



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Michael Scippa 415-548-0492
Jorge Castillo 213-840-3336

Alcohol Justice Announces Youth Video Winners

Kids Demand: Free Our Sports From Alcohol Ads

SAN RAFAEL, CA (April 11, 2013) – Three young filmmakers were awarded top prizes today for their entertaining counter-alcohol ads submitted to the 2013 Free Our Sports™ Youth Film Festival. The contest challenged them to help expose and eliminate global alcohol advertising, sponsorships, branding and promotions from every sport, from college games to the NFL championship, from the World Series to the World Cup and Olympics.

Winners of Alcohol Justice's Free Our Sports™ 2013 Youth Film Festival video contest:

First Prize (\$1000) – Adnan Islam, age 14, from Olathe, Kansas for his video “**Regrets**”

Second Prize (\$500) - James Jackson, age 20, from Allendale, Michigan, for his video “**Alcohol Ads and Kids**”

Third Prize (\$250) – Mikinley Weaver, age 17, from North Salt Lake, Utah, for his video “**The Right Message**”

“These were judged the best from entries that came in from states coast-to-coast, from Connecticut to California,” stated Michael Scippa, contest director and Director of Public Affairs for Alcohol Justice. *“We even received entries from Canada, and Australia this year and inquiries from the Ukraine. Clearly the issue of exploiting sports to sell alcohol resonates with youth around the globe.”*

Research has shown that the more alcohol ads kids see, the more likely they are to drink, drink to excess, and drink more often. In 2009, the **Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking** reported that 5,000 people under age 21 die annually from alcohol-related injuries. Hundreds of thousands more suffer alcohol-fueled sexual assaults, serious injuries, diseases, and academic failure.

“If you work hard at anything, you can make a difference...and I really thought that the Free Our Sports contest was a great way for kids to make a difference,” stated Adnan Islam, first place winner. *“Even if alcohol companies do not stop advertising to youth, at least the memorable videos will influence the decisions that young viewers make. Another reason I entered this contest was because I love the art of rapping. The negativity that mainstream hip-hop artists have brought to the craft has me bothered. Most raps you hear on the radio talk about engaging in risky or illegal activity. Somehow, people think that drugs and alcohol are cool. I want to prove that that's not what hip-hop*

is about. I've promised myself to make my music meaningful and to deliver a message that can somehow benefit my listeners and change the negative connotation of rap."

Big Alcohol (global beer, wine, and spirits corporations) will place 2 million alcohol ads on TV this year. Foreign-based alcohol corporations will spend half a billion dollars advertising during TV sports programs alone.

"It was important for me to enter this year because I really enjoy creating films that can make people aware and inspire positive change," stated James Jackson, 2nd prizewinner. *"Many people don't see how alcohol ads being promoted during sporting events is a real problem. I wanted to show them why. Awareness is the first step of change."*

Judges for this year's contest were:

- **John O. Whitaker, Jr., CATC**, (Johnny Whitaker), actor, substance counselor, and president of Paso Por Paso a San Fernando Valley non-profit support entity to help the Spanish-speaking addict find treatment and recovery in their own language.
- **Rami Al-odaini**, writer, singer, college student, and winner of the Free The Bowl® 2011 youth video contest.
- **Leonard Lee Buschel**, Founder of the International REEL RECOVERY FILM FESTIVAL and co-founder of Writers In Treatment (W.I.T.), a non-profit organization grounded in the arts and recovery fields. Mr. Buschel is a California Certified Substance Abuse Counselor with years of experience working directly with people struggling with addiction.
- **Michael Scippa**, *Free Our Sports*™ Contest Director, and Director of Public Affairs for Alcohol Justice.

Free Our Sports™ gives young people a digital forum to protest Big Alcohol's toxic social norm that binds alcohol to sports," added Scippa. *"They want industry to take notice and back-off the sports advertising, sponsorship, branding and celebrity endorsements that help fuel underage drinking and harm."*

Current and past Free The Bowl® videos can be found at FreeOurSports.org
Background information on the effects of alcohol advertising on youth can be found at AlcoholJustice.org

###