

CU Student Group Honoring Gordie Bailey With 'Week Of Remembrance' Sept. 12-17

September 11, 2008

With the Sept. 17 anniversary of the death of University of Colorado at Boulder student Lynn "Gordie" Bailey Jr. approaching, the CU student-founded group Guidelines and Objectives of Responsible Drinking, or G.O.R.D., is honoring his memory by hosting several events emphasizing the dangers of binge drinking Sept. 12-17.

An 18-year-old freshman from Dallas, Bailey died of acute alcohol poisoning on Sept. 17, 2004, just weeks into the new school year, at the Chi Psi fraternity house off campus. The organization's national headquarters later dissolved the fraternity's Boulder chapter.

The "Week of Remembrance" will begin Friday, Sept. 12, with G.O.R.D. members planting 6,800 flags on Norlin Quadrangle to represent the estimated number of college students, ages 18 to 24, who have died in alcohol-related incidents since Bailey's death in 2004, according to Ramon de Jesus Rodriguez, president of G.O.R.D. A recent report by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism stated that an estimated 1,700 college students died from alcohol-related injuries in 2001, which is the figure G.O.R.D. used to determine the number of flags to post.

"The flags we are putting out represent those who have lost their lives from excessive drinking, excluding those who have been indirectly affected, such as deaths from drunk driving accidents," Rodriguez said. "We are hoping this visual will show students that they are far from invincible."

G.O.R.D. is partnering with university administrators on several events including the free, public campus premiere of the documentary "Haze," which examines the building crisis in America of binge drinking among young adults that has led to an increase in the number of alcohol-related deaths among college-aged people. The documentary will be shown on Sunday, Sept. 14, at 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. and Tuesday, Sept. 16, at 7:15 p.m. in the ATLAS building auditorium.

The "Week of Remembrance" will conclude with a public panel discussion about alcohol with CU-Boulder administrators and students on Wednesday, Sept. 17, at 7:15 p.m. in the Glenn Miller Ballroom. Deb Coffin, dean of students, Jane Curtis, director of CU-Boulder's alcohol and other drugs program, Jamal Ward, director of judicial affairs, Gardiner Tucker, residence life director and Victoria Garcia, University of Colorado Student Union tri-executive will make up the panel.

G.O.R.D. members also will be stationed on Norlin Quad Sept. 15-17, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. each day distributing water and talking with students about binge drinking and the dangers of alcohol abuse.

As president of G.O.R.D., Rodriguez has spent the past couple of years giving campus talks and helping spread the word about the dangers of binge drinking and alcohol abuse to groups all over campus. For the most part, he says getting students' attention and getting them to think about and possibly change their behavior can be an overwhelming challenge.

"Society has created a culture in which it is acceptable to overconsume," Rodriguez said. "We have a super-sized mentality coupled with an instilled competitiveness that translates to every part of our lives, including drinking, making students more prone to consume large quantities."

G.O.R.D.'s mission is "to teach and spread alcohol awareness to peers, and ultimately to create an

enlightened society in which people realize the risks involved with alcohol, conduct themselves accordingly, and actively share this knowledge with others."

For his part, Rodriguez says this week and next will have a personal component that will drive his commitment.

"Though my experience with Gordie was limited, I remember very clearly his smile and attitude," Rodriguez said. "He was friendly to everyone he met and took the time to get to know people. He remembered names and faces well, not because he tried, but because he cared. Vibrant, cheerful and confident is how I would describe him."

For more information about G.O.R.D. visit www.gordcolorado.com. For information about the Gordie Foundation visit www.gordie.org/home.aspx.

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