



Whittier Union HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

To Achieve and Maintain Excellence...

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 8, 2024 **CONTACT:** Andrea Garcia **PHONE:** 909-447-2403

Santa Fe High School Students Witness Dangers of Driving Impaired with ‘Every 15 Minutes’ Program

WHITTIER – Santa Fe High School juniors and seniors huddled with friends and peers on the campus front lawn on April 4, in front of a two-car-wreck with shattered glass and broken metal parts littering the driveway as a severely-injured individual dangled on the hood of one of the cars.

To complete the dramatized scenario, a recording of a car accident played on the loudspeaker, followed by a rehearsed 911 call from a student in one of the cars, pleading for help and to be removed from the wreckage.

This simulated car crash scene marked the first day of the “Every 15 Minutes” program for Santa Fe High students, a two-day presentation that boldly shows the dangerous consequences of driving while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

The national campaign begins with the staged rescue efforts and dramatized student deaths and concludes with a mock funeral of the students who were selected to represent the statistic that ‘every 15 minutes’ someone dies in the United States from an alcohol-related traffic collision.

“I have personal experience with people thinking it’s okay to drink and drive, and my hope is if they see someone they care about as a victim in one of these avoidable accidents, it might help them change their ideas,” Santa Fe High School senior Emily Scott said.

As a new driver, Scott said it is anxiety-inducing to be on the road knowing that not all drivers are responsible when behind the wheel.

The program is hosted in partnership with the City of Santa Fe Springs Department of Police Services, Whittier Police Department, California Highway Patrol, and Santa Fe Springs Department of Fire-Rescue.

During the first day’s car crash simulation, police and firefighters accessed the scene, cut open a totaled vehicle to retrieve survivors, and declared a student as “fatally wounded”. The scene closed with a mock student arrest.

“Older siblings of mine were involved in the program, and they said it was very impactful for them,” Santa Fe sophomore Samuel Zamora said. “I want to be able to teach my fellow peers and it feels even more important since I’ll be driving soon.”

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Scott and Zamora were part of the group of students who were pulled from class to show a visual representation of the ‘every 15 minutes’ statistic. Throughout the school day, the Grim Reaper pulled students from class to make them part of the “living dead,” symbolized with skull makeup.

“Sometimes people think that they are sober enough to drive when they aren’t,” Santa Fe junior Alondra Quintero said. “Events like this one are important because they can potentially prevent the loss of life.”

On April 5, the program concluded with a mock funeral and school assembly, featuring a video documenting the previous day’s events with excerpts from students who were “fatally wounded.” Students who were part of the “living dead” spent the first night at an overnight retreat to reflect on their experience, and their words of pain and loss were shared during the mock funeral.

“Santa Fe High School is proud to partner with our local agencies to host the ‘Every 15 Minutes’ program because it is important for our juniors and seniors to know that personal safety and community care are always connected,” Principal Craig Campbell said. “This program shows students that they are responsible for their safety and that of others. Thank you to all of our students and staff who helped put this program together.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS

WUHSD_15MINUTES1: A Santa Fe High School student faces the consequences of driving impaired during a dramatized two-car-wreck scenario on April 4, presented as part of the school’s “Every 15 Minutes” program.

WUHSD_15MINUTES2: During the dramatized scenario as part of the "Every 15 Minutes" program on April 4, a Santa Fe High School student, simulated to be “critically injured,” receives assistance from the Santa Fe Springs Department of Fire-Rescue.

WUHSD_15MINUTES3: During the April 4 "Every 15 Minutes" program, Santa Fe High School students participate as the "living dead," symbolized with skull makeup.

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OUR MISSION:

The Whittier Union High School District provides all students with an engaging, quality standards-based instructional program delivered by a well-trained staff resulting in improved student achievement. Whittier Union High School District works to achieve and maintain excellence in providing a comprehensive education for all students.

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