

# The Extra Mile

Advocating for evidence-based policies and practices  
to prevent and reduce alcohol-related harms



## GOING THE DISTANCE: Thanking Community Advocates Across Nebraska

[Register](#) by November 14th to help us celebrate these leaders!

*The following advocates will be recognized for their hard work at Champion's Run in Omaha. A listing of all 2019 honorees can be found [here](#) on Project Extra Mile's website, including those highlighted in October's newsletter.*

### **Pastor Jon Lucas and the Reverend Portia Cavitt**

(Community Advocate Award)

Jon and Portia represent a dedicated and diverse group of community advocates in Omaha that includes religious leaders, neighborhood association representatives, and others who are actively engaged in liquor licensing issues. Citizens have consistently voiced their concerns about the negative impact of alcohol outlet density to city councils, the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission, and the Legislature in order to keep their communities healthy and safe. Following a recent protest, the Liquor Control Commission denied a liquor license for a North Omaha Tobacco Hut location at 64th and Ames, an area already saturated with 14 alcohol outlets within 2 miles. It was the third attempt by the business to obtain the license.

To learn more about their efforts, several [articles](#) highlighting their work are available on the Omaha World-Herald website.

### **Douglas County Sheriff's Office and Ralston Police Department**

(Law Enforcement Agency Award)

Enforcement is the cornerstone of community-based efforts to prevent alcohol-

related harm. The Douglas County Sheriff's Office and Ralston Police Department have been committed partners during heightened alcohol enforcement efforts in the Omaha Metro Area. Under the leadership of Sheriff Tim Dunning and Chief Marc Leonardo, their agencies have collaborated to conduct alcohol retail compliance checks in order to curb underage drinking and its harms as well as take the lead in creating a Douglas County DUI Task Force to address the serious problem of alcohol-impaired driving in the Omaha Metro Area through saturation patrols and sobriety checkpoints.

### **Frank LaMere**

(Marty Conboy Public Advocate Award, awarded posthumously)

In September 2017, Frank won a decades-long battle when the Nebraska Supreme Court ruled that the liquor licenses of the four Whiteclay beer stores should not be renewed. The four stores served an average of 3.5 million cans of beer per year to the Native American population on the bordering Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Whiteclay was always a focus for Frank, a member of the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska. Much of Frank's activism extended beyond alcohol policy to address a variety of social justice issues impacting all walks of life, but especially American Indians. He advocated for the reform of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, for more Indian Health Service (IHS) resources to address substance abuse, for better foster care protections for native children and for environmentalism. "[He gave voice](#) to those that didn't have a voice," said former Winnebago Tribal chairman John Blackhawk, a longtime friend of LaMere. In June, Frank was laid to rest in Winnebago.

### **Fred Zwonechek**

(Leon Dappen Award of High Distinction)

Fred, a longtime advocate for traffic safety in our state, retired in late 2018 following 44 years of service, including 37 years as an administrator at the Nebraska Highway Safety Office (HSO). Since Project Extra Mile's inception in 1995, Fred has supported community-led efforts aimed at preventing underage drinking, excessive alcohol use, and drunk driving. Under Fred's leadership, HSO provided resources to law enforcement agencies across the state for special operations and training, as well as training for prosecutors and judges. "To say that Fred will be missed by the public health and law enforcement communities in Nebraska is an understatement. Fred's passion for this work was evident to all who had the opportunity to work with him," said Project Extra Mile Executive Director Chris Wagner.

The Lincoln Journal Star chronicled Fred's remarkable contributions and [career](#) at HSO. KOLN/KGIN 10/11 News aired [this story](#) in January.

*We hope you can join us to thank all of the community champions as they are recognized for their commitment to making positive changes in Nebraska. Register [here](#) or by calling Project Extra Mile at (402) 963-9047.*

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## **MILES TO GO: Alcohol Products Continue to Promote Underage and Binge Drinking**

In early October, whiskey capsules created and marketed by Scottish distillery The Glenlivet made headlines. The whiskey pods are remarkably similar in appearance to laundry detergent pods.

Not surprisingly, the release followed a teenage craze in 2018 called the Tide Pod Challenge, where youth bit down on laundry detergent pods and either ingested or spit out the pod contents on video. Products like these beg the question: What can individuals and communities do to address irresponsible products that target

underage and binge drinkers?

Public health advocates who have been addressing this issue for decades understand the long-standing nature of the challenge. In the 2004 National Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine report, [Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility](#), authors noted, "Suspicion



that some new alcohol products and some alcohol advertising seem to be specifically targeted at the tastes and sensibilities of underage drinkers leads some industry critics to claim that at least some companies are not only being negligent with respect to underage drinking, but may (more culpably) be encouraging it."

Fifteen years later, research continues to demonstrate the harm that has followed a variety of deliberate promotional attempts to reach youth with alcopops and other products. These products include [Zippers](#), Pocket Shots, [powdered alcohol](#), and others. A 2015 study published in the American Journal of Public Health by the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth (CAMY) at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and Boston University School of Public Health is believed to be the first [study](#) of its kind to examine the association between consumption of different types of alcopops by youth ages 13-20, risky drinking behavior, and subsequent injury.

Researchers concluded that **consuming products like premixed cocktails and alcopops was associated with several adverse outcomes like episodic heavy drinking, fighting, and alcohol-related injury among underage drinkers.**

Two new [studies](#) from George Mason University found that 'Four Loko' continues to negatively impact young drinkers, even after the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) mandated new serving size labels. The studies examined consumption in three states and found that most college students who drank Four Loko first did so as underage drinkers. Furthermore, many experienced blackouts or vomiting while consuming it, and most students significantly underestimated its alcohol content despite the product's new labels. The FTC monitors the alcohol industry's voluntary self-regulatory codes designed to limit alcohol advertising to youth as well as publishing the results, but continues to emphasize parent responsibility over industry responsibility.

Public health and safety have clearly taken a back seat to industry efficiency and profits. However, CAMY offers a variety of resources to help communities take action on alcohol advertising. Case studies, success stories, and a consumer guide, which outlines the process for filing alcohol advertising complaints are available on CAMY's [website](#).

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## Youth Leadership Vital to Community Efforts

Youth leadership is a critical component of community efforts to achieve sustainable and permanent change around underage drinking and excessive alcohol use. Young people play an essential role in decision-making and have an uncanny ability to capture the attention of elected officials and other policymakers. Project Extra Mile's youth leadership initiative allows 8th to 12th grade students to make a difference in their communities in several ways:

- Review current and prospective alcohol policies and share their perspective on crucial decisions with policymakers
- Participate in various forms of peer leadership through community

connections and events

- Utilize media advocacy to raise community awareness and initiate action to address alcohol-related problems effectively

Upcoming meeting dates are planned at two locations in Omaha, including:

## Bob Brewer named Community Guide Champion

Robert (Bob) Brewer, MD, MSPH, CAPT, USPHS (ret) was recently awarded the Jonathan E. Fielding Community Guide Champion Award in recognition of his longstanding contributions to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Alcohol Program. Dr. Brewer helped to initiate the CDC's Alcohol Program in 2001. He later worked with the Community Guide branch to undertake a series of systematic reviews focusing on effective strategies to address excessive alcohol use. For more information on these strategies, see the Community Preventive Services Task Force's [findings](#) for ten population-based strategies to prevent excessive alcohol use.



## NEWS BRIEFS

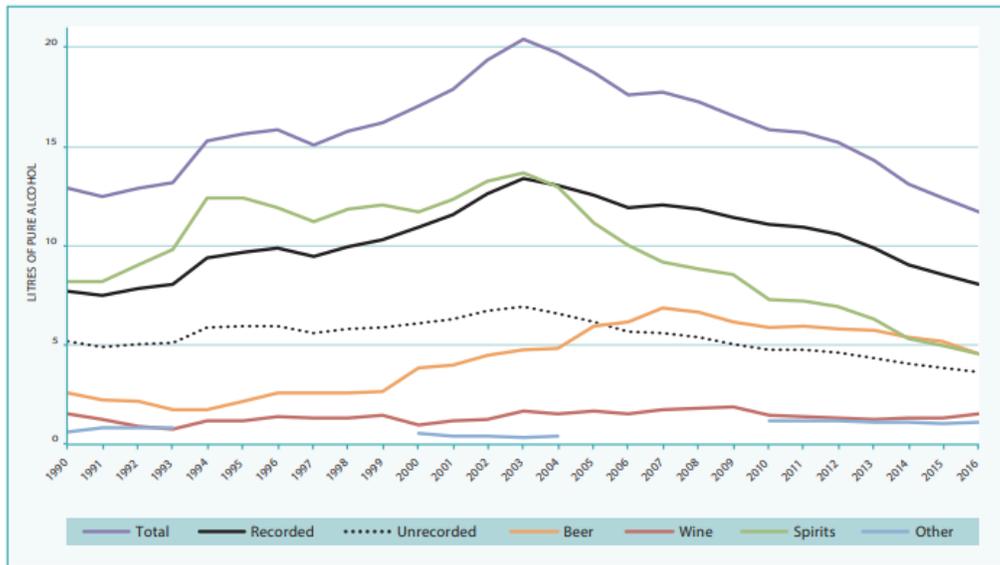
### Alcohol Consumption in Russia Declines Following Policy Measures

The Russian Federation has historically been one of the heaviest drinking countries in the world. Its patterns of excessive alcohol use are associated with high levels of mortality and harm. Epidemiological research indicated that one in every two men would die prematurely because of alcohol in the 1990s and 2000s.

Fortunately, these trends are changing course. Between 2003 and 2016, total per capita alcohol consumption dropped by 43%. Mortality due to 100% alcohol-attributable causes of death has also declined. The most substantial drops between 2003-2017 were seen in alcohol poisoning mortality, with a 73% decline in men and a 78% decline in women. During this time, death due to alcoholic liver diseases decreased by 22% in men and by 24% in women.

The observed trends in alcohol consumption and mortality are attributed to a series of alcohol policies the government began adopting after 2000. Strategies initially focused on eliminating homemade and illegal alcohol production. Efforts later progressed to include population-based policies aimed at reducing alcohol misuse and alcohol use disorders.

Fig. 1. Trends in total adult (15+) per capita alcohol consumption in the Russian Federation



Source: Global status report on alcohol and health, 2018;<sup>24</sup> Manthey et al. (2019).<sup>25</sup>

A [case study](#) prepared by the World Health Organization identified the most effective strategies to reduce alcohol-attributable harm. Strategies include measures aimed at increasing the price of alcohol through taxation, restrictions on the physical availability of alcohol and alcohol marketing, efforts to prevent drunk driving, the provision of brief interventions for at-risk drinkers, and the treatment of individuals with alcohol use disorders.

The Russian Federation implemented all of these strategies over time and subsequently had a profound impact on drinking and mortality patterns. "The Russian Federation is undoubtedly the most prominent case of a country from the eastern part of the WHO European Region that put serious effort into reducing hazardous drinking at the population level and changing overall drinking patterns," said the case study's authors.

Source: World Health Organization. Regional Office for Europe. (2019). Alcohol policy impact case study: the effects of alcohol control measures on mortality and life expectancy in the Russian Federation. World Health Organization. Regional Office for Europe.

## Project Extra Mile attends Fourth Annual Whiteclay Leadership Summit

The Fourth Annual Whiteclay Leadership Summit was held on October 18-20, 2019 at Our Lady of the Sioux Church in Oglala, South Dakota, and the former Lakota Hope Center in Whiteclay, Nebraska. Nearly 50 public health advocates from Alaska, Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and South Dakota convened to continue planning for a trauma center in Whiteclay. While the nature of the challenges has changed since the beer stores were shut down in 2017, a number of alcohol-related harms still remain. The proposed trauma center will help address these harms through evidence-based strategies like clinical alcohol screenings and treatment for those in the region, which can lead to fewer problems such as binge drinking and pregnant women drinking and the associated harms.

The weekend was filled with laughter and tears as leaders Alan Jacobsen (1953-2019) and Frank LaMere (1950-2019) were remembered for their many contributions to these efforts. Attendees expressed hope for a brighter future and healing for the Lakota people. A Celebration of Life ceremony took place on Saturday afternoon. Friends and family came together to share stories of their loved ones and their desire to continue the work.

Additional information about the Summit and speaker bios are available [here](#).





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