

## Sample letter for Greek fraternity and sorority leaders and members to include in newsletters and online Web sites



Dear Members:

As organizations founded on principles of leadership, unity and strength, and as respected members of Greek fraternities and sororities, the ability to encourage and inspire is an everyday path of existence. As **[insert official title]** of this organization, I seek your knowledge, expertise, and wisdom to encourage others to pursue a path of safety and to make the right choices this holiday season and every day.

Kwanzaa is quickly approaching, and with it comes a time for all of us to reaffirm our commitment to ourselves, our families, our community, and the struggle for equality. It's a time for celebration and reflection on the seven principles designed to uplift the African-American community.

One of these seven principles talks of responsibility. During this time of year when many celebrate Kwanzaa – and other holidays -- that responsibility extends to educating our loved ones about the dangers associated with impaired driving, and the importance of selecting a designated driver before attending any event where alcohol will be served. We must also be prepared to intervene if we see someone who has had too much to drink attempting to drive home. This one act can save many lives!

According to statistics compiled by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration , someone in America is injured every two minutes in an alcohol-related crash. Every 31 minutes, someone is killed in an alcohol-related crash. Moreover, African-American drivers and pedestrians over 40 years old tend to have higher percentages of alcohol-related fatalities than whites of the same age, and are less likely to be belted at the time of the crash. And as far as young people, alcohol use contributes to the three leading causes of death among African-American 12- to 20-year-olds: homicide, unintentional injuries (including car crashes) and suicide.

We need to also remember that NHTSA's new *Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest.* campaign means that drivers who are caught driving while impaired or allowing another to do so can be arrested, have their licenses revoked, have their insurance rates increased, or be given hefty fines. According to the Centers for Disease Control, in 2004 more than 1.4 million drivers were arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics. This is an arrest rate of 1 for every 139 licensed drivers in the United States.

Driving while impaired or allowing another to do so can result in tragic consequences, so remember the principle of "Umoja" that reminds African-Americans to strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation and race. Let's define ourselves as positive, safe and healthy. Alcohol-related crashes destroy families and that destroys communities, so embrace the principle of "Collective Work and Responsibility" that makes us responsible for each other.

Celebrate, but please do it safely.

Habari Gani