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Project Extra Mile thanks the law enforcement agencies that have demonstrated their commitment to protecting the health and safety of youth through continued efforts to enforce the underage drinking laws.

On Oct. 25, an 18-year-old Brady man lost his life in an automobile crash after attending a party in North Platte with other minors. Officials agreed not to prosecute anyone for minor in possession in order to make the critical determination of the source of the alcohol. Through their investigation, Lincoln County Sheriff's deputies cited four people for providing alcohol for minors in that case. They should be commended.

On Dec. 20, four 19-year-olds were arrested in Dawson County for minor in possession as well as one driving under the influence. In both situations blood alcohol content for at least one person was close to twice the legal limit for adults. There is no legal limit for minors.

In the October situation a young man lost his life. In the more recent Dawson County event a number of families were fortunate enough to have their young people home safely. Both of them needed to be prevented.

Adults continue to be the source of alcohol for our youth—both in social and retail settings. Holding those adults appropriately accountable is an effective approach to preventing underage drinking. In one case, we got lucky. In the other, the loss of young life will be felt for decades to come. As a society, we cannot afford to take the middle road when faced with the tragic yet preventable consequences of underage drinking.

Thank you to law enforcement for sticking to the job and always looking for where young people get alcohol. Our kids are always worth it.