



Archives By Year

- 1995
- 1996
- 1997
- 1998
- 1999
- 2000
- 2001
- 2002
- 2003
- 2004

Masthead

- [About Us](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Editorial Staff](#)
- [Advertising](#)
- [Jobs at The Daily](#)

Recent Issues

2006-04-07

Copyright © 2006
The Daily
University of
Washington

[Return to Search Results](#)

Drinking and driving takes toll on families, community

Melissa Santos
2006-04-06

Robert Vasen's life ended because someone else had too much to drink.

Vasen, a UW junior, died the weekend of March 25 after a 1993 Jeep Cherokee ran a light in downtown Bellevue and T-boned the car he was riding in, according to several witnesses and a police report.

Police have now revealed that the Jeep's driver, 21-year-old Jarrod Wayne Bandy, had a blood alcohol level of twice the legal limit at the time of the accident.

Alcohol plays a part in about one out of 10 automobile accidents and nearly half of all driving fatalities, according to The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Each year, about 17,000 die from alcohol-related car crashes.

The problem is worst among people ages 21 to 34, said Lisa Arose, project coordinator for a safe ride home program at the Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center (HIPRC).

In a series of focus groups, researchers at HIPRC found many young adults had trouble assessing their level of impairment, Arose said.

"What the people in that age group were telling us is that they didn't really know they were over that limit," Arose said. "They kind of know when they're completely smashed, but they don't know where that gray area is when they shouldn't be driving."

For families, the results can be devastating.

"Any time it happens is one too many," said Jackie Vasen, Robert Vasen's sister.

What can be the most painful is that victims of drunk drivers are often not at fault, she said.

That was the case with Robert and his four friends, she said. The person driving the car Vasen rode in was not intoxicated, according to police.

"They were doing everything right," Jackie Vasen said. "They were responsible about who was driving."

Families who lose someone in a drunk driving accident often feel like that person was stolen from them, she said.

"Robert was so young -- he had so much in front of him," Vasen said.

HIPRC's Safe Ride Home program and organizations like Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) aim to reduce drunk driving fatalities through education and prevention, said Judy Eakin, regional executive director of MADD in the Pacific Northwest.

"All of us pay for what happens in one way or another," Eaken said. "We feel very strongly that the education process is a big piece of a puzzle. It's about letting people know that there are other ways to get home without impacting your life or someone else."

Reach Daily reporter Melissa Santos at:

[url='mailto:melissasantos@thedaily.washington.edu']melissasantos@thedaily.washington.edu[/url].

Copyright© 2006 The Daily University of Washington

[1995](#) - [1996](#) - [1997](#) - [1998](#) - [1999](#) - [2000](#) - [2001](#) - [2002](#) - [2003](#) - [2004](#)