

# “Impaired Driving Prevention at the Spring Foxfield Races”

## Program Goals/Objectives

1. Through concerted programming and educational efforts, to reduce dangerous drinking behavior by students at the Spring Foxfield Races.
2. To increase the number of sober drivers and options for safe rides home in order to reduce drunk driving after the Foxfield Races.
3. To create a culture in which it is not perceived as mandatory to engage in unhealthy drinking practices at the Races.

**Target Audience:** UVA and other college students who attend the spring Foxfield races

## Program Description:

The Foxfield Races are steeplechase horse races held 4 miles west of Charlottesville, VA. Out of a population 23,000 patrons, about 8,000 - 10,000 are college students. Foxfield is one of the social highlights of the spring semester at the University of Virginia. The races are held on the last Saturday in April, and the weather is typically hot and sunny, increasing students' susceptibility to dehydration and increased BACs. The event is very close to the last day of classes, which increases the risks of dangerous drinking. The event is far enough away from the UVA campus to make it likely that some students may risk driving after drinking rather than pay for an expensive cab ride home.

Since 2000, ADAPT has worked closely with the UVA Student Council Safety Concerns Committee and the Foxfield Racing Association to explore ways for students to reach out to their peers to reduce drunk driving after the races. The races are attended by large numbers of students from other colleges including James Madison University, Sweetbriar College, Virginia Tech, Georgetown University, Washington and Lee University, the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill and even Princeton. ADAPT worked to put plans in place to serve all of these students. In 2004, these efforts were coordinated by two ADAPT event co-chairs in collaboration with the Foxfield Racing Association, Central Virginia MADD and UVA Student Council.

**Information Campaign.** Before the races, an informational advertising campaign was launched in a proactive effort to educate students about the harmful effects of excessive drinking and inform students about the programs available at the Foxfield Races. Representatives from the Racing Association, ADAPT and a UVA ER nurse spoke to all fraternity and sorority presidents in the week before the races to remind them of alcohol laws and safe ride options. They also discussed what to bring to Foxfield (e.g., legal ID if you want to drink, plenty of non-alcoholic beverages, sun screen, high protein foods).

ADAPT and Student Council distributed table tents in campus dining halls and staffed tables on the Lawn to hand out information about the Foxfield programs and the UVA Yellow Cab Program. The Yellow Cab Program is a system where students who should not be driving may request a ride home in a Yellow Cab and then charge the ride to the Office of the Dean of Students. The students are billed later and have a month to repay the charge.

**Posters.** In 2002, the Center for Alcohol and Substance Education, the Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Board (ABC) and Foxfield developed a poster that was distributed through the student health departments of Virginia colleges and universities. These posters were pre-tested with students at several colleges throughout Virginia and were distributed primarily to fraternities and sororities. The content of the posters included:

Make a plan for getting home safely.

Bring valid ID

Bring and drink plenty of water. If it is a hot day it is easy to dehydrate.

Bring and eat high-protein foods. This is the best kind of food to slow the effects of alcohol.

If a friend has too much to drink, keep that person from consuming more alcohol. There is a first-aid station located at the airplane hanger. Contact security for help.

These posters were designed by Virginia ABC, paid for by Foxfield and then revised by Foxfield and the University of Virginia Department of Emergency Medicine in 2004. The core message of the posters was adapted into a full-page ad that ran in the UVA student newspaper on the Thursday before the races. The ad was paid by the Office of the President.

**ADAPT/Student Council Tent.** At the event itself, ADAPT and Student Council coordinated the distribution of free food and water at a designated tent for students who either wished not to drink or wanted to alternate non-alcoholic beverages with alcoholic ones. The educational tent was located next to the tent at which students obtained “over 21” wrist bands. Although primarily targeting UVA students, the food, beverages and information were distributed to anyone who stopped by the tent. Food included bagels, doughnuts, fruits and vegetables, as well as more high-protein snacks that could slow down the absorption of alcohol. The Whole Foods grocery store donated a significant amount of bottled water. Students who came by the tent were uniformly positive in their response to the free food and and especially grateful for the free water. Information about the free bus service back to UVA was also available. For the past two years, ADAPT and Student Council have also staffed the safety tents outside the primarily student section of the infield. By doing so, ADAPT potentially reduced the amount of unhealthy drinking decisions made by community members. This year, ADAPT also partnered with the local MADD chapter to staff the tent in the student section. Foxfield provides tickets and parking for students working the tent and also provided the plot and tent free of charge.

**Safety handbills.** ADAPT students arrived early at the races in order to distribute handbills with safety information to all cars in the student section of the infield. The handbills contained the same safety messages as the Foxfield poster and reminded students that a designated driver should be a sober driver.

**The Savvy Fox:** Foxfield’s Designated Driver Program. This program is coordinated by Foxfield and it rewards students and community members who pledge not to drink and drive. Anyone who signs a pledge not to drink AT ALL during the races receives a special wristband, free non-alcoholic drinks all day, a tee shirt and coupons for free pizza paid for by Domino’s Pizza and the Racing Association. This program has been very popular and each year the amount of free food and beverages has increased due to demand. A total of 311 pizzas were redeemed with designated driver coupons. One of the registration areas for the Savvy Fox program was included in the ADAPT/Student Council tent. This program attracted over 500 participants in 2003 and again in 2004.

**Safe Ride Home.** This program, sponsored by the Chandler, Franklin & O’Bryan Affiliated Law Offices, provides a cab ride home, free of charge, to any Foxfield patron. In 2002, the Marketing Director for the law firm described the program as “very successful” and said that the students riding “were very thankful and very considerate.” To encourage students to utilize this service, Foxfield allows patrons to leave their cars at the track overnight. Over 400 people used the free cab program in 2004.

**Bus Service.** Charlottesville Transit Buses provided rides to the races for \$5.00 roundtrip, collected at the point of origin. Rides back to the three drop off points at UVA were free. In 2002, 503 people rode the buses. This number increased to 672 in 2004. We believe the

increased publicity provided by ADAPT and the Foxfield Racing Association led to the increase in ridership.

**Promotion and Publicity:**

1. Information tables on the Lawn
2. Table tents in dining halls
3. Informational presentations to all fraternity and sorority presidents, sponsored by the Foxfield Racing Association and including a University of Virginia ER nurse and representatives from ADAPT
4. Emails to all fraternity and sorority presidents
5. Full page ad in the student newspaper paid for by the Office of the President
6. Posters distributed at UVA and at other colleges

**Budget:**

The overall cost for this program was kept low by the generosity of local merchants and community members. ADAPT solicited donations from Kroger Foods, Whole Foods Market, and Chesapeake Bagel. Red Bull, Pepsi and the coordinators of the Foxfield event donated free beverages. The Foxfield Racing Association and Domino's Pizza also donated discount coupons for pizza at the event. The Racing Association provided free tickets and parking passes to the students who set up and staffed the tent and donated a generous 20 x 20 plot of land for the tent as well as the actual tent. The Racing Association printed the posters that were distributed at UVA and other Virginia colleges and the UVA Office of the President paid for a full page ad in the student newspaper.

The only real cost incurred by this project was for supplies, photocopying and some additional food – a total cost of about \$300. These costs were covered by ADAPT, Student Council, and the Center for Alcohol & Substance Education.

**Collaboration:**

1. Foxfield Racing Association
2. Central Virginia Mothers Against Drunk Driving
3. UVA Student Council
4. UVA Presidents Office

**Duration:** The event was held on the day of the spring Foxfield Races. Most of the publicity took place in the week before the event.

**Location of Event:**

Foxfield Races, 2215 Foxfield Track, Charlottesville, VA 22901

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