

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Monrovia Unified Students Experience Drunken Driving Dangers through Simulated Auto Crash

MONROVIA – Twisted metal, shards of broken glass and pools of fake blood littered West Colorado Boulevard on May 16 in front of Monrovia High School, where two colliding vehicles kicked off the school’s “Every 15 Minutes” program to demonstrate for juniors and seniors the very real perils of operating a car while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

“Hopefully, this event will help some people see how important it is to not drink and drive,” Associated Student Body President Brenda Hernandez said. “I hope showing them how a drunken driving scenario plays out will make an impact on the students this year.”

The program comes ahead of Monrovia High School’s prom on May 19 and graduation on June 7.

“Monrovia Unified’s top priority is providing a safe environment for all students,” Monrovia Unified Board Vice President Terrence Williams said. “With prom, summer vacation and college right around the corner, it’s imperative that our students take these lessons to heart.”

The event, coordinated by activities director and math teacher Sandy Duff, featured a simulated car crash, rescue efforts from police officers and firefighters, dramatized injuries and deaths of several students, a mock student arrest and guest presentations detailing real-life drunken driving consequences.

“I would love for this event to make students think about drinking and driving and the effects it can have on others,” Duff said. “We want them to make smart decisions and to think about their families and other people on the road before they drive under the influence.”

A Monrovia High counselor and alumnus dressed as grim reapers to pull several students from their classrooms every 15 minutes before the crash scenario to become the “living dead,” representing lives lost to drunken driving. All “living dead” students and crash scene participants were kept overnight at a nearby hotel with no contact to the outside world for 24 hours, hosting team-building activities and writing sorrowful letter to their families. Mock vigils with eulogies from family and friends were also held.

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Inspire students to engage in meaningful learning in a safe and nurturing environment that embraces diversity.

Challenge students to be ethical, productive members and leaders of the community.

OUR VISION

Our students will be ethical, compassionate individuals who:

- graduate from high school prepared for college and career,
- contribute and adapt to an ever-changing world by being resourceful and responsible citizens, and
- embrace diversity.

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During the second day, all Monrovia High juniors and seniors attended a mock funeral with the living dead students hoisting a casket to the front of the auditorium and placing flowers inside. All students reflected on their experiences as they watched a video of the simulated crash scene from the day before and as their peers were transported to the hospital and mortuary.

“This event is gut-wrenching – even knowing that it is a simulation,” Monrovia Unified Superintendent Dr. Katherine Thorossian said. “It takes a great deal of coordination between the school, California Highway Patrol, Monrovia Police Department and the City of Monrovia to pull this off. This is an investment given without hesitation because it is an investment in our students.”

This is the sixth “Every 15 Minutes” event held by Monrovia High, funded by a \$6,000 grant from the California Highway Patrol. Duff said applying for the grant, choosing students to participate in the crash scene, selecting “living dead” students, hiring makeup artists and coordinating with police officers, firefighters and mortuary companies is a yearlong process.

PHOTO CAPTIONS

052217_MUSD_15MINS1: Three Monrovia High School students sit in stunned silence in the aftermath of a simulated drunken driving collision for the “Every 15 Minutes” program on May 16. The program illustrated the dangers and consequences of driving under the influence for the school’s juniors and seniors.

052217_MUSD_15MINS2: The Grim Reaper and more than 200 Monrovia High juniors and seniors look on as emergency medical service workers rush a victim to a nearby ambulance on May 16 as part of the “Every 15 Minutes” program, which illustrated for students the dangers and consequences of driving under the influence.

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