



UNIVERSITY of  
MASSACHUSETTS  
150 Infirmary Way  
Amherst, MA 01003-9288

University Health Services

voice: 413.577.5000

fax: 413.577.5488

## PRESS RELEASE

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**Contact: Karen Dunbar Scully, UHS Communications & Marketing**  
**(413) 577-5077; [kdscully@uhs.umass.edu](mailto:kdscully@uhs.umass.edu)**

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# Benefit concert and art project raising awareness about student stress, substance abuse

AMHERST, Mass. – A painful loss is serving as the catalyst for two events designed to raise awareness and break down barriers around student stress and substance abuse.

Darby Fassett, a member of UMass Amherst's class of 2009, died May 7, 2008 of an accidental drug overdose. Now, his family, friends and the university community are reaching out, through "**Be the One**," a creative art project and memorial benefit concert.

Through art and music, organizers are calling attention to the challenges young people can face and the resources available to them. "We're remembering the passing of a talented, delightful student and working to prevent this tragedy from happening to others," said Dan Fassett, Darby's father and one of the event planners. "Each of us has the ability to 'Be the One' who makes a difference, by speaking up with love and courage from both sides of this experience."

The **concert** takes place Friday, May 8, 7 p.m. – midnight at Bowker Auditorium at UMass. The eclectic lineup of bands and performance artists lending their talents includes:

- guitarist **Ben Renda**;
- **4-Bee's-B-4**, with old-school roots, rock and reggae;
- alt-rockers **Bunny's a Swine**;
- **Crescent Hill Band**, blending punk and experimental sounds;
- area drama innovators **Peripitus Theater Company**;
- rap and funk with **Doctors of Flight**; and
- **DPR Sound**, combining reggae, groove rock and ska.

Tickets are available online from the Fine Arts Center box office, [www.umass.edu/fac](http://www.umass.edu/fac); by phone, (413) 255-1087 or toll-free, (800) 999-2657; and at the door beginning one hour prior to showtime. Admission is \$5 for students and \$15 for the general public; donations are also welcome at the door. Proceeds will benefit substance abuse prevention initiatives through the university's Center for Alcohol and other Drug Abuse Prevention (CADAP).

Beginning April 28, **creative art stations** in the Campus Center concourse will give students an opportunity to visually express their feelings about grief, loss, memory, hope and recovery. Participants can work at the stations, independently, or at the university's Craft Center through the end of the semester. Artworks will be framed and displayed in galleries, residence halls, the Campus Center and other high-visibility venues across campus.

Elise Forcino, a UMass senior and Darby's close friend, was awarded a UMass Arts Council grant for the project. "I want to create connection to help break down the silence around issues like this. I want people to feel they have support ... and that none of us are alone," she explained in her grant application. A website created by Darby's family and friends is providing another venue to keep memories alive and create connections; visit [www.darbyfassett.org](http://www.darbyfassett.org).

CADAP promotes responsible decision-making around alcohol and other drug use on the UMass Amherst campus and in the community. Established in 2006 as part of the Health Education department at University Health Services, CADAP employs cutting-edge approaches to reduce dangerous behaviors and increase awareness. Learn more at [www.umass.edu/uhs/cadap](http://www.umass.edu/uhs/cadap).