

Innovative Efforts to Reduce Drunk Driving

It seems like you can't open the newspaper or watch the news without coming across a story about a horrific car crash caused by drunk driving. Even the results of a Google search of the term "drunk driving" are alarming: page after page of news articles from the past 24 hours detailing alcohol-related car accidents fill the computer screen.

For more than 30 years, organizations such as The Center for Alcohol and Drug Resources, the newest member of the Children's Aid and Family Services' family, have worked tirelessly to educate the public about the dire consequences of drinking and driving. Their efforts have certainly been making a difference and raising public awareness. According to Madd.org, annual traffic fatalities related to alcohol have dropped from an estimated 30,000 in 1980 to fewer than 17,000 today. Yet even though progress has been made, there is still much to do to alleviate this problem and make our communities safer.

Last year, The Center received funding from the New Jersey Division of Addiction Services to create initiatives to address heavy drinking and drunk driving in Bergen County, a problem that plagues young adults, especially men between the ages of 18 – 25, and the communities in which they live. The Center aligned with numerous individuals, organizations and businesses, to create the group CARDD (Connected Around Responsible Drinking Decisions). The group has already implemented two important efforts to help prevent people in restaurants, bars and nightclubs from driving drunk. A campaign, "Who's Takin' You Home Tonight?" has been developed that is geared toward the typical young man who tends to go out to meet young



women and socialize, but is likely to end up driving home drunk and getting into trouble. The campaign includes posters, a promotional team, game wheel, prizes and giveaways. Ads have appeared in STEPPIN' OUT, the magazine aimed at young adults who go to local nightclubs and have also been posted on Facebook. A kickoff party at

Park City Bar and Grill in December was well received by guests.

CARDD is also partnering with local bars, restaurants and night clubs to provide free training programs to their serving staff. The training, called TIPS (Training Intervention Procedures) is designed to help prevent underage drinking, intoxication and drunk driving through classroom-style and on-premise training. It teaches servers the legal forms of identification in New Jersey for proof of age, how to spot fake ID cards, the behavioral clues of

intoxications and how to legally and safely handle situations and intoxicated customers.

CARRD is seeking additional hospitality businesses to help spread its important message. For more information, contact Lesleigh Campanale at 201.488.8680.

"Project CARDD is great for the hospitality industry. Times are changing for us and we need to work together to protect our businesses, our patrons, and our communities. CARDD's free TIPS trainings was a great opportunity to educate our new staff and even our senior staff members benefitted. The 'Who's Takin' You Home Tonight' promotional event was a great hit, too."

John Mosca, owner of Park City Bar and Grill

- **The National Highway Traffic Safety Association reported in 2008 that drivers in their early twenties have the highest level of involvement in alcohol-impaired driving fatalities, compared to drivers of all other ages¹.**

- **Bergen County ranks higher than most other NJ Counties in alcohol-related crashes from 2001-2009; at over 50 crashes per month for almost every year. Young men make up the majority of those crashes, as well as the majority of DUIs².**

¹ Shope, J.T. & Bingham, R. 2008. "Teen Driving Motor-Vehicle Crashes and Factors That Contribute" American Journal of Preventive Medicine, Volume 35, Number 3S: 261-271

² Statistical data reported on motor vehicle accidents was obtained via New Jersey Department of Transportation and analyzed using a statistical software program, STATA, by The Center for Alcohol and Drug Resources