

They just get caught on to it': Teen talks about underage alcohol use following death of Gretna girls

Written by Mason Mauro

SARPY COUNTY, Neb. (WOWT) -- The Sarpy County Sheriff's Office is still working to pin down who provided them alcohol.

They are having a difficult time getting that information, but what's not difficult, according to a teen who talked to 6 News, is getting alcohol when you're under-aged.

"They just get caught on to it. They either steal it from their parents...any way they can get their hands on it," the incoming Omaha

Burke High School student told 6 News.

This student was not surprised to find out four of the Gretna teen girls involved in last month's deadly crash were drinking alcohol.

The underage student who chose to remain nameless told 6 News a quarter of his eighth-grade classmates drank alcohol.

"Show these teens, show these kids that, alcohol can really have a dangerous effect on you," the student said.

Sixteen-year-olds Abigail Barth, Kloe Odermatt, and Addisyn Pfeifer, and 15-year-old Alexandria Minardi died in a fiery crash on June 17 when their vehicle left the road at 108th Street and Platteview Road, then dove into a creek.

Sarpy County investigators released positive blood-alcohol readings in each girl except Addisyn Pfeifer.

Tests also showed 15-year-old Roan Brandon, the lone survivor of the crash, also had alcohol in her system.

"It's a mistake to say 'kids will be kids' and throw up our arms and say that we can't do anything," said Chris Wagner, executive director of Project Extra Mile, which works to reduce all alcohol-related harms in Nebraska.

Wagner has pushed state legislators to increase excise alcohol taxes. More expensive liquor is less affordable for teens, but so far the effort is still just that.

"Waiting for the problem to happen and then saying, 'What more could've been done?' Well, we know what can be done," Wagner said.

Until something changes, this Burke student says the hallways won't dry up, and drinking teens are still a danger.

"We're not at that age that we are really mentally developed for what can really happen when you're drinking or if you drink too much," the student said.

The student told 6 News that they expect more alcohol present in high school and more peer pressure to drink.

Wagner said another way to prevent underage drinking is to place heavier penalties on those who are caught providing alcohol to teens.