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Art, awareness and prevention keep teens above the influence

By Charlotte Tallman For the Sun-News

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The Unified Prevention! (UP!) Coalition for a Drug-Free Do a Ana County is bringing art, awareness and prevention together through the Above the Influence (ATI) Art Project—a project asking teens to create their own visual expressions of the Above the Influence symbol.

Parents, organizations and schools are encouraged to include the ATI Art Project as an activity for teens, bringing both awareness to ATI and substance abuse prevention. Once teens submit their own unique ATI symbol, entries will be reviewed by an independent panel of judges from UP!. Top selections will be picked based on originality, art content and design, inspirational content and media potential. Entries should not have profanity, corporate logos or name brands or symbols of violence including guns, gang signs or symbols. Student's name, grade, participating school/organization, mailing address, email and phone number must be placed on the back of the artwork, which will not be visible at any point during the judging. Pre- and post-activity surveys must accompany each entry as well as a signed copy of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) "Permission to Use" form. The ATI Art Project Toolkit can be found at www.unifiedprevention.com.

ATI Art Projects must be submitted by Friday, Feb. 3 to the Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico (CFSNM) at 301 S. Church, Suite H., Las Cruces, NM 88001. Entries may be dropped off at the office or

mailed via USPS.

Judging will take place the week of Feb. 6. Once the top selections are made, students will be contacted and the art will be uploaded to Facebook (www.Facebook.com/beuplascruces) no later than Feb. 17. Online voting will end Friday, March 2.

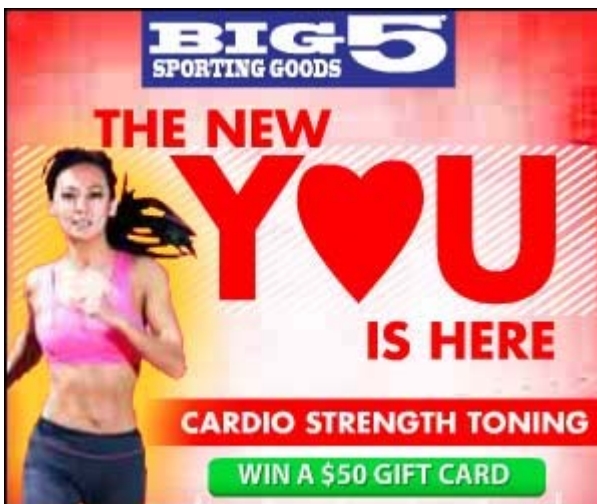
The White House ONDCP's National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign created ATI to capture the attention

of youth when they are most likely to be first exposed to substances of abuse and are most vulnerable to negative social and cultural influences. The brand has become a philosophy for teens and inspires them to think critically about drug use and the influence of their social environment so they can make more informed choices.

UP!, an initiative of the CFSNM, partnered with the ATI campaign as a community leader, allowing the campaign to deliver a prevention message at a national level, as well as more targeted efforts at the local community level. ATI targets youth ages 12-17, with an emphasis on ages 14-16, the critical transition years from middle school to high school when teens are most likely to initiate drug use.

"Youth who are aware of the Above the Influence campaign are consistently more likely to have stronger anti-drug beliefs compared to those unaware of the campaign and its national advertising efforts," said Jaylene McIntosh, coalition coordinator. "The brand awareness of Above the Influence allows the UP! Coalition to localize and customize the campaign's messages through projects like this."

A Community that's Aware is a Community that Cares is submitted by Charlotte Tallman, media campaign coordinator for the Unified Prevention! (UP!) Coalition for a Drug-Free Do a Ana County, an initiative of the Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico. For more information on the coalition, visit www.unifiedprevention.com or contact Jaylene McIntosh at (575) 521-4794 or jaylene@cfsnm.org



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