



98% of patients would return
to our Family Birth Place.

We know
because
we ask.

CLICK HERE TO
OUR PATIENT RAI

Unity Hospital
BETTER BY ANY ME.

This is a printer friendly version from the Democrat and Chronicle:

April 22, 2007

Suburban spotlight: Gruesome simulation puts a face on DWI

Erica Bryant
Staff writer

On Thursday morning, broken glass was scattered across the parking lot at Aquinas Institute.

A minivan and a sedan sat in the lot, mangled by an apparent head-on collision. Inside the vehicles were four students, blood and screams.

This marked one of several re-enactments of fatal drunken-driving accidents that will be taking place at high schools across Monroe County during prom season. It was staged by the Monroe County Sheriff's Office, Rochester Police Department, New York State Police, and Rural Metro Ambulance.

All juniors and seniors at Aquinas were summoned to watch.

John Mitrano, a senior who lives in the city, played the drunken driver who caused the fatal accident. He is a member of the Aquinas Community Emergency Response Team and knows people who have been injured in accidents caused by drunken drivers.

"I wanted to help my friends see," he said, "so this doesn't happen more often."

His father, Rochester Fire Department Deputy Chief Salvatore Mitrano, has been called to the scene of a number of accidents caused by drunken drivers.

Mitrano, who helped run the re-enactment, said today's vehicles are more structurally sound, which makes it harder to extract victims from a car crash.

As rescue workers used the Jaws of Life to break apart the car and free the students during the simulation, Monroe County Sheriff's Deputy Dan Lyon reminded the crowd that rescue workers typically have one hour to get seriously injured accident victims to the hospital.

"Imagine what it would be like if it were your friend in the front seat, not moving, not answering when you call her name," Lyon said.

James Hasson, a junior from Pittsford, said the simulation gave him insight into what can happen when people drink and drive.

"It's not every day you see the worse-case scenario," he said.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving says that more than 1,300 people are killed in drunken driving accidents each year. According to the most recent Monroe County public safety statistics, 23 people were killed in car crashes where alcohol was a factor in 2005. Nearly half of all traffic fatalities that year involved drinking.

Lyon knows of about a dozen local schools have requested re-enactments.

"They see the horrors of what can happen," said Bill Geraci, the principal at Churchville-Chili High School, where an accident will be staged in May. "It's pretty powerful."

At Greece Athena, an accident simulation will be part of a DWI awareness week that will start on Friday.

The school will also participate in the "Every 15 Minutes" program during which certain students will be pulled from class and return wearing black. They will represent students killed in drunken driving accidents and spend the rest of the school day not speaking to or interacting with their peers.

Parents of students who were selected to participate in these activities were asked to write obituaries for their children that will be posted in a memorial area.

"They've chosen a diverse cross-section of students," said Jama Koester, Athena's assistant principal for 12th grade.

"To exemplify that drunken driving can affect anyone, not just the kids who you think would be the partiers on the weekend."

Aquinas' re-enactment ended with a description of what it's like for parents to go to the Monroe County Medical Examiner's Office and identify their child after he or she has been killed by a drunken driver.

Some student spectators hugged each other as they watched. Others had tears in their eyes.

"You don't need a lot of alcohol in the bloodstream to cause this kind of mayhem," said Doyle.

EBRYANT@DemocratandChronicle.com

[Back](#)

Copyright © 2007 Rochester Democrat and Chronicle | 55 Exchange Boulevard | Rochester, NY 14614 | (585) 232-7100. All rights reserved.

Use of this site signifies your agreement to the [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy](#), updated June 7, 2005.