

Every 15 Minutes

Results and Impact

This powerful program is designed to create an awareness among students that they are not invincible. They experience first hand how their actions affect the lives of so many other people.

Funding

With funding available from the California Office of Traffic Safety, the California Highway Patrol (CHP) provides mini-grants to agencies and organizations implementing the program.

Experienced California Highway Patrol personnel are available to provide technical assistance in planning and implementing your program.



Contact Information

For further information concerning the Every 15 Minutes program or to apply for a grant, please contact your local California Highway Patrol office.

For CHP addresses and phone numbers, visit www.chp.ca.gov





Introduction

The Every 15 Minutes program is a two-day program focusing on high school juniors and seniors, which challenges them to think about drinking, driving, personal safety, the responsibility of making mature decisions and the impact their decisions have on family, friends, and many others.

Goals and Objectives

The program brings together a broad coalition of interested local agencies with the goal of reducing alcohol-related incidents among youth.

Prior to the actual event, approximately 25 students, representing a cross section of the school, are selected.

Program Components

DAY ONE

One student is removed from class every fifteen minutes and becomes one of the “living dead.” A uniformed officer and a counselor enter the classroom and read each student’s obituary to those remaining in the class. Simultaneously, the parents of each living dead student are given their child’s death notification by a uniformed officer and/or chaplain.

Throughout the day, members of the living dead place their tombstones in a temporary cemetery on the school campus so friends and classmates can mourn their loss.

A simulated drunk driving collision involving pre-selected high school students is staged for the benefit of the entire student body. It begins with a pre-recorded 911 call that triggers an emergency response

by law enforcement, firefighters, paramedics, and the coroner.

Paramedics treat one student for minor injuries. A second critically injured student is trapped inside a vehicle and must be rescued by firefighters using the “Jaws of Life.” A third student is declared dead and removed by the coroner. The fourth student, designated as the drunk driver, is given a field sobriety test and is arrested for driving under the influence.

After the collision, the drama continues for the students involved in the crash. Officers book the drunk driver into jail. After booking is completed, the drunk driver must call a parent or guardian to explain what he or she has done.

Emergency medical responders transport the critically injured patient to a local trauma center where doctors simulate attempts to save his or her life. Unable to do so, the doctor on duty has the grave task of notifying the student’s parents of their child’s untimely death.

Organ procurement team members discuss the option of organ donation with the parents of the deceased child. Meanwhile, the student who died on-scene is taken to the morgue, weighed and measured, and placed in a body bag until a family member can identify the body.

At the end of the day, law enforcement chaperones take the living dead to an overnight retreat. Once the students become members of the living dead, there is no contact with family or friends. At the retreat, the students participate in team building activities and learn first hand from people who have been involved in or affected by an incident involving alcohol. The evening ends as the students write letters to their loved ones, expressing the thoughts they would convey if they had not been killed on that particular day.

DAY TWO

The living dead students return to school to attend a student body assembly.

During the assembly, everyone in the auditorium watches a video of the previous day’s events. After the video, several of the living dead students read excerpts from the letters they wrote the night before. They share with their friends and classmates what it felt like to die without having the chance to say good-bye.

Other members from the community, like trauma doctors, law enforcement officers, and emergency responders, explain how they are personally affected on a daily basis when someone makes a poor choice involving alcohol.

The assembly concludes with a call to action challenging everyone in the auditorium to make responsible choices when alcohol is involved. After 24 hours on an “emotional roller coaster,” parents and living dead students are reunited. Parents and teens are typically overwhelmed with emotion and gain a new sense of love and commitment to one another to make the right choices.

The program helps the students see members of their community in a different light. They are no longer just cops, doctors, paramedics, or firefighters, but also friends, mentors, and human beings who care about the kids in their community,

The two-day Every 15 Minutes program is very dramatic and emotional—and purposely so. Teenagers are constantly reminded about the choices they have to make involving alcohol and how many others are affected by their decisions. They know the intellectual statistics. However, many teens share the belief it will never happen to them.