

Hoquiam Students Reminded "Every 32 Minutes" of Impaired Driving Consequences

Local News

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HOQUIAM, Wash. - The Hoquiam Police Department, Hoquiam School District and the Grays Harbor Target Zero Task Force teamed up together to present the "Every 32-Minute" program at Hoquiam High School on Wednesday May 8th, 2013 with the final assembly on Thursday May 9th, 2013. The timing of this program coincides with the end of the school year and graduation. The intent of this two-day program is to show the emotional and human impact of driving while intoxicated or distracted while driving. In this country, someone dies as a result of impaired driving every 32-minutes. The following is a synopsis of the program from Susan Bradbury of the Grays Harbor Target Zero Task Force: What this project does is put students as close to an impaired driving fatality as you can get without it actually happening. Statistics show that every 32-minutes someone in our country is killed by an impaired driver. Previously every 15-minutes...so we are making progress. Students have been selected in advance with parental permission and involvement. Parents and students have been meeting with staff so they fully understand their roles and the delicate nature of the program.

On day one, students went to class as normal. Every 32-minutes, a dispatch report of a collision went over the school intercom. At some point in the day, the selected student was visited by the "Grim Reaper" in class. Paramedics then put them on a gurney and a close friend or sibling of the student read an obituary over the loud speaker. The "dead" student was taken to our staging area, their faces were painted white and they wore a black robe. The student then returned to class but did not talk or interact with anyone the rest of the day. They are "dead". There was a mock car crash in front of the entire student body where paramedics worked on an "injured" student. Officers then investigated the intoxicated driver and made an arrest. An Airlift Northwest Helicopter landed at the scene to remove one of the grievously injured students from the mock crash. Final assembly: At the final assembly held on Thursday, the entire school and all parents were invited. This is highly emotional as students speak about their perspective. The keynote speaker was Jennie Reed. Reed's son was killed by an impaired driver in 1981. She told us about her son attending Elma High School and going onto the University of Washington. Reed talked about how she had spoken to her son earlier in the evening and a few hours later learn her son was the victim in a fatality collision. The police department is very proud of this Program and commends the interest and involvement of the Hoquiam School District and the HHS Students.