



# News Release

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## Healthy Aroostook alcohol awareness event held for students at NMCC

*Aroostook County* - "Let's Party! An Alcohol Awareness Event" was held recently at Northern Maine Community College. The event included a free lunch, an afternoon keynote speaker, and alcohol-free mocktails during the evening. Funding for the activity was provided through a \$5,000 grant from The United Way of Aroostook to offer the area's college-age population more information and resources concerning substance abuse.

Engaging and informative activities designed to be held just prior to graduation festivities allowed organizers to inform area students about alcohol consumption, underage and binge drinking, operating under the influence, and the medical complications associated with alcoholism.

"The purpose of this event is to educate as many students as possible about the effects of alcohol poisoning and the potential consequences that can result from their actions," explained Carol Bell, program director for Healthy Aroostook. "Many students are lucky, but there are some that are not. We want to prevent them from binge drinking and teach them how to assist other students who may have reached the effects of poisoning."

Among the most informative aspects of the event were the demonstrations presented by local law enforcement to show first hand how disoriented students can become while under the influence of binge drinking. The event also focused on the effects binge drinking can have on a student's academic standing, since students sometimes waste their college education due to the effect of heavy alcohol abuse.

"I have learned today that binge drinking can lead to such tragedies as drunk driving fatalities and long-term problems such as alcoholism or liver damage," said NMCC liberal studies student Frederick Lewis Asam of Presque Isle. "I feel that after witnessing those close to me experience the tragedies of alcohol abuse, I am determined that I will not allow that to happen to myself."

The event was well attended by students who asked lots of questions and interacted with presenters. "With this being the end of the school year when many students are planning to celebrate graduation, our goal was to help them make better choices through this time of the year," said Linda Mastro, director of health services at NMCC. "Students have been coming in for guidance to know where support services are in the area."

The point of the event was not lost on the students who participated. “I learned some valuable lessons from this event that drinking and driving is just simply not worth it,” said electrical construction and maintenance student Parker Bradford Brown of Mapleton. “One time can prove to be the worst mistake anyone can make in their life.”

In addition to the hands-on exercises and informational displays, the day culminated in an event that showed students that they could have a good time without the need for alcohol. The annual Mocktails at Monte Carlo was held in the gym, featuring “mock” alcoholic drinks, such as strawberry daiquiris and blue moons, as well as games such as Pokeno and Texas Hold’em which allowed students to win “money” with which to bid on prize items during an auction at the end of the event. This year, thanks to the grant funding, the evening culminated in a dance with a DJ after the conclusion of the Mocktails at Monte Carlo.

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*A Northern Maine Community College student undergoes a field sobriety test while wearing goggles which imitate the effects of being impaired during a recent alcohol awareness event at the College.*