

Lifeline

News from the
Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council of Delaware County

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Lieutenant Governor Speaks to Under the Influence Coalition

The effects of underage drinking and driving are widespread and too often tragic. That was the core of the key note message delivered to the Reducing Underage Drinking Conference on December 20.

The keynote speaker was Mary Donohue, lieutenant governor of the State of New York. The conference was sponsored by the Delaware County Under the

Influence Coalition, a county-wide organization formed to combat drinking by underage youth. The day-long conference, which included workshops, was held at the Hancock Central School and the Hancock Baptist Church.

Donohue explained that Kevin King, one of the four students killed in a recent underage drinking/driving accident at Colgate University, was the child of close family friends.

"I will never forget having to tell my daughter, that Kevin was killed," Donohue said. "She didn't believe it. She said, 'That would never happen, my friends have always been careful.'"

The conference was hosted by NYS Assemblyman Clifford Crouch. The Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council of Delaware County and the Delaware County Stop-DWI were organizers of the event.

ADAC executive director David Ramsey called the event a "huge success" and cited the high number of political and business leaders among the 100-plus attendees. "These are people who can carry the message about underage drinking problems back to their communities," he said. ■



Outdoor Leader Joins Council Staff

Ricardo Sierra, the council's newest staff member, comes to ADAC as an experienced educator for children, youth, and adults. His background includes the creation of several wilderness programs and camps for children and teens, adult workshop programs, a correspondence course in Native American wilderness survival skills, a college level instructor training program and many school-based programs.

"I am excited about working in the field of prevention education in Delaware County and getting to know the people here. I have seen the positive effects of bringing outdoor skills to kids, and I will try to incorporate that into my work."

In addition to teaching outdoor skills, Ricardo is an accomplished artist and writer, having been published in several outdoor skills and environmental education journals.

Ricardo will be delivering the Life Skills Training curriculum to several schools, and working with

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Above, Lt. Governor Mary Donohue greets Assemblyman Clifford Crouch before speaking to the luncheon gathering. Below, ADAC director David Ramsey and LEAF assistant director Julie Dostal confer before their joint presentation on community risk and protective factors.



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LIFELINE

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Mission Statement

**The Alcohol and
Drug Abuse Council
of Delaware County (ADAC)
is dedicated to
the prevention of alcohol and
substance abuse
by providing
education, information, and
referral services.**

Letter from the Director

In this column I am hoping to find the words to adequately pay tribute to a lovely man, Dr. James Ferraro, who died December 5 at age 87. Jim was a supporter of this council practically from its founding in 1977. He served as a board member, including a term as president, from that year to 2001 and after that kept in contact with us as a board member emeritus. Jim had a keen understanding of addiction and was active in both the treatment and prevention fields. More important, to me personally, he was a friend. I cherished our frequent contacts and particularly appreciated his droll sense of humor and his wise advice and counsel.

Jim was born in 1915 in Jersey City, New Jersey. He was a graduate of Fordham University in the Bronx and Tufts Dental School where he ranked in the top three percent of his class. He first practiced dentistry in the Bronx, then moved his practice to Margaretville. He also became an expert in the field of alcoholism and a certified New York State addictions counselor. He worked for a time as a counselor at the Delaware County Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services in Hamden, and as director of the family program at Veritas Villa in Kerhonkson.

A family tribute to Jim spoke of his "his level of forgiveness and his love for people." I would like to add to that his immeasurable contributions to both this Council and the field of addiction treatment and prevention. The Council sends its sympathies to his wife Pamela, his three sons, and the rest of his family. For this issue, the name of Dr. James Ferraro, my friend and colleague, remains on our masthead. I am too sad of heart to cut that tie yet.



Quote of the Day

**"Support Dairy Farmers!
Buy Teens Milk, Not Beer!"**

Slogan on t-shirts distributed
at the Reducing Underage Drinking Conference

Outdoor Skills Leader (cont.)

area professionals to develop or enhance several programs for youth to provide opportunities for learning, growth and recreation.

"In my fifteen years as an educator, I have seen the powerful effects of how outdoor programs create possibilities for self-awareness, bonding and personal growth," he said. "Nature seems to have a vast ability to inspire learning and excitement, and with the natural beauty and resources here in the county, it seems like a perfect match."

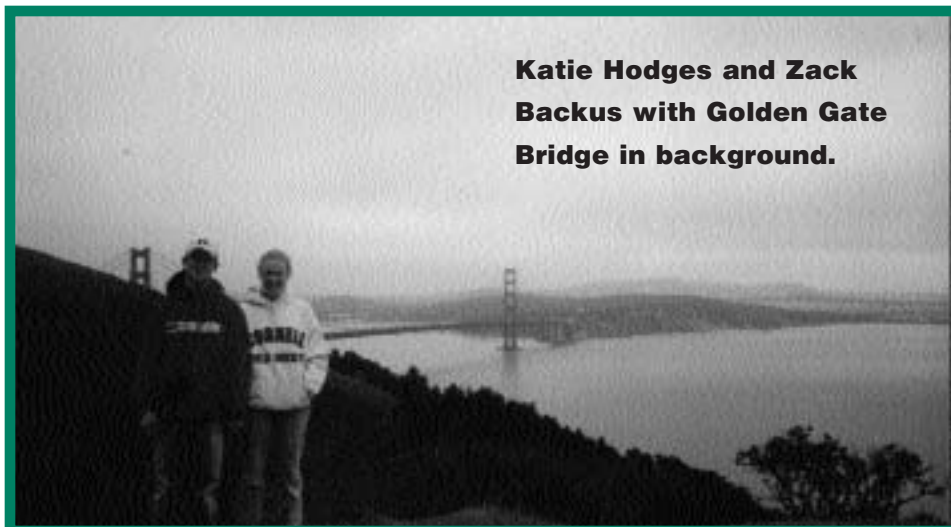
Sierra sees possibilities for youth to gain leadership, responsibility and develop inner direction and strength, not just using wilderness skills but in doing authentic native arts and crafts, poetry, music, writing and much more.

"Many children think that wilderness skills mean hiking to the top of a mountain in an hour or hanging off a cliff by a rope. I see it as having just as much to do with wading along a stream, learning about birds, plants, making a natural shelter or cooking our lunch over the fire.

"These activities can provide just as many challenges as the more purely physical ones," he explains. "Kids have enough daily stress to deal with, so we can ease into it if we need more physical challenges."

Ricardo welcomes any ideas or collaboration by anyone interested in joining him in these ideas. He can be reached at the Council at (607) 746-8300 or by e-mail at Ricardo@adaconline.org ■

Reality Check Goes West



Katie Hodges and Zack Backus with Golden Gate Bridge in background.

by Christina Hodges

Youth Empowerment Coordinator

Recently, three core members of Delaware County's Reality Check movement were included in the National Conference on Tobacco or Health in San Francisco, California. Zackery Backus, Katherine Hodges and Bradley Northrup all Juniors at Walton Central School boarded a plane from Albany to spend three days at the conference, with an extra three days for themselves in beautiful California.

"We had an incredible time," reported Katherine, a board member at the state level of Reality Check. "The weather was unbelievably warm and we were able to learn so much!" Zack Backus—also a board member at the state

level, and Brad Northrup—a member for several years now, both entered into an essay contest last Spring. They were awarded funds for their air fare, the conference registration fee, and food and lodging. "We were able to speak to youth from other states who are also involved in tobacco control," Zack said, "and we were able to share so many ideas with them."

Reality Check, New York State's youth-led, adult supported movement against the Big Tobacco Industries, continues to provide opportunities for youth at many levels. The group calls these opportunities, "Circles of involvement." The more involved a youth is, the more likely they are to be afforded

opportunities such as the San Francisco trip.

All three youth noted that their favorite trainings focused on the tobacco industry and its ongoing relationship with Hollywood. In New York Reality Check is currently working on a statewide initiative entitled, "Hollywood and Big Tobacco: Headed for a Breakup." that raises awareness regarding Big Tobacco product placement in movies. The fact that smoking in movies is up violates the Master Settlement Agreement of 1998, in which the tobacco industry agreed not to target youth. Reality Check is asking that movies with high instances of smoking be rated "R".

"If we consider the f***-word offensive and rate a movie "R" based on the number of times it is used, then why wouldn't we attempt to do the same thing for a product that kills over 400,000 Americans every year?", asked Katie Hodges. "That's the equivalent of 3 jumbo jets crashing every single day!"

Anyone interested in helping the youth raise awareness or achieving their goal of getting movies rated "R" can contact the youth empowerment coordinator at (607) 746-8300 or dcrealitycheck@catskill.net.

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Playing Santa Claus but, instead of gifts, delivering an anti-underage drinking message, Ray Seyforth calls students to the podium, in this case his own daughter, Erin.



At the Reducing Underage Drinking Conference, a group of mostly students, who did the serving, wait for luncheon to begin. Their t-shirts read: Support Dairy Farmers! Buy Teens Milk. Not Beer!

