

AU students' 'Be Safe' campaign wins accolades from community

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Four Alfred University (AU) students who launched the "Be Safe, Give Back, Have Fun" campaign for Hot Dog Day 2011 will be recognized for their efforts by the Alfred Community Coalition at its third annual awards ceremony at 5 p.m. April 12 at the Alfred Village Hall. The coalition, formed seven years ago to "reduce high-risk behaviors of students in the community," started its awards program to "honor those community businesses or individuals who have made a difference in the lives of the students of Alfred University and Alfred State College." "We were thrilled that the coalition recognized the work our students did last year to make Hot Dog Day more meaningful and safer," said Kathy Woughter, vice president of Student Affairs for Alfred University and a founding member of the coalition. Other members represent the Village and Town of Alfred, the Alfred Police Department and Alfred State College. Kevin Carr, Adrian To, Susie Morrison and Matt Brown will receive the Community Spirit Award from the Alfred Community Coalition. Carr, a senior in the School of Art & Design at Alfred University, said the idea for the "Be Safe, Give Back, Have Fun" campaign arose from the Think B4 You Speak initiative he and the others had previously been involved in. They recognized that Hot Dog Day - a rite of spring in this village with about 1,000 permanent residents and more than 5,000 college students - "had kind of lost its path," Carr said. Started more than 30 years, the annual event originally sought to bring together students from Alfred University and Alfred State College for fun, and to raise funds for community organizations. In recent years, the fun had overwhelmed the fund-raising mission, Carr and the others believed, but it's still important. Over a 10-year period, Hot Dog Day activities have raised more than \$75,000 to support community organizations, including the A.E. Crandall Hook and Ladder Co, the Alfred Station Fire Department, the Allegany County ARC, the Box of Books Library, Alfred Montessori School, Genesee Valley Habitat for Humanity, Allegany County Mental Health Association, and the American Red Cross. "Students didn't really know what Hot Dog Day was about," said Carr. "We wanted to draw attention to what it really is, and we wanted people to think about what they were doing during the weekend." Carr said there were three parts to the campaign: posters that shared with AU students the facts about Hot Dog Day, including how much money has been raised for community organizations; pledges that students signed to indicate they would be safe and respectful of others; and "Be Safe, Give Back, Have Fun" pins that students wore to remind them what the weekend is supposed to be about. "We considered the campaign to be a success," said Carr. "We got the message about the original intentions of Hot Dog Day out." Plus, he said, almost all the pins they had made were not just taken, but worn and being talked about. Carr said the students had a lot of assistance from Craig Arno, coordinator of diversity programming for the Division of Student Affairs, and Patricia Debertolis, assistant dean for new student programs for the Division. Carr is a graduate of Canandaigua Academy. His parents are Kenneth Carr and Robin Kline-Carr of Canandaigua, NY. Morrison, who is from Port Allegany, PA, and Matt Brown, who is from Staten Island, NY, graduated in May 2011. To, who is originally from Hong Kong, transferred to the University of Virginia after two years at Alfred University.