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UWEX AmeriCorps*VISTA Success Story

By Bryanne Tudor, VISTA Member

Some may say the more the merrier, however I say it only takes one. During my time of service in Clark County, I held a county town hall meeting. The meeting was

held in the north central part of the county at a local pizza place. Underage drinking has been a growing concern in the county for a few years, just as it has become an even larger concern nationwide. Youth Risk Behavior Survey data indicates that underage drinking in Clark County is occurring at a larger rate than it is across the state, and even nationwide. Youth are beginning to drink at younger ages and are turning to binge drinking rather than social drinking. As you may be wondering this was the chosen topic for the town hall meeting because I believed that underage drinking was a large enough concern that it should be discussed amongst county residents.

With limited attendance at the meeting, the meeting still was a huge success. One of the attendees at the meeting was a local chief of police. With the information provided through our PowerPoint presentation, he had even more information for us. He is working with this population, and is trying to change some of the county laws in order to help prevent underage drinking. However, there is currently a disagreement among law enforcement officers around the county on whether compliance checks are necessary. I was unaware of this and thought that it was a national law that compliance checks must be conducted everywhere that alcohol was served. This was just one piece of information that this attendee was able to contribute to our knowledge of underage drinking in the county.

The Clark County Prevention Partnership sponsored the town hall meeting and that night gained two new members to their coalition. Although the meeting did not draw a large crowd, the conversations and partnerships that were created with the few attendees was great. They gave us information to add to our presentation for future meetings related to this topic and both were surprised with the county statistics we were able to supply to them. It only takes one person to make a difference and educating a few was better than none. So, in this case, the more was not the merrier, and the Clark County Prevention Partnership now has two more members to add to their current prevention partnership coalition, which is a fifteen percent increase in membership!