

# Merchant Training Program Helps to Reduce Youth Substance Abuse

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Preventing substance abuse among today's youth begins not only at home, but it's now beginning at work for some Guilford retailers.

The Developmental Assets for Youth (DAY) has partnered up with the Guilford Police Department, the Connecticut Liquor Control Division, Dichello Distributors, and The Connection, Inc., to conduct a merchant education program for all alcohol merchants in town. A Fairfield Police Department officer will also be present to share his insight and knowledge.

"Alcohol merchants of Guilford are invited for a comprehensive review of the laws, rules, and regulations for the sale and dispensation of alcoholic beverages," said Lorri Hahn, communications coordinator for Guilford public schools. "Chief of Police Thomas Terribile has extended an invitation via a letter to all Guilford permittees and their employees to attend in the interest of helping to stop underage drinking. He explains that the training will assist in preparing businesses to pass future compliance checks."

Working as the prevention coordinator for DAY and a volunteer counselor at Guilford Youth & Family Services, Dana Pelliccio is always looking for ways to educate the town on providing safe and informative techniques geared towards the younger community.

"It's part of one of the activities our coalition is doing to work toward creating a healthier environment for youths in Guilford, which is actually the goal of our coalition," Pelliccio said. "I think by ensuring that the merchants have the knowledge of how to, for instance, spot fake IDs and understand the laws is very important."

In many cases, Hahn said police choose a stealthier approach when dealing with these types of situations, but for this event several groups have teamed up for the same purpose.

"This event is different because instead of an element of surprise, the department is trying to work together with merchants and other groups," she said.

The event is Thursday, Jan. 19 from 10 a.m. to noon at the Guilford Police Department on 400 Church Street.