**Historical Overview: Social Host Ordinance**

The Chaffee County Youth Alliance (CCYA) is a community-based coalition focused on promoting youth health and well-being. In 2018, after CCYA was formed, community members analyzed youth health data from the Healthy Kids Colorado Survey, looking for outstanding risk factors in Chaffee County that are known to impact youth health. One risk factor that emerged from that study was the easy availability of illegal substances for youth in our county, and a workgroup was formed to address it.

When consulting with law enforcement partners in 2018 around youth access in regard to illegal substances, local law enforcement agencies reported numerous instances of adults knowingly hosting parties on their property where substances were consumed by underage individuals. Responding to these calls presented a challenging dilemma for law enforcement officers, as their options were either to let the adult off with a warning or impose the felony charge of Contributing to the Delinquency of a Minor. A mere warning appeared overly lenient and ineffective, while imposing felony charges seemed often disproportionately severe.

Recognizing this gap and the need for a more balanced and nuanced approach, the Chaffee County Youth Alliance began a collaboration with law enforcement agencies and other community organizations to address the issue. The result of this collaborative effort was the development of a Social Host Ordinance, a legislative framework for our community designed to introduce a middle ground of consequences. For adults who host underage parties for youth with substances, there is a scaling series of fines, community service requirements, and educational opportunities. The ordinance seeks to fill the existing enforcement gap by creating a comprehensive set of consequences that deter irresponsible actions while promoting understanding and education, giving law enforcement personnel the confidence to impose proportionate consequences for the situations they are responding to.

The initial progress of this effort faced an unexpected disruption with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2023, when the CCYA workgroup regrouped and reassessed the issue, all local law enforcement agencies affirmed the continued relevance of the ordinance. The enforcement gap has persisted, emphasizing the need for a legislative solution that strikes a balance between effective enforcement and community well-being. In the coming weeks, our CCYA workgroup is proposing the Social Host Ordinance to the Salida City Council, and are looking for individuals and organizations within our community to voice their support. Please consider signing the following letter of support.