

BOLD COALITION
Building Our Lives Drugfree
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BOLD receives a \$100,000.00
Bureau of Substance Abuse Services Grant per year for Three Years
to address substance abuse with an emphasis on underage drinking.

Fall River, Mass.— May, 27, 2008. BOLD (Building Our Lives Drug Free) was awarded a grant by The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH)'s Bureau of Substance Abuse Services (BSAS.) With this grant, BOLD (Building Our Lives Drug Free) will begin to address substance abuse issues, with an emphasis on underage drinking. According to the Massachusetts Youth Health Risk Behavior Survey, 28 percent of all Massachusetts high school students report having their first drink before they turn 13, and the problem continues to intensify in the high school years.

The harmful effects that underage drinking has on young people are real. The brain goes through dynamic changes throughout adolescence, and alcohol can seriously damage long- and short-term growth processes. What's more, underage drinking affects teens for life. Those who binge once a week, or increase their drinking from age 18 to 24, may have problems attaining the goals of young adulthood—marriage, educational attainment, employment and financial independence.

Adolescents need only drink half as much as adults to suffer the same negative effects, and rather than "outgrowing" alcohol use, young abusers are significantly more likely to have drinking problems as adults. People who begin drinking before age 15 are four times more likely to become dependent on alcohol than those who wait until age 21 to start drinking. Underage drinking negatively affects our young people both now and in the future. Long term issues such as educational attainment and employment affects the health and welfare of our community as well.

BOLD will begin to address this issue by utilizing key stakeholders from BOLD's existing membership and form a Strategic Planning Committee that will focus on policy development, enforcement and community mobilization. In addressing the issue of underage drinking, BOLD will implement the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) five-step Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF): Assessment, Capacity Building, Planning, Implementation and Evaluation. Specifically, our initiative will develop and implement strategies that will decrease the use of alcohol by minors through compliance checks, alcohol checkpoints, parent contracts and other strategies identified by the Strategic Planning Committee. Our Strategic plan will use the Communities Mobilizing for Change model. Together with the Bureau of Substance Abuse Services and the Southeast Center for Healthy Communities we will reduce underage drinking in Fall River.

BOLD is a substance abuse prevention coalition comprised of community volunteers, agency representatives, educators, city government, school representatives and youth. We are all working together to create a healthy community for our young people to live in. We use evidence-based programs and practices to accomplish our objectives. Our mission is to reduce youth substance abuse in Greater Fall River. Our vision is to create a healthy community for the youth of Greater Fall River.