



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: Valerie Martinez

Juliette Funes

(909) 445-1001

Santa Fe High's 'Every 15 Minutes' Program Reveals Devastating Consequences of Drunk Driving

WHITTIER – A mock 9-1-1 broadcast blared through Santa Fe High School's PA system during the late morning of April 1, alerting students that the "Every 15 Minutes" program had officially begun.

The two-day program presents the devastating consequences of drinking alcohol and getting behind the wheel by incorporating realistic scenarios, beginning with a simulated auto crash. Held in front of the school on April 1, the staged crash involved a Santa Fe High student "fatality" and an "injured" student who was transported via ambulance to a local hospital.

"Although students understood ahead of time that this was a simulated accident, it still created a lasting impact by demonstrating firsthand the potentially fatal consequences alcohol and drug impairment can have," Santa Fe High Principal Kevin Jamero said.

The event, presented to Santa Fe High's 1,100 juniors and seniors, was a collaborative effort between Santa Fe High and the cities of Santa Fe Springs and Whittier, the California Highway Patrol, Los Angeles County Fire and Police departments, Santa Fe Springs Fire Department and Whittier Police Department.

Throughout the day, a Grim Reaper pulled students from classes every 15 minutes without warning to become one of the "living dead, representing the number of lives lost to drunken driving. These students did not return to their classes, instead participating in an overnight retreat without contact with their family and friends. Later that evening, students were given the opportunity to write personal letters to family and friends, reflecting on the retreat and everything that had happened during the day.

"The hardest part was walking around all day with the dead face and seeing my friends' reactions," said senior Marley Figueroa-Munoz. "When they looked at me and I saw the shock on their face, it felt real. I promise never to drink and drive."

On April 2, a mock funeral was held to honor the student fatality from the simulated crash. Figueroa-Munoz read the anti-drunk driving poem "Death of an Innocent."

Students also listened to the true stories of individuals involved in or affected by drunk driving-related crashes. Jason Barber, a Southern California resident, told students about the life-changing day that he unintentionally killed his brother in an automobile accident while speed racing under the influence of alcohol in 1991.

Emotions ran high as the event concluded with a school assembly slideshow of the previous day's events and students were reunited with their families and friends.

"Although the rawness of this program is difficult to experience, the dangers associated with drinking and driving are very real," Whittier Union High School District Superintendent Sandra Thorstenson said. "We hope this event encourages students to make mature, responsible decisions so that they may pursue vibrant opportunities within their education, careers and every aspect of their lives."

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

15MINUTES1: Santa Fe High School students, declared the "living dead," and the Grim Reaper watch the Every 15 Minutes event take place in front of the school on April 1, 2015.

15MINUTES2: Presented to Santa Fe High's 1,100 juniors and seniors, the Every 15 Minutes event is a two-day program that includes a mock funeral service held the following day.

15MINUTES3: The Every 15 Minutes event showcased the devastating consequences of drinking alcohol and getting behind the wheel by incorporating realistic scenarios, beginning with a simulated auto crash.

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*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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9401 S. Painter Avenue, Whittier, California 90605-2798 ■ (562) 698-8121 ■ www.wuhsd.org