard County

In collaboration with the Howard County Sheriff's department, and with funds from Enforcement of Underage Drinking Laws, Helping Services for Northeast Iowa provided a beverage server training at the Farm Bureau meeting room in Cresco on Wednesday June 25th, to Howard county alcohol sellers and servers..

Bill Deutsch, substance abuse prevention specialist with Helping Services, says that the goal of this training is to educate alcohol retailers and their employees about their responsibilities as license holders. "The State of Iowa used to make some materials available to license holders, and has offered training to alcohol license holders in several larger municipalities. Our locally developed beverage server training helps retailers in our rural area to be responsible sellers, and helps to keep alcohol out of the hands of underage and intoxicated people." Mark Grinhaug, Howard County Sheriff confirmed that underage alcohol use is a primary concern in Howard county. "There's no delicate way to put it – alcohol hurts people. Statistically, for about 5 years in a row, we've lost one young person in this county in an alcohol involved accident. More youth are killed in this county from alcohol use than from any other drug – and contacting a parent that their child has been killed is one of the hardest parts of my job."

This training provided information on a number of topics that are part of Iowa code Chapter 123, relating to sales of alcohol. Participants learned best protocol for checking identification, learned to identify invalid and counterfeit ID's, shared tips for recognizing and dealing with customers that have had too much to drink, and learned of the rights and responsibilities of alcohol beverage servers and sellers in the state of Iowa.

Law enforcement will be doing follow-up compliance checks in the next few months, as a way of confirming compliance with the law. If an underage youth is part of the process, he or she will go into an area business and attempt to purchase alcohol. The youth will represent their age honestly if asked, and will present their own, legitimate, under age 21 license, if an ID is requested. If the retailer asks for the youth's age, or asks for an ID and then correctly refuses the sale, they have passed the check. Sometimes these compliance checks are referred to as stings, but their purpose is not to catch people **breaking the law** (though sometimes law enforcement does find violations), but to **verify compliance** with the law.

To find out more about the training, or how you can help reduce the problem of underage alcohol use in Howard County, contact Bill at Helping Services at 563-387-1720.