

June 26, 2008
Winneshiek County Beverage Server Training

In collaboration with the Winneshiek County Sheriff and the city of Decorah law enforcement, and with funds from Enforcement of Underage Drinking Laws, Helping Services for Northeast Iowa recently provided a beverage server training at the Decorah city hall on Thursday, June 26. The two hour training was attended by more than two dozen area alcohol servers and sellers. Hundreds of Winneshiek county servers and sellers have gone through this training in the last 6 years.

Bill Deutsch, substance abuse prevention specialist with Helping Services, says that the goal of the server training was 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.” Tim Felton, Winneshiek County deputy, and co-presenter of the training stated, “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.

One follow-up to this training in the coming months will involve law enforcement making visits to licensed establishments to verify compliance with the law. 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 that the retailer is complying with the law.

To find out more about the training, or to find out how you can help reduce the problem of underage alcohol use in Winneshiek County, contact Bill at Helping Services, 563-387-1720, ext. 109.