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Penn Greeks clear up 'Haze'

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[Anjali Tsui](#) (1)

While some might call it having a good time, alcohol consumption among college students is a theme that is attracting increased attention at Penn.

Tuesday, Phi Delta Theta, the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Affairs and the Interfraternity Council will be hosting a screening of *Haze*, a documentary about binge drinking and hazing on college campuses.

Haze was produced by the Gordie Foundation to share the story of Gordie Bailey, who died of alcohol poisoning in September 2004 following a hazing incident at the Chi Psi Fraternity house during his freshman year at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

According to Engineering senior Holt Cutler, who was two grades under Bailey when they attended St. Marks' School of Texas in Dallas, "the relevance of Gordie's story goes beyond the Greek community."

"The documentary will help to raise awareness about alcohol abuse," he said. "The drinking culture at Penn is definitely better than [at] most colleges, but there is much to be done."

Haze features interviews with Bailey's family and friends, as well as insights from psychologists and researchers on alcohol abuse.

Forty-four percent of college students in the U.S. are classified as binge drinkers, according to Harvard School of Public Health lecturer Henry Wechsler.

According to Joseph Califano Jr., from the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, alcohol is responsible for more than 1,700 deaths every year across the country. College students are especially at risk, as 22 percent meet the medical diagnostic criteria for alcohol abuse.

"This documentary is really moving and definitely makes an impact," said College junior Zach Hochster, who also attended St. Mark's with Bailey. Hochster recalls being shocked at the news of Bailey's death, adding that "he was a really popular kid — everyone knew him."

Tonight's screening will take place in room G17 of Claudia Cohen Hall at 7 p.m., and will be followed by a student-run discussion to raise awareness on the issue of binge drinking and improve the drinking culture at Penn.

"Hazing is a difficult topic that people aren't talking about a lot," added Cutler. "We're trying

to take the pressure off and let people speak their minds.”

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