



County of Los Angeles

Probation Department

Rebuilding Lives, Providing for Healthier and Safer Communities

L.A. PROBATION POMONA AREA OFFICE STAFF BRING AWARENESS TO YOUTH ABOUT DANGERS OF DRUNK DRIVING

Probation's DUI and school-based units participate in Every 15 Minutes program



Drunk Driving Accident Simulation at Village Academy High School in Pomona

On April 12-13, staff members from Probation's specialized DUI Unit and School-Based Unit participated in the nationally recognized Every 15 Minutes program at Village Academy High School in the Pomona Unified School District. For the last four years these Probation units have devoted their time and effort to this worthwhile two-day event.

Every 15 Minutes strives to recreate the real-life consequences of drinking and driving with a realistic portrayal of an accident scene and the harsh consequences that accompany the decision to drink and drive. It also employs a portrayer of the Grim Reaper removing a student from class every 15 minutes as a visible demonstration of the statistic that indicates every 15 minutes someone dies from an alcohol-related accident.



Accident Simulation as part of Every 15 Minutes Program at Pomona's Village Academy High School

As part of the program, 19 students visited a hospital-morgue, a mortuary and participated in an overnight retreat at an area hotel. As part of the retreat, Probation clients who are currently on active probation for DUI-related offenses spoke to the students about how their choice to drive while intoxicated has impacted them and their family. The DUI DPO's also shared stories regarding their role in the supervision of adults who have made the poor decision to drink and drive.

The program culminated the following day at a student assembly where three students read their own obituary to their parents and their parents read goodbye letters to the youth. The students also heard from a DUI victim who lost his wife and two young children due to an accident with a multiple drunk driver offender.

"This program really makes you think about the consequences of drinking and driving," stated SDPO Kristine Kucharik. "The simulated funeral where letters of goodbye from the victims to their parents and from the parents to their children were read was emotionally overwhelming."

This re-enactment could not have taken place without the following participating agencies helping to make the accident scene and the entire process as realistic as possible: Los Angeles County Fire Department, C.A.R.E. Ambulance, Pomona Police Department, Pomona Valley Hospital, California Highway Patrol, Pomona Unified School District, Make-up Artists from the Cosmetology School, Videographers from Village Academy High School and Forest Lawn Mortuary.

"I am so pleased that our probation staff willingly participated in this event," said Pomona Area Office Director Debbie Nelson. "They add so much value to programs of this nature because they facilitate the youth's first-hand encounter with probation clients who can best articulate the consequences of driving under the influence."