

**The Parents Program  
University of Virginia Fund  
Report Summary  
2003-2004**

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Date: June 14, 2004

Grant Amount: **\$3,139**

Grant Name: **21<sup>st</sup> Birthday Card**

**Purpose:** Reduce the incidence of alcohol poisoning and mortality associated with high-risk drinking on students' 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.

**Summary:**

In light of recent hospitalizations and deaths across the county involving students consuming high-risk amounts of alcohol on their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, the University Advisory Committee on Substance Abuse, in conjunction with the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Team (ADAPT) peer educators, developed a health education birthday card for students about to turn 21 years old. The purpose of the 21<sup>st</sup> Birthday Card Project is to reduce the incidence of alcohol poisoning and mortality associated with high-risk drinking on students' 21<sup>st</sup> birthdays, especially as a result from the Corner Crawl. A perceived "tradition" by some, the Corner Crawl is the attempt to consume 21 shots of liquor on the night students celebrates their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. The program is modeled after similar initiatives at Michigan State University and the California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. The card design features a cover picture of the Rotunda and an inner message from President Casteen and several student organizations asking students to enjoy a "safe" birthday. The main message of the birthday cards read "Happy 21<sup>st</sup> Birthday! We encourage you to celebrate responsibly." In addition to the insert described below, students receive a coupon from a local restaurant.

Funding from the Parents Program paid for postage and printing of the birthday cards as well as wallet-size informational cards. The cards contained Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) information, effects of different BAC levels, responsible drinking tips, alcohol poisoning information, and emergency resource numbers. (Please see attached birthday card and inserts.) Design is underway for a revised insert with gender specific BAC calculations based on weight, hours of drinking and number of drinks. Each insert will have calculations for both genders so students can have information for themselves and their friends available. This change is being made based on student feedback.

**Project Evaluation**

The 21<sup>st</sup> Birthday Card Project began in December 2000. Members of ADAPT mail the cards one to two weeks before a student's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday using labels. In June 2004, students who had turned 21 between November 2003 and April 2004 received an e-mail directing them to an on-line survey. Students were asked to complete a brief questionnaire about their reactions to the card and about their behaviors on their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. After completing the survey they could email an ADAPT member to be entered in a \$50 raffle. A total of 239 students completed the survey.

Survey results suggest that the birthday card program has had a positive effect. The tables below describe the behaviors of students who turned 21 between November 2003 and April 2004 as well as their reactions to the card program. Interestingly, although only 4.6% of students said they drank less alcohol as a result of receiving the card, **the average number of drinks was substantially lower for those who received it on or before their birthday compared to those who received it late or not at all. In addition, students who received it on or before their birthday were also much less likely to report completing the Corner Crawl.** (See below)

<b>21<sup>st</sup> Birthday Drinking Behaviors</b> <b>Jan – April 2004</b> (N = 239)	
Did NOT drink on 21 <sup>st</sup> birthday	16.7%
Did NOT attempt the Corner Crawl	90%

**Average number of drinks consumed on the day they celebrated their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday**

	All	Received card on or before birthday	Received card late or not at all
All Students – including those who did not drink	6.9 drinks	6.77 drinks	8.92 drinks
Only students who drank	8.33 drinks	8.12 drinks	11.3 drinks
<i>Perception</i> of how much the average UVA student consumes on their 21 <sup>st</sup> birthday	8.9 drinks		

**Percentage who reported completing the Corner Crawl**

All students	Received card on or before birthday	Received card late or not at all
3.3%	1.2%	15.8%

Students indicated a high level of satisfaction with the card and insert. They also believe the program should be continued.

<b>Reactions to the 21<sup>st</sup> Birthday Card</b> (N = 239)	
	<b>Percent who answered “Yes”</b>
Appreciated receiving the card	81%
Saved the insert	50%
Learned new information about alcohol poisoning	26%
Discussed the card with friends or relatives	56%
Think about the card’s message while celebrating	25%
Drink less alcohol than you would have otherwise	4.6%
Believe program should be continued	69%

**Budget Summary**

Printing 2,000 birthday cards and envelopes	\$1,410.00
Printing 2,000 alcohol poisoning wallet cards	\$ 619.00
Postage	\$1,110.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,139.00</b>