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For Immediate Release
May 5, 2009

FMI:
Jo Morrissey, 773-7737

Wow, Times Have Changed!
Underage Drinking is Becoming a Thing of the Past

Cumberland County, ME—“Wow, Times Have Changed!” is the theme of this year’s prom campaign distributed by local florists, tuxedo rentals, hotels, motels, and limousine companies, together with their local law enforcement agencies and sponsoring prevention organizations. This campaign highlights a recent report from the Maine Office of Substance Abuse, which states that most of today’s youth do not drink. In addition, a recent parent phone survey by 21 Reasons in Portland found that more parents are taking concrete steps to keep their children from drinking.

As part of the campaign, florists and tuxedo rental shops were asked by their local law enforcement agency to distribute the “Wow, Times Have Changed!” card with each corsage, boutonniere, and tux rental during prom season. Participating florists and tux shops are listed below by city/town. A copy of the card is attached.

The “Wow, Times have Changed!” effort also includes notifying every limousine and hotel/motel operation in Cumberland County of the dates of all proms and graduations and asking these businesses keep an extra watchful eye during those dates for underage drinking parties. Law enforcement agencies are also making personal appeals to local area businesses to post positive prevention messages on their marquee boards during prom and graduation season.

“We had a lot of good news this year, and we wanted to share it in a positive way,” states Jo Morrissey, Assistant Project Director for 21 Reasons. “Community-wide efforts are truly paying off in reducing youth drinking. Increased parental monitoring, law enforcement compliance checks and party patrols, and greater community disapproval of underage drinking are all making a difference.”

The results show it. Times *have* changed. Statewide and in Cumberland County, teen drinking rates have followed a downward trend in the past few years.

In Portland, for example, the percentage of youth who report recent alcohol use (at least once within the past 30 days) has dropped significantly--from 37% in 2000 and 36% in 2004, to 29% in 2008 (Maine Youth Drug and Alcohol Use Survey). And according to a phone survey conducted by 21 Reasons, more Portland parents are concerned about underage drinking and taking concrete steps to prevent it—including talking with their teens about alcohol, asking if alcohol will be at parties, and calling party hosts to make sure alcohol will not be provided.

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More healthy party tips can be found on the 21 Reasons website: www.21reasons.org.

In addition, former Attorney General Steve Rowe has specific prom and graduation tips on YouTube, keyword: promsmart. To see the clip, click here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-BODm5Yk2Vw>. This video was produced by the Communities Promoting Health Coalition and Smith Atwood video services.

Florists and tux shops participating in the “Wow, Times Have Changed!” campaign to prevent underage drinking:

Falmouth

Falmouth Flowers

Gorham

Portland

Harmon & Bartons

Minott's Flowers

Vose-Smith

Dodge the Florist

DS Lillet

Rosemont

Whole Foods

Antoine's

Tanorama

Scarborough

Oak Hill Florist-Flower Shop

Jordan's floral & Gifts, Inc.

Maine Floral Creations

Red Brick Tailor Shop

Dancing Damsel

South Portland

Shaw's

Fleur de Lis

Hearts and Flowers

Classic Tux

Men's Warehouse

Tux for Less

S&K Men's Store

MW Tux

Westbrook

Harmon's and Barton's

Windham

Tanorama

Yarmouth

Village Florist

Campaign co-sponsoring organizations:

- 21 Reasons Coalition (a project of Medical Care Development)
- Cumberland County Underage Drinking Enforcement Task Force
- PROP Communities Promoting Health Coalition

Attachments:

“Wow, Times Have Changed” card

Past 30-Day drinking Trends, 1995-2008

FMI on these events or on the work of 21 Reasons, visit: <http://www.21reasons.org> or call Jo Morrissey at 773-7737.

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