

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 26, 2026

Local Contact:

Kellie Canepa
Calaveras County Office of Education
Kcanepa@ccoe.k12.ca.us
209-736-6095

Shifting Norms, Shaping Futures: Youth-Led Media Campaign Aims to Reduce Underage Drinking



High school students from across Calaveras County are leading a creative, research-based media campaign to reduce underage drinking, using their voices to influence peers and spark positive change.

The effort is led by the Calaveras County Youth Council, a countywide chapter of the Friday Night Live (FNL) program locally coordinated by the Calaveras County Office of Education. FNL is a youth-led program that builds partnerships for positive, healthy youth development, engages youth as active community leaders, and generates resources to drive positive change on issues that matter to them. The council is made up of high school-age youth representing schools throughout the county who come together to examine countywide trends affecting teens and collaborate to advocate for healthier communities.

As part of this initiative, youth leaders are designing public service announcements and educational materials that speak directly to their peers and the broader community.

Although underage drinking rates continue to decline, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration reports that alcohol remains the most commonly used substance among adolescents. Underage alcohol use increases the risk of motor vehicle crashes and interpersonal violence, contributing to more than 4,000 alcohol-related deaths each year among individuals under the age of 21 (U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Alcohol-Related Disease Impact, 2022).

Unlike traditional prevention efforts created for youth, this campaign is created by youth. Through story-driven media and evidence-based prevention strategies, youth leaders elevate authentic voices, highlight positive choices, strengthen community connections, and help shape healthier social norms around alcohol use.

The Calaveras County Youth Council's multimedia campaign challenges common misconceptions about youth and alcohol. Research shows that social norms, or the behaviors and attitudes a group believes are acceptable, strongly influence individual choices. Using data from the California Healthy Kids Survey (2024–2025), the campaign highlights that most teens in Calaveras County choose not to drink, make healthy decisions, and focus on their futures. Campaign materials include educational posters, digital graphics, and video and audio PSAs shared throughout the county.

“Working together to take a stand in our community and provide a safe and fun environment for the youth of Calaveras County.”

— *Calaveras County Youth Council*

As part of the campaign, youth will administer the Community Alcohol Survey to gather youth and adult perceptions related to underage drinking and traffic safety. Survey results will inform future prevention strategies locally and statewide. Community members can participate at:

<https://tiny.ucsf.edu/A52Qm2>

Throughout the year, youth participants will receive training in data collection, public speaking, alcohol prevention strategies, graphic design, and PSA development. The Calaveras County Youth Council is part of a statewide network of 45 Friday Night Live chapters and receives technical assistance from the California Friday Night Live Partnership (CFNLP). Funding for this program is provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS), through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

For more information, visit **ccoe.k12.ca.us** or follow the Calaveras County Youth Council on Instagram: **[@calaveras_youth_council](https://www.instagram.com/calaveras_youth_council)**