



MADD

Activism | Victim Services | Education

NORTHERN VIRGINIA

Affiliate Newsletter

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Fairfax Countywide Initiative to Reduce Underage Drinking

In 2007 the Surgeon General of the United States issued a Call To Action To Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking. "It's time to stop accepting drinking as a rite of passage and to understand the threat it poses to healthy development. It's time to replace an environment that all too often enables underage alcohol use with an environment that discourages it." said Dr. Moritsuga.

Information gathered from the most recent Fairfax County Youth Survey indicates that underage drinking is a problem in Northern Virginia because:

- **Alcohol is the most widely used substance of abuse by youth both nationally and in Fairfax County.** In Fairfax County 16% of 8th grade students; 30% of 10th grade students and 47.9% of 12 grade students report drinking regularly in the past 30 days. Fairfax County's 12th grade drinking rate is higher than national norms.
- **When kids drink, they drink a lot and they drink fast.** In Fairfax County 5.3% of 8th grade students; 11.6% of 10th grade students; and 26% of 12th grade students binge drink on the weekends – this means one in four 12th grade students drinking over 5 drinks in a row in one sitting.
- **Children start drinking at a very young age while they are still physically developing. Most 6 year olds know that alcohol is for adults; between ages 9 and 13 youth begin to think alcohol use is okay for them.** 4% of Fairfax County 6th graders report drinking regularly; most Fairfax youth who currently report alcohol use started by age 12.
- **Young people take risks while they are drinking.** 19.9% of our youth 16 and older report driving a car after drinking while 27.4% report riding in a car with someone who has been drinking. Nationally 28% of 15-20 year olds who were killed in car crashes had been drinking.



MADD Northern Virginia has been working closely with the Countywide Initiative to Reduce Underage

Drinking task force since its start. It is now in its second year of implementing the nationally recognized *Parents Who Host, Lose the Most (PWH)* campaign. This public awareness campaign informs parents and other adults about the legal ramifications and health and safety risks of serving alcohol to teens. In Virginia adults who knowingly allow any person under age 21—other than their own child—to remain on their property while consuming or possessing alcoholic beverages can be prosecuted and face jail sentences, fines, and/or loss of property.

"We need to commit ourselves to solve the problem of underage drinking in Northern Virginia. Underage alcohol use is not inevitable," said co-chair of the Initiative Diaine Eckert. "Parents, teens, and the community can come together to encourage a new attitude about underage drinking and the so-called rite of passage. A community that opposes underage drinking can help change how people think and act. We did this before with seat belt laws and with smoking ordinances...it can be done again."

To become involved or receive more information, please contact the Co-Chairs of the Countywide Initiative to Reduce Underage Drinking Sara Freund at sarafreund@verizon.net or Diane Eckert at 571-423-4278 or diane.eckert@fcps.edu.

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New MADD Northern Virginia Development Officer: Karen Horowitz

Karen Horowitz is the new Development Officer at Mothers Against Drunk Driving Northern Virginia and has been with the affiliate since April. Previously, Karen was Director of Development and Volunteer Services at Alternative House in Fairfax where she worked for over 5 years. She has lived in Northern Virginia her whole life – went to Annandale High School and graduated from George Mason University (with degrees in English and art history).



Karen has served as the President of the Board of Directors for the Northern Virginia Association for Volunteer Administration (NVAVA) for two years, and has been an NVAVA board member for five years. She is also a member of the Nonprofit Committee of the Vienna-Tysons Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Karen brings enthusiasm and dedication to her position at MADD. She is already busy planning our affiliate's first Walk Like MADD event scheduled for November 1, 2008.



Alcohol Ignition Interlocks Help Eliminate Drunk Driving – Not Social Drinking

Earlier this month a group of “family-friendly” chain restaurants, hiding behind the American Beverage Institute, a restaurant and alcohol industry lobby group, launched a national attack on the implementation of ignition interlocks for convicted drunk drivers which have been repeatedly proven to save lives.

The primary supporters of this initiative appear to be the parent corporations of some of the best-known chain restaurants in the country including:

- Outback Steakhouse
- Applebee's
- Bahama Breeze
- Carrabba's
- Chili's
- Maggiano's
- Olive Garden
- On the Border
- P.F. Chang's
- Red Lobster
- T.G.I. Friday's

MADD is profoundly disappointed that these “family-friendly” chain restaurants are putting alcohol profits ahead of public safety. We call upon these restaurants to stop hiding behind ABI and explain to the public why they oppose laws proven to keep drunk drivers off the road.



MADD's Statement Regarding Grand Theft Auto IV

MADD is extremely disappointed by the decision of the manufacturers of the game Grand Theft Auto IV to include a game module where players can drive drunk. Drunk driving is not a game and it is not a joke. Drunk driving is a choice, a violent crime and it is also 100 percent preventable. MADD is calling on the Entertainment Software Ratings Board to reclassify Grand Theft Auto IV as an Adults Only game, a step up from the current rating of Mature and for the manufacturer to consider a stop in distribution – if not out of responsibility to society then out of respect for the millions of victims/survivors of drunk driving.

CHANGING THE CULTURE

Many Americans still don't get it. Drinking and driving is a 'big deal.' MADD has been successful in opening many peoples' eyes to the dangers and consequences of drunk driving, but among too many people a casual attitude, a denial of how easily and quickly alcohol can impair a person, and a continuation of bad habits still remain.

In April 2008 the AAA Foundation published a Traffic Safety survey that reports that of the 2,509 adults surveyed, 9% admitted to having driven when they thought their BAC level was above .08, the legal limit, within the past 30 days.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), there were almost 16,000 deaths in 2006 caused by accidents related to driving under the influence of alcohol. Overall, driving under the influence of alcohol and illicit drugs is among the leading sources of preventable death by injury in the United States.

As supporters of MADD you can help to change the culture, one person at a time. Take opportunities to share these statistics and concerns with you friends, neighbors and co-workers.



MADD's Statement about the National Survey from SAMHSA

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) conducted a survey of 127,000 adults. The findings in this new report from SAMHSA show that 15.1 % of the nation's drivers age 18 and older drove under the influence of alcohol at least once in the past year. This is a disappointing figure because it means that one in seven people will make the choice to drive after consuming alcohol.**

In order to keep our roads safe from drunk driving offenders, it is imperative that individual states move to enact comprehensive ignition interlock legislation. Interlocks have proven effective in keeping drunk drivers off the nation's roadways. Virginia currently mandates an ignition interlock for DUI-1 offenders with a BAC \geq .15 and for all DUI-2 offenders. Judges can also order an ignition interlock for DUI-1 offenders with a BAC $<$.15 and offenders under the age of 21. We must also work toward technology that will be optionally available to all drivers that prevents drunk driving and that is inexpensive, accurate, reliable and set at the illegal limit of .08 BAC.

States interested in eliminating drunk driving should take into account their current drunk driving laws, levels of law enforcement, judicial support for eliminating drunk driving, and how many drunk driving crashes and fatalities occur in that state each year. During 2006, alcohol was a factor in 374 Virginia highway deaths, representing 39 % of all traffic fatalities. During the same year, 28,132 Virginia drivers were convicted of DUI.

MADD believes the safest way home after drinking is with a designated, sober driver. We remain committed to eliminating drunk driving, supporting victims of this violent crime and stopping underage drinking.

**When conducting their study, SAMHSA did not define "under the influence of alcohol," leaving that determination up to the respondents.

For more information go to:<http://www.madd.org>

<http://www.aaafoundation.org/home/>

<http://www.samhsa.gov/newsroom/advisories/0804223939.aspx>

Get Ready to Walk like MADD!



Let's **ELIMINATE** Drunk Driving

WHEN: Saturday, November 1, 2008 at 10AM

WHERE: Lake Fairfax Park, Reston, VA

Mark your calendars for our 1st annual Walk Like MADD event on Saturday, November 1, 2008 at 10:00 AM at Lake Fairfax Park in Reston, Virginia. This 5K walk will include entertainment, prizes, a healthy and safety fair and fun activities for kids, adults and pets, including a Halloween costume contest.

Walk Like MADD is a great way for the community to come together to raise awareness of and support for a very important cause that affects all of us.

Participants can sign-up at www.walklikemadd.org (click on "Fairfax, VA") and can sign up as an individual, form a team, or join a team. Walkers raise money for MADD through pledges from family, friends, co-workers, and neighbors. Walk teams include family and friends, some of whom form teams in memory of a loved one, survivors, teen/school groups, corporate teams, community groups, pets and more. Those who can't attend the event but still want to participate, have the option to sign up as virtual walkers.

Walkers and pledge supporters of Walk Like MADD are the key to securing funds to support MADD's mission to eliminate drunk driving, support the victims of this violent crime, and prevent underage drinking. Every step taken and every pledge made makes a difference!

Walk Like MADD sponsorships are available and offer great benefits, and event volunteers and vendors for the health and safety fair are needed. If you are interested in one of these opportunities or have other questions about Walk Like MADD, please contact Karen at 703.379.1135 or Karen.Horowitz@madd.org.

We hope to see you November 1st at Walk Like MADD! www.walklikemadd.org

Volunteer Profile:
Sharleen Henderson

One of our dear volunteers is relocating to Arizona. Sharleen Henderson joined our MADD affiliate in late 2004 when she attended the unveiling of our new Crash Car Trailer. Since then Sharleen has made numerous presentations to young students and youth groups, in addition to participating in our Victim Impact Panels. Sharleen and her husband Jim have also attended a MADD Conference, worked at designated driver booths and generously supplied prizes for our MADD Golf Tournaments.

Sharleen is originally from Canada and was a very active MADD Canada volunteer who helped raise awareness of drunk driving through speaking and organizing events. She even raised money for MADD by driving a golf cart across part of Canada.

Sharleen lost her beloved twin sister Cindy to a drunk driver. In high school Cindy had been the president of an anti-impaired drinking initiative and she helped organize the first 'dry' graduation celebration.

Cindy was a passenger in a car with 2 other sober people. The car was at a complete stop and waiting to make a left turn when it was hit by a speeding pickup truck driven by an impaired driver. Cindy was only 2 blocks from home. Sharleen was not in the car with Cindy, but was at her hospital bedside when she died 4 days later.

Cindy's loss was devastating for Sharleen and her family. Through her volunteer work with MADD Sharleen keeps Cindy's memory alive and prevents other families from suffering such a tragedy.

Thank you Sharleen and best wishes.

VICTIM SUPPORT GROUP

All survivors and bereaved family and friends are welcome. This is a safe outlet for sharing with other victims/survivors who have suffered a loss due to drunk driving.

The group meets monthly on Saturday mornings at 10:30AM. The location rotates between Centreville and Falls Church. **The next Victim Support Group is scheduled for Saturday, May 31st at the MADD Falls Church office.**

Please call Noreen Dinndorf (703) 379-1135 or email advocate@maddnova.org for more information.



SUCCESSFUL BLOOD DRIVE

Polly Berry would like to thank those who participated in the special blood drive in memory of her son Greg on Saturday, April 19 at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church in Alexandria, VA.

Greg Berry was a senior at TC Williams High School when he was critically injured on December 26, 2006. Greg was a passenger in a car driven by an impaired driver. Greg fought bravely for his life to stay with his family and friends, but passed away after almost four months in Fairfax Hospital on April 19, 2007. You can read about his journey by going to www.caringbridge.org and typing in 'gregberry' on the visit line.

Polly, Greg's mother plans to make the blood drive an annual event.

**Nathan B. Marti
Memorial Scholarship Fund**

Lindsay Marti and two of her brother Nathan's friends have formed the Nathan B. Marti Scholarship Fund at Radford University. Lindsay's brother Nathan was killed on June 5, 2007 by a drunk driver headed south in the northbound lanes of I-395. On April 21, 2008 the drunk driver, Vathana Chan, was convicted of aggravated involuntary manslaughter and was sentenced to 20 years in prison with 5 years suspended.

The Marti Family, including Nathan's parents Sue and Pete will be hosting an in-house fund raiser at the Dogfish Head Alehouse in Falls Church on Tuesday, July 15, 2008 from 11AM to 11:30PM. 15 % of the restaurant's revenue that day, including food, drinks, and merchandise, will be donated to the memorial scholarship fund. For more information contact Lindsay Marti, lindsay.marti@yahoo.com or go to <http://nathanmarti.blogspot.com>

