

B.R.A.D.

Be Responsible About Drinking, Inc.

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Foundation Seven Year Update

Be Responsible About Drinking, Inc. (The B.R.A.D. Foundation) was founded on February 2, 1999 by the family and friends of Bradley McCue, a Michigan State University junior who died of alcohol poisoning on November 5, 1998, his 21st birthday. The Foundation is now in its seventh year. We want to thank you and the numerous universities and organizations that have supported our mission. We could not have done this without you.

Mission

The Foundation's mission is to educate young adults and their parents as to the effects and consequences of alcohol use and abuse. Our educational materials and presentations focus on the signs and symptoms of alcohol poisoning and encourage responsible use of alcohol.

Update on Select Initiatives

The Birthday Card program began April 1, 1999. The program provides young adults turning age 21 with a reminder to celebrate responsibly. Over 109 colleges and universities in 31 states and the District of Columbia have mailed B.R.A.D. birthday cards to their students. Many additional schools have adopted a modified B.R.A.D. birthday card or have developed their own cards based on the concept. Cards are also available for individuals through the B.R.A.D. web

site. Over 210,000 B.R.A.D. birthday cards have been distributed through the participating schools.

BRAD21.org website became available on the internet in May 1999. Having more than 30 pages, the website provides Bradley McCue's story and educational information about alcohol use and abuse. The usage has grown each year, with more than 203,500 sessions in our seventh year. The web site won the Flint Area Advertising Association "Addy" award for excellence in February 2000.

Educational Presentations Age appropriate presentations have been delivered to more than 33,000 people. Audiences in thirteen states - Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Pennsylvania, Florida, Massachusetts, Vermont, New York, Virginia, Illinois, Nebraska, Texas and Alaska – include 182 middle school, high school and college level audiences parent and teacher groups and various community service organizations.

Laminated B.R.A.D. Wallet Cards were developed in 1999. These cards provide important signs and symptoms of alcohol poisoning and discuss appropriate emergency measures. Over 560,000 wallet cards have been distributed to universities, colleges and other interested organizations and individuals. Wallet cards are often inserted in the birthday cards distributed by the colleges participating in B.R.A.D. birthday card program.

Minimum Drinking Age Debate

Taken from the "How to Reduce High-Risk College Drinking: Use Proven Strategies, Fill Research Gaps," Taskforce of the National Advisory Council on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, National Institute for Health.

Despite an abundance of research demonstrating the effectiveness of the age 21 Minimum Legal Drinking Age (MLDA) in reducing youth drinking and alcohol-related problems, a few States are again considering lowering their legal age limits for drinking. Many issues and arguments heard decades ago are resurfacing, and many are similar to arguments college administrators hear against campus policies to discourage high-risk alcohol use. Following is a summary of possible responses to these arguments, suggested in the research review on MLDA commissioned by the Panel (Wagenaar and Toomey, April 2002).

Issue: *Establishing a legal drinking age of 21 is unconstitutional age discrimination.*

Response: This question has been treated in detail in two court cases, one in Michigan, the other in Louisiana. In both instances, the courts upheld the constitutionality of the laws, based in part on the demonstrated value of age 21 laws in preventing traffic crashes.

Issue: *If I'm old enough to go to war, I should be old enough to drink.*

Response: Many rights have different ages of initiation. A person can obtain a hunting license at age 12, drivers license at age 16, vote and serve in the military at 18, serve in the U.S. House of Representatives at age 25 and in the U.S. Senate at 30, and run for President at age 35. Other rights that are regulated include the sale and use of tobacco and legal consent for sexual intercourse and marriage. The minimum age for initiation is based on specific behaviors involved and must take into account the dangers and benefits of that behavior at a given age. The age 21 policy for alcohol takes into account the fact that underage drinking is related to numerous serious health problems, including injuries and death resulting from car crashes, suicide, homicide, assault, drowning and recreational injuries. In fact, the leading cause of death among teens is car crashes, and alcohol is involved in approximately a third of these deaths.

Issue: *Europeans let their teens drink from an early age, yet they don't have the alcohol-related problems we do. What we need are fewer restrictions, not more.*

Response: The idea that Europeans do not have alcohol-related problems is a myth. European youth may be less at risk of traffic crashes since youth drive less frequently in Europe than in the United

States. However, European countries have similar or higher rates of other alcohol-related problems compared to that of the United States.

Issue: *Lower rates of alcohol-related crashes among 19-to 20-year olds aren't related to the age 21 policy, but rather they're related to increased drinking-driving education efforts, tougher enforcement, and tougher drunk-driving penalties.*

Response: When the age 21 restriction was initiated, alcohol-involved highway crashes declined immediately (i.e. starting the next month) among the 18- to 20-year old population. Careful research has shown the decline was not due to DUI enforcement and tougher DUI penalties, but is a direct result of the legal drinking age. Studies have also shown that education alone is not effective in reducing youth drinking. Achieving long-term reductions in youth drinking problems requires an environmental change so that alcohol is less accessible to teens.

Issue: *Making it illegal to drink under 21 just increases the desire for the "forbidden fruit." Then, when students turn 21, they'll drink even more.*

Response: Actually, the opposite is true. Early legal access to alcohol is associated with higher drinking rates.

Issue: *Who will pay for enforcement laws? The age 21 law is too expensive.*

Response: We already pay large portions of our tax dollars for problems resulting from alcohol. For example, in Minnesota, cities use approximately one-third of their police budgets to deal with alcohol-related problems; the U.S. pays more than \$10 billion annually just for the costs associated with drunk driving. The higher drinking age saves money by resulting in fewer alcohol-related health problems, fewer alcohol-related injuries, and less vandalism.

Issue: *We drank when we were young and grew out of it. It's*

just a phase that all students go through.

Response: Unfortunately, many teens will not “grow out of it.” Studies indicate that youth who start drinking before they are 21 are more likely to drink heavily later in life. Those who do not drink until age 21 tend to drink less as adults. Teens who drink are also more likely to try other illegal drugs and to become victims of crime. If teen drinking is accepted as normal behavior, youth will continue to experience car crashes, other injuries, early unprotected sex, and other problems commonly associated with drinking.

Issue: *If students can't get alcohol, they just switch to other, perhaps even more dangerous, drugs.*

Response: Research shows that the opposite is true; teens who drink and/or smoke are more likely to move on to use other drugs. Preventing youth from using alcohol and tobacco reduces the chance that they will try other illegal drugs. Moreover, when the drinking age was raised to 21, and teen drinking declined, there was no evidence of a compensatory increase in other drug use.

Educational Materials Price Increase

This year is the first year we will be increasing the prices of our educational materials. The new prices go into effect on September 16, 2006. If you are interested in placing an order, we encourage you to do directly from our website at www.brad21.org/request_literature.html.

| Item | Price until September 15 th , 2006 | New price September 16 th , 2006 |
|---|---|---|
| Birthday card | \$.15 each | \$.18 each |
| Alcohol poisoning wallet card | \$.12 each | \$.15 each |
| Alcohol poisoning magnet | \$.25 each | \$.30 each |
| Organizational brochure | \$.05 each | \$.10 each |
| Alcohol poisoning information sheet | \$.03 each | \$.05 each |
| Alcohol poisoning poster | \$4.00 each | \$5.00 each |
| Alcohol awareness CD with vignettes and facilitator guide | \$100.00 | \$100.00 |
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DONATE TO THE FOUNDATION

The B.R.A.D. Foundation has relied on the generous donations of friends and advocates of the organization's educational goals and activities. The continuation and scope of our projects is dependent on the donations received. You can find information about making donations at http://www.brad21.org/make_a_donation.html

Be Responsible About Drinking, Inc. (B.R.A.D.) is a Michigan nonprofit corporation. The organization has been approved by the Internal Revenue Service for tax deductible status under Section 501(c)(3).

Shelby Middle School: In Their Own Words

Mrs. McCue gave a presentation on May 2, 2006 to 400 8th graders at Shelby Middle School in Utica MI. Here is a selection of their comments following the presentation.

I learned many facts about drinking and how much it can truly hurt you. I now know how important it is to wait until the legal age to drink. I know that when drinking you should be very responsible. My favorite part of the presentation was the video clips because they show real situations that people go through every day. I think this presentation was very educational. I also think it must have been pretty hard to tell the story of her son. I am happy we have people in the world like her to tell us the reality. People think that this is all a joke and don't understand that by not taking things seriously that they could lose a friend, a best friend, husband, wife or any family member. I realized that by knowing what really happens that people will think twice about what they do or how much they drinking. This can save lives of many people, just by taking things seriously and being responsible.

I would like to say thanks to the speaker. I learned a lot and how to help other people too. I learned that alcohol has a bigger effect than just feeling different, but that it can kill you and affect your future. I learned that if everyone would look out for each other, not so many people would die. Also, when you're of legal age, drinking is not bad as long as you drink responsible.

I learned a lot from the speaker. I was really amazed at all the information I got out of it. The story she had about her son was really sad. I also learned what to do and not to do if someone gets drunk. I would like to find out more about what happens to your body and mind when someone gets drunk. I thought this assembly was very beneficial.

I thought the presentation was great. She got up there, talked about her son that passed away from

all of this, and not one tear came from her for people to notice. I learned so much and I feel so different about the drinking situation. This information I learned today will greatly affect my future and drinking habits to watch out for. I will think ten times more just before I even think about taking a drink. I'm proud of the lady who stood up and talked today. She changed my point of view on drinking and I bet I'm not the only one.

Two things I learned from the presentation are to not drink around people you don't know because you don't know if they'll take care of you and it's better to not drink and have fun than to make a bad decision from drinking. I think this was a good assembly because it influenced me to not drink underage and to be cautious about my actions. I also learned how to take care of my friends if they were to pass out from drinking and that is very helpful in their lives.

I have many different thoughts and feelings on this presentation. I was amazed at some of the facts and statistics given. I learned there is a difference between passing out and sleeping it off. I also learned to turn someone on their side if they've had a lot of alcohol. I enjoyed the presentation and I learned many different things.

From our Mailbox



Dear Ms. McCue,

My 16 year old son had alcohol poisoning a few weeks ago, after his first night drinking with some friends. We are the lucky ones, as I found him on the driveway in enough time to call 911 and get him to the ER for treatment.

His friend had stayed with him outside my house, as he thought he would be ok sleeping it off in the car, since he had already vomited and it was believed that he was "alcohol-free." They were 20 feet from my door, but the friend did not seek help because he did not want to get my son in trouble. I do not hold him responsible in any way for my son's poor judgment, but I realized how ignorant teens are in this respect. These kids had planned this evening of drinking in the neighborhood, knowing that no one would be driving, so they thought they had "played it safe."

Not one of them knew the facts about alcohol poisoning (nor did I, frankly), and none of them knew that drinking, in and of itself, could be fatal. While doing some research after the incident, I found your website, and I am imploring every parent of a teen whom I know to visit your website.

I am so sorry for the loss of your son. Know that your efforts and commitment will save the lives of other children.

Warm regards,

*Patti
Cooper City, FL*

Response from Cindy McCue
*President and Co-Founder
B.R.A.D. Foundation*

Patti,

Thank you for writing and I am so glad that your son is OK. It is always hard to read a note like yours. I never know if the second sentence will bring good news or another tragedy.

I am also glad you found the website helpful. What happened to you and your son happens so many times that people don't know. Ask an emergency room doctor or nurse about alcohol overdose that they see (and the ones they see don't count those that do "sleep it off" and never know what negative effect it has caused them--never know how close they were to not making it through the night).

One of the main motivators for my husband and me in keeping the B.R.A.D. Foundation going is exactly what you said in your note. WE DIDN'T KNOW... and we want more people to know, both parents and kids. Your son's friends thought that they were "playing it safe" because a car was not involved. Bradley's friends had a designated driver the night that he died. They just don't know enough. Many parents react the opposite of what you have. They cover up an embarrassing incident when their child has too much to drink and end up in the ER. THANK YOU so much for spreading the word and helping us educate on a real danger to teens AND adults.

Thank you again. Be sure your son understands how lucky he is and then give him a hug for me.