

Students receive a

CRASH course

in the dangers of drinking and driving



Mass Casualty Incident Drill presents students with a harsh reality

check about the consequences of drunk and distracted driving

The Seminole County Middle High School (SCMHS) chapter of Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) and the SCMHS Drama department sponsored and participated in a Mass Casualty Incident Drill on Thursday morning, April 1.

Georgia State Trooper Brian Palmer spoke with high school students about the dangers of driving under the influence and gave several examples of the negative impacts that decision can have on others. Students were then escorted to the front of the building where a mock accident scene was set up with students from the Drama department acting as victims in the scene of an accident. Some students were “driving under the influence” while others were sober. A mock 911 call was made and first responders arrived and reacted to the scene they found.

Students gathered around the flag pole and watched first responders use the Jaws of Life to cut the roof off a grey sedan to extract one of their classmates, Arionna Soto, a student actor among several from the school’s drama club asked to participate.

Nearby, another student actor, Breanna Fletcher, cried as she performed chest compressions to try to “save” the life of a friend who had been thrown out of the car and was lying on the ground in a pool of stage blood. When a police officer arrived to check her pulse, he announced on his police radio she was dead, followed by a firefighter placing a white sheet over her body.

Meanwhile, paramedics loaded another student who had been pulled from the mangled car into an Life Flight helicopter to be transported to the hospital.

The scene depicted the aftermath of a distracted driver who had crashed her car into another car full of students, leading to multiple injuries, three fatalities and an arrest.

The scenario-based exercise was a chance for police, firefighters, medical staff and paramedics to practice how they’d handle the situation.

Among the agencies involved were Seminole County Middle High School’s S.A.D.D. Club and Drama Club.

Seminole High Senior Breanna Fletcher, who led the student involvement aspect of the demonstration, said she sees distracted driving occur “all the time” among her friends and when she’s driving on the street.

“It’s something that needs to be addressed, and it’s not always talked about,” she said. “One thing that we wanted to make clear is that it impacts everyone.”

Fletcher, who was covered in stage blood, said it was important to have a death in each of the vehicles in the mock crash, because “it’s more impactful” for young people to realize that distracted driving can kill a passenger in another car or even one of their own passengers.

“It’s just second nature to pull out your phone to answer a text at a stoplight or answer a phone call. Even that split-second of a distraction can have terrible repercussions,” she said.

The most sobering moment was seeing friends react to their dead friend. Real tears flowed, as their friends were carried off into emergency vehicles.

Simple things like calling a sober parent or friend or wearing a seat belt can prevent officers from having to deliver devastating news to parents of young people.

“We hate to see that happen,” School Officer Jeffery Lawson said. “We think that these statistics are 100 percent preventable. If we can take events like this to educate our youth, they can see that there are real consequences to the choices we all make.”

“Bringing in multiple agencies for the scenario helped add realism to the exercise,” he said.

Loss of life is not the only serious consequence, Drama Club Coach Maribeth Burke noted, but also “loss of life related to the loss of freedoms” that can come from the major legal consequences of distracted driving. Bottom line, “it only takes a second to become a statistic.”

Law enforcement and first responder agencies participating in the drill included the Donelsonville Police Department, Seminole County Sheriff’s Office, Donelsonville Fire and Rescue, South Georgia EMS, Georgia State Patrol and Survival Flight.

Students who were involved in the simulated car wreck were Desiree Barlow, Ayana Mukerson, Arionna Soto, Jaleah Scarborough, Kayla Sheffield, Savannah Powell, Lee Cumbie, Leanne Pollock, As-hunti Kinder, Brian Bims, Brianna Fletcher and Leabeth Boyett. Photographs courtesy of the Journalism Class, were taken by Madison O’Hearn and Lily Castro.

An event organizer commented, “We appreciate everyone that responded and was a part of this drill. Special thanks to SRO Lawson for helping organize both events from this week.”



Thanking First Responders

On Wednesday, March 31 the SCMHS Student Council sponsored a parade and luncheon to honor first responders of Seminole County. Students came out and watched the parade and stood at attention as the Green Machine Band played the National Anthem.

Following the parade, a luncheon was provided for all participants. Parth Patel, Student Council President, donated his winnings from the Seminole County Athletic Booster Club’s Cow Pie Bingo event and paid for the meal. Dusty Smith, the SCMHS cafeteria staff, and various others helped prepare the meal which was served by members of the Student Council.

This event was held to show school and community appreciation for all first responders in the Seminole County community.

