

AU wins grant to create 'healthy campus/community coalition'

1/29/03

Alfred University's Counseling and Student Development Center has secured a grant from the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) to create a "healthy campus/community coalition" aimed at curbing alcohol abuse during Alfred's annual spring festival, Hot Dog Day. "Hot Dog Day is a rite of spring for students from Alfred University and Alfred State College, as well as residents from the surrounding community," said Dr. Norman Pollard, director of the Counseling and Student Development Center at Alfred University. "We want students and residents to continue to have fun, but we don't want the day marred by the risky behaviors caused by over-consumption of alcohol, sometimes with very serious consequences." This year's Hot Dog Day is scheduled for April 26. An Alfred tradition for more than 25 years, the annual festival brings together students from both campuses for a street festival that benefits community non-profit organizations. It's usually held the last weekend in April, just before students begin studying for final exams, and often is an unofficial reunion for recent alumni. "Students see Hot Dog Day as an opportunity to relax before facing end-of-the-semester pressures," said Pollard. "We want it to continue to serve that function, but without risky behavior." In partnership with the Village of Alfred, the AU Counseling and Student Development Center will put together a coalition to "create and promote strategic social and educational programming that offers students and community member alike a positive alternative to the traditional Hot Dog Day events, the majority of which historically have been intertwined with alcohol and related drinking behaviors," said Pollard. "We are planning events that will use a community-based approach to reinforce the idea that students and residents can have a good time at Hot Dog day without drinking in excess," explained Pollard. Activities to be supported by grant funds include: - A faculty-staff basketball game open to the public free of charge. - Showing of a first-run "drive-in" movie, to be shown outside McLane Recreational Center (weather permitting)- Production of commercials and public service announcements, promoting alcohol-free fun, to be used extensively prior to Hot Dog Day and also during the day. - Extending training for area law enforcement officials. "Our goal is to create and market events that will attract both students and community members," said Pollard. Events are being planned for the evening hours, the time when most incidents relating to substance use and abuse typically occur.