



WHITTIER UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

To Achieve and Maintain Excellence...

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 2, 2026 **CONTACT:** Andrea Garcia **PHONE:** 909-447-2403

Whittier Union Students Witness Dangers of Impaired Driving Through 'Every 15 Minutes'

WHITTIER – Santa Fe High School juniors and seniors took part in the nationally recognized "Every 15 Minutes" program on April 1-2, participating in a two-day presentation designed to demonstrate the consequences of driving under the influence and promote responsible decision-making among students.

The program opened with a staged car crash simulation on campus, where students gathered to witness a realistic emergency response to a mock collision involving their peers. The dramatized scene included a simulated 911 call, first responders securing the area, and emergency personnel working to rescue injured students and transport them for medical care, providing a visual representation of the real-life impact of impaired driving.

"Hearing people's stories about drunk driving has been really eye-opening and sad," Santa Fe High Junior Ava Aguirre said. "When I was acting my part and heard my friend's mom screaming for him, I started imagining that it was really happening to me. Being a part of this has really had an impact on me."

"Every 15 Minutes" is a national program that uses realistic scenarios and student participation to show the emotional and legal consequences of impaired driving. Throughout the first day, selected students were removed from class to represent the statistic that someone in the United States dies in an alcohol-related traffic collision every 15 minutes. These students participated in reflective activities and an overnight retreat before returning the following day to share their experiences.

The two-day event concluded with a mock funeral and school assembly, where students reflected on the experience and heard messages focused on safety, responsibility, and the importance of making informed choices behind the wheel.

The assembly reinforced the program's message on safe driving and highlighted the impact of individual choices on families and communities.

"It's a full-circle moment for me, because I participated in 'Every 15 Minutes' when I was in high school," Santa Fe School Resource Officer Kaitlyn Lara said. "Now, after four years on the job, I've seen the real-life consequences, so reading those obituaries and pulling those students out of class is emotional for me. You can see the shift in students — once they hear the funeral details, it really sinks in that this could happen to someone they know."

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The program was hosted in partnership with the City of Santa Fe Springs Department of Police Services, Whittier Police Department, California Highway Patrol, Santa Fe Springs Department of Fire-Rescue, and Mercy Air, whose personnel participated in the simulation and provided students with firsthand insight into emergency response procedures.

“The ‘Every 15 Minutes’ program provides our students with a powerful and realistic look at the consequences of impaired driving while encouraging thoughtful decision-making and personal responsibility,” Santa Fe High School Principal Craig Campbell said. “Thank you to our student leaders, staff, and community partners for their time, care, and commitment in creating a meaningful experience that supports the safety and well-being of our students and community.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS

WUHSD_15MINUTES1: Emergency responders transport a Santa Fe High School student to an ambulance during a staged car crash simulation on April 1 as part of the “Every 15 Minutes” program.

WUHSD_15MINUTES2: A group of Santa Fe High School students take part of the “living dead” during the school’s “Every 15 Minutes” program on April 1. “Living dead” students represented the number of lives lost in alcohol-related collisions.

WUHSD_15MINUTES3: A Whittier Police officer detains a Santa Fe High School student portraying an impaired driver during the school’s “Every 15 Minutes” program on April 1.

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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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