

# B.R.A.D. Foundation

Volume 1, Issue 1 Fall 2003



The front of the B.R.A.D. 21st birthday card

## *A letter from Cindy McCue, Co-founder of the B.R.A.D. Foundation*

Thank you for subscribing to our newsletter and for being patient in receiving this first issue. Starting this fall, we would like to publish a quarterly newsletter. We hope to be able to continue to

provide quality information that is useful through the publication of this newsletter. Please share with us any ideas that you have to make this constructive for you as a student, parent, educator or administrator. The B.R.A.D. Foundation has grown and developed far beyond the original expectations and I am excited to have this opportunity to communicate with those interested in the organization and its efforts. In the past 4 1/2 years I have had direct contact with over 25,000 students through presentations at schools across the country. I can't even begin to count how many people we have contact with through the birthday card program, web site and other literature.

We believe that our information has been effective in educating students, parents and others about the dangers of alcohol poisoning. Recently we participated in a 2001-2002 U.S. Department of Education

study where we were able to prove that the B.R.A.D.

card is an evidence based programming tool. We are excited to share with you the positive survey results about our birthday card program (see page 3).

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This fall we also have new alcohol educational products. Because of the demand for the alcohol poisoning laminated wallet card -- we are proud to introduce the same information on a magnet. We have also launched an educational CD-ROM targeted for young people that has six vignettes related to responsible alcohol use. Please visit the website to view, and order, the magnet and related materials.

As of this August, we now have a staff member experienced in health education and public health issues. Jasmine Greenamy, MPH has joined us part time as the Program Director. Ms. Greenamy served as Michigan State University's Alcohol and Other Drug Coordinator from 2000-2003. She obtained her Masters in Public Health in Health Behavior and Health Education from the University of Michigan in 2000. She will be writing most of the newsletter and we both welcome your input and suggestions. She can be reached directly at [jasmine@brad21.org](mailto:jasmine@brad21.org).

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# *A Parent Guide about Alcohol use: Talk with your Son or Daughter*

Campus climate is important, but ultimately it is up to your son or daughter to make responsible choices. Studies show that parents remain a key influence on college students (National Collegiate Health Assessment, 2002 and 2000). Your opinions and guidance can make a difference!

**Listen.** You won't get far by lecturing. Ask your child to talk about alcohol and other drugs. Find out what concerns he or she has.

**Make your expectations clear.** College is a huge investment of time and money. Set clear expectations that your son or daughter should focus on academic work and personal development. Underage alcohol consumption and alcohol-impaired driving are illegal. Make it clear where you stand on these issues.

**Offer information.** Alcohol is toxic. Far too many students die every year from alcohol poisoning. Discourage dangerous drinking such as drinking games or fraternity or athletics hazing. Encourage your son or daughter to have the courage to intervene when someone is engaging in dangerous drinking.

**Help them take a stand.** Every student has the right to a safe academic and living environment. Discuss ways to handle situations ranging from interrupted study time to assault or unwanted sexual advances. Help your son or daughter think about whether to approach the offender directly or whether to notify residence hall staff or other college or law enforcement officials.

**Get and share the facts.** Students grossly *overestimate* the use of alcohol and other drugs by their peers. Young adults are highly influenced by peers and tend to drink amounts they perceive to be the norm. You can play a vital role in providing accurate information.

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**Encourage community service.** Students who volunteer are less likely to abuse alcohol and other drugs. Point out the benefit of volunteer work – forming friendships, developing job-related skills, and knowing the satisfaction of helping others.

**Be a good role model.** Evaluate your own use of alcohol, tobacco, prescription medicines, and even over-the-counter drugs. Consider how your attitudes and actions may be shaping your son or daughter's choices about whether or not to use alcohol or other drugs.

*This was an excerpt from the "Alcohol, Other Drugs and College: A Parent Guide". The whole document is available at [www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS/](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS/) or [www.edc.org/hec](http://www.edc.org/hec).* ■

## **Be Responsible About Drinking**

B.R.A.D. was founded by the family and friends of Bracey McCue, a Michigan State University junior, who died of alcohol poisoning after celebrating his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.



"It is our hope that the educational information distributed by the organization will prevent other families from suffering the loss we have sustained."

### **B.R.A.D.**

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*Left hand side  
message in the inset  
of the B.R.A.D. card*

# Card Research Results

## Background on origin of birthday card

In April of 1999, Michigan State University (MSU) and the B.R.A.D. Foundation began sending birthday cards to students just before their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, reminding them to celebrate responsibly. A laminated wallet card with information about alcohol poisoning is included with the birthday card.

## Is the B.R.A.D. card a promising practice

In the spring of 2001, over 60 Universities and Colleges had adopted this card as a means to address a high-risk drinking celebration event. In an effort to measure the effectiveness of the card, the Foundation and MSU applied and received a 2001-2003 "High Risk Drinking and Violent Behavior" U.S. Department of Education grant.

1,731 students were surveyed within two weeks of their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday during the 2001-2002 academic year. Of all students turning 21 during the study, students were randomly selected into a control (no card) group and a group who received the card and laminated wallet card. The students were asked an extensive set of survey questions on how they celebrated their birthday and what they thought of the B.R.A.D. card and the wallet insert.

## Birthday card is an evidence-based prevention tool

Of the 1,731 students surveyed:

- 93% celebrated their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday;
- 80% celebrated with alcohol;
- 48% "got drunk" on their birthday;
- 11% got sick on their birthday; and,
- 10% did not recall parts of the celebration.

Students who receive the birthday and wallet card (verses those who did not):

- Drank less;
- Were less likely to get drunk;
- Were less likely to drink shots;
- Were less likely to report parts of their birthday they cannot recall;
- Were more likely to stop drinking when they "had enough"; and,
- Were more likely to have someone watch out for them during the celebration.

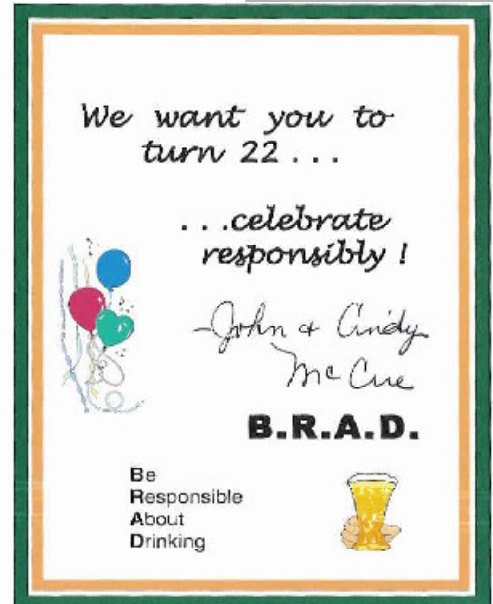
Of the students who received the cards:

- 74% saved part of the card;
- 22% reported thinking about the card during their celebration;
- 12% reported they changed their plans for their birthday;
- 15% reported learning something new about alcohol poisoning;
- 65% shared the card contents with family or friends; and
- 98% felt that MSU and B.R.A.D. should continue sending cards to students. ■

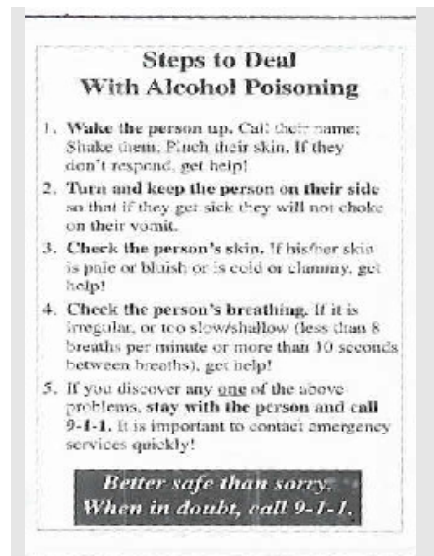
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98% of students recommend the continuation of the card program

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Right handside message in the inset of the B.R.A.D. card



Information that appears on B.R.A.D. wallet card and magnet