

“Freeze!” You might have heard that sound off your television as the cops put the grab on another bad guy, but in this case, the origins actually come from the children’s game called “Freeze. Unfreeze.” Remember those days when your friends would play Freeze Tag or any number of variations thereof? In simple terms, the idea of a child’s game is how we’re taking an adult approach to the subject of responsible alcohol consumption. Don’t worry, no speech from a fiery pulpit here, no graphic images of car crashes, or teenagers sticking needles in their arms while their drug dealers hover nearby. Our message is a simple one, “Freeze before doing something stupid.”

Since man first discovered the intoxicating effects of fermentation, alcohol has been a part of culture in every part of the world. It’s unrealistic to expect people to fully abstain from alcohol yet we can’t deny the tragic and devastating effects it has had on people’s lives. However, since we know that alcohol will always be available and around us, let’s acknowledge that we can take personal responsibility for our consumption choices and watch out for one another if things get a bit out of hand. Be a Wingman, be the one to say “Freeze” if your partner is incapable, and let’s watch out for each other to save lives.

In 2006, the Great Falls Police Department was awarded an extensive grant through the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Program for Enforcing Underage Drinking Laws (EUDL). The grant required that the applicant agency partner with an Air Force facility in order to target underage alcohol consumption and develop a common sense approach to those who legally consume alcohol. One of the caveats of the grant included using a concept developed by (Ret.) Colonel Evan Hoapili, the former commander of F.E. Warren AFB in Cheyenne, Wyoming, which included using the numbers **0-0-1-3** as a guide to responsible alcohol consumption. Translated, the numbers mean “Zero drinks if you’re under 21, zero DUI’s, 1 drink per hour, 3 drinks max.” In simple terms, if you’re underage – don’t drink, but if you are 21, then modify your consumption.



When Malmstrom Air Force Base and the local police department received the grant, they discovered that there were virtually no rules and the open-ended approach was up to each award recipient in how they wanted to creatively address the alcohol related problems in their community. On the local level, a number of groups were already in existence and working closely together, so it didn’t take much to develop a community coalition of over 15 organizations, including law enforcement, health care, military, and businesses. Serving as oversight to the grant, the coalition discussed their priorities and brought each of their resources and skills forward. The challenge was not in recognizing there was a problem, but in how the grant would be “creatively” applied. What had not been tried before?

Police department members decided on a more subtle approach to their marketing plan. By imbedding the number 0013 in a variety of messages



and a twist of humor, a natural curiosity might build within the community. Weren't people already tired of fire and brimstone messages about the dangerous effects of alcohol? Wouldn't they turn numb to one more message? Although ten years ago most people obtained their information from books and libraries, they now relied on Internet search engines for split-second answers to facts they were trying to gather. If the marketing plan could drive people to the Internet to find out what the message was, a website would serve as the educational source for responsible drinking. The birth of www.usa0013.com served as the common link to accomplish that goal.

The grant also covered the cost of video commercials. The officers chose to retain a professional video production company and collaborated to create a variety of entertaining commercials that avoided being "preachy" but still sent a message on alcohol consumption. The commercials include messages on the impact of fitness vs. alcohol, testimonials by young women who have been approached by intoxicated men trying to pick them up, and an entertaining clip of an elderly woman applying for a job, only to discover that an alcohol violation when she was a teenager in the 1930's left a permanent mark on her record. Since then, the themes have shifted to "Freeze before doing something stupid." They depict a character in his 20's who continually gets into trouble from stupid decisions he makes as a result of alcohol. Split seconds before some crazy act, another person nearby tells our character to "Freeze", resulting in some entertaining consequences.



When the first phase of the EUDL grant came to a close after four years, the results of the collaborative effort were astounding. A 30% reduction in MIP's (Minor in Possession) within the city limits and an 80% reduction in non-judicial punishment related cases at the military base. On the national level, the partnership between Malmstrom AFB and the Great Falls Police Department was being noticed and other military bases started modeling their programs similarly, even borrowing promotional materials and commercials. The public service announcements are now being shown as far away as Hawaii and it is anticipated that the results will be just as effective in many other communities.

In a statement released by Malmstrom AFB Wing Commander Michael Fortney, the program was lauded as a success. Said Colonel Fortney, "Malmstrom AFB is blessed to have such an involved partnership with its neighbors outside the gate. The Great Falls Police Department, in concert with the EUDL program, has been engaged in helping us lower our underage drinking and DUI rates and we've seen tremendous results. The leadership of the base and our Airmen have benefited from this partnership and we hope to keep it going for years to come."

Although it is often difficult to truly measure the effectiveness of these kinds of programs, officers, coalition members, and community leaders are encouraged at what is developing. For now, we hope

that people will use this website to educate themselves and that it can help serve as a conduit or forum for further discussion and it is our true desire that everyone will “Live by a Higher Code”.

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