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## **Foundation for Alcohol Responsibility Launches Inaugural Project**

HARRISONBURG, VA – March 8, 2007 – Foundation for Alcohol Responsibility (FAR) launched its inaugural community-based alcohol responsibility project in Harrisonburg, VA on Wednesday, February 21, 2007.

Over the course of a year, the project will reach community members and provide key stakeholders with alcohol education while arming them with the information to both consume and serve alcohol responsibly and to intervene in instances of intoxication.

“We are pleased that the community of Harrisonburg has welcomed the Foundation and responded so favorably to our commitment to work with its businesses and residents. Our goal is to get the entire Harrisonburg community speaking the same language when it comes to the sale, service and consumption of alcohol. We look forward to a continued impactful relationship with the community and to using this format in other cities around the country,” said Jill Kerr, President of FAR.

Funding for the initiative comes from contributions made to FAR, a non-profit 501(c)(3). Primary funders for the launch project include Health Communications, Inc. (providers of the TIPS server training program) and The Charmer Sunbelt Group’s Virginia joint venture affiliate Associated Distributors, LLC.

The first phase of the project, which began on February 21, targeted restaurants and bars. The training provided servers and bartenders with the confidence and skills to help reduce instances of underage drinkers as well as reduce the number of intoxicated patrons and patrons who drive under the influence. Popular off-premise outlets will be offered training as well.

Also incorporated into phase one of the project is The BARS Program, a mystery-shopper service which will be utilized to re-inforce ID checking behaviors and to publicly recognize the establishments that are compliant. BAC Solutions, which manufactures and markets a personal breath test, is providing instruments to interested restaurants and bars to educate the public about how alcohol affects their individual BAC (Blood Alcohol Content).

Owners and managers from six of Harrisonburg's most popular restaurants and bars have been participating on a roundtable since late 2006 and have provided input to the FAR committee on the types of initiatives they believe will be effective. The group determined that server training was a vital element of any responsibility initiative and that ID compliance checking an appropriate follow-up.

Chris Clark, owner of The Artful Dodger, sent his bartenders and servers to the training sessions because he wants them to know how to act in tough situations. He says he hopes they will learn how "to gain the information that's necessary to find that underage drinker or overly intoxicated individual and to handle that individual in a safe manner."

A key component of the alcohol responsibility project in Harrisonburg is the work of a group of senior communications majors from James Madison University. The students will be applying their skills and experiential input to the initiative. Acting as a marketing communications agency, they will devise a strategy for the campaign including a theme, slogan, promotional materials and a kick-off event to introduce the project to the community in Harrisonburg. This peer marketing model will ensure that the message is appropriate for the university audience.

Shortly after the first phase launches, key campus leaders including Greeks, resident advisors, and athletes will receive training. Awareness within the community on responsible alcohol consumption practices will be expanded through print advertising, on radio and television campaigns, and on posters displayed throughout the community.

Phase two of the project will include social norms marketing, expanding the training component to reach every freshman college student, and development of the systematic structure to replicate the program year after year. The goal is to use Harrisonburg as a template for other community-based alcohol responsibility initiatives throughout the country.

#### About Foundation for Alcohol Responsibility

Foundation for Alcohol Responsibility (FAR) was created upon the belief that when community members are effectively taught to prevent the irresponsible use of alcohol or to intervene when alcohol is used irresponsibly, alcohol-related deaths and injuries can be prevented. FAR is a non-profit 501(c)(3) that provides funding for initiatives to prevent intoxication, drunk driving and other alcohol-related problems as well as promotes the responsible use of alcohol. These initiatives include efforts in training, higher education, enforcement, awareness, and the development of community coalitions. For further information, please visit our website at [www.alcoholresponsibility.org](http://www.alcoholresponsibility.org).