



# Local teen rap artists win GRAMMY experience for songs about preventing drug abuse

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*Contest promoted locally through Safe Schools/Healthy Students and Drug Free Alton Coalition*

Local Alton High School teens are first place winners in a music composition contest, with a music video that focuses on personal experience living around drugs. The contest was promoted locally through the joint efforts of the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative (SS/HS) and the Drug Free Alton Coalition. Daevion Caves and Jordan Atkins were the winners of the Musicares® and GRAMMY Foundation's Teen Substance Abuse Awareness through Music Contest. The contest celebrates National Drug Facts Week, a seven-day observance launched last week by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA).

Caves, an 18-year-old junior, and Atkins, a 16-year-old sophomore, are students at Alton High School. Their entry, a music video entitled "Drug Free State of Mind," ([click here to view: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ad3iNm5I9yw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ad3iNm5I9yw)), shows the boys living daily around drug use, but having the courage to stay drug-free. This entry was made in collaboration with classmate Ben Bregenzer, a computer technology enthusiast. Caves and Atkins are part of a positive rap group called the "618 Boyz", a group sponsored by Alton High school social worker Linda Wittman.

The contest was open to teens ages 14-18. Entrants were asked to compose or create an original song and/or music video that explores, encourages and celebrates a healthy lifestyle or accurately depicts a story about drug abuse. The winners will attend a rehearsal of the 53<sup>rd</sup> Annual GRAMMY Awards and take part in a "Backstage

Experience” on Feb. 13, 2011 in Los Angeles. The duo were also awarded \$500. Their video is featured on the NIDA, ThinkMTV and Grammy365 websites.

Atkins said “I wanted to do this for my Grandpa. Alcohol use has affected my family and I see how it causes struggles in my community. I am trying to influence people to stay away from drugs and violence”. Caves added “ I feel like I better myself when I lend a hand to others. We hope it will let people know how tough it is growing up in the streets, but give them hope of a better tomorrow if they rise above their situation”.

### **About Alton’s Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative**

The Federal Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative (SS/HS) has funded more than 350 urban, suburban, rural and tribal areas nationwide since 1999. This grant is the result of a unique collaboration among the U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Justice, and was created in response to rising concerns about youth violence and school safety. Locally, SS/HS helps reduce the risk factors that come between children of all ages and their ability to learn – and helps them to stay safe and healthy. Together with Drug Free Alton, SS/HS works on the goals to lower the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs among youth.

- For more information on the Federal SS/HS Initiative, visit <http://www.sshs.samhsa.gov>.
- For more information on Alton SS/HS grant, programs, and services, contact Sandy Crawford at 618-433-4907, [scrawford@altonschools.org](mailto:scrawford@altonschools.org).
- For information on Drug Free Alton FCoalition, contact Melanie Nagel, 618-288-3100, ext. 3375, [mdnagel@chestnut.com](mailto:mdnagel@chestnut.com) or visit [www.drugfreealton.com](http://www.drugfreealton.com)
- For more information about the The MusiCares® and GRAMMY Foundation's® Teen Substance Abuse Awareness through Music Contest visit: <http://drugfactsweek.drugabuse.gov/contest.php>