

Rush Henrietta DWI Re-enactment May 2007

Good Morning, my wife and I would like to thank you for inviting us to come and talk to you today, the morning before your Senior Ball. Now, if we could have a few moments of silence. (30 seconds) Thank you. During the time we were quiet, someone was killed by a drunk driver.

The Virginia Tech tragedy earlier this year was terrible, terrible for the people killed, their families, and their friends. Do you think on that day, more people were killed by DWI or by the Virginia Tech killer? The answer is DWI.

Our son Matthew was killed on July 21, 2004, since that time, do you think more people were killed by DWI or by the war in Iraq? The answer is DWI, by almost a factor of 10 to 1, 10 to 1!!

In Monroe County about 4,000 people are convicted of DWI every year, another 40,000 are estimated to be driving drunk but not caught. You can attend a Victim's Impact panel every 6 – 8 weeks at MCC where victims talk to people convicted of DWI. Between 400 and 600 people are in the auditorium every time. Some of these people actually drive to the presentation drunk and are denied admittance to the session. Think about that for a few moments, they drive drunk to a presentation about drunk driving where victims of that crime will be talking to them.

We are asked why do we come to your DWI re-enactment every year? We ask ourselves the same question as this is one of the more difficult things we do each year. First of all, we need to tell you that we would be disappointed if you didn't invite us to talk. However, we usually go home afterward, totally exhausted, drained, and we cry, we think about our son Matthew and we sleep.

The answer to the question, why do we do this every year is.... We pray that by our coming and talking to you, by putting a face to the crime, by helping to make this a bit more real for you, you will choose not to drink and drive, and you will also be on alert as you now know there are other drivers who have chosen poorly, they have chosen to drink and drive.

We are always relieved when we open the newspaper on Saturday and we don't read about one of you, one of you getting hurt or killed. Please be careful. The group of people standing behind us represent the number of people who have been killed by drunk drivers since we first started talking to you this morning.

Thank you for listening.