

La Porte/Bayshore Sun

'Shattered Dreams:' Event hopes to prevent teenage drinking, driving



WHAT IF? - Courtney Dunkin (left) makes the 9-1-1 call as she runs up to the scene of the mock accident during "Shattered Dreams."

Published:

Monday, March 16, 2009 10:52 AM CDT

The auto accident was not real, nor was the funeral, but these activities that were part of "Shattered Dreams" at La Porte High School made students seriously consider "what if?" The two-day program designed to help prevent teenage drinking and driving was held at the campus on March 11 and 12, with widespread community support to make the event successful.

"Shattered Dreams is ultimately about making good choices, and we want to really get the message across to all of our students that the choices they make today affect tomorrow's future," said Jason "Mac" McConnell, LPHS assistant principal and Shattered Dreams coordinator.

"Don't Wreck Your Life" is the theme for the program, which began on March 11 with a mock crash scene on San Jacinto Street at H Street. Emergency medical services, police department and fire department responders enacted the rescue of student volunteers who were made up as crash victims.

Throughout the day, student volunteers were removed from their classes to demonstrate that a life is lost due to drunk driving every nine minutes. These students, who represented the "Living Dead," left the room as their "obituaries" were read to their classmates. They were escorted by other student volunteers serving as "Guardian Angels" and did not communicate with anyone the remainder of the day.

In addition, student participants attended an overnight retreat in the girls' gym.

On March 12, students attended assemblies at which mock funerals were held for students who had "died" as a result of the crash. Parents of the students who portrayed the victims as well as the drunk driver read letters they had written, and a video showing scenes from the accident, the drunk driver's time in jail and court, and notification of the victims' parents was shown. Individuals who are now incarcerated because they were responsible for someone's death while driving drunk also spoke at the assemblies.

"Yesterday and today I visited numerous classrooms and asked students what they thought," said Joanne Kolius, LPHS principal, the day after the event. "Shattered Dreams has made an impact on every student. They all thought it was a powerful and meaningful experience."

Members of the "Shattered Dreams" cast included Sabrina Starr, Kayton Geddes, C.J. Martin, Kodi Wright, Zach DeLong, Delaney Burton, Courtney Dunkin, Mackenzie Weller, Lauren Bunch, Sarah McKinley, Matt Moreno, Ali Hager, Jacob Lozano, Devon Sutherland, Kyle Juel, Kurt Adams, Taylor Holt and Rand Cook; and parents Lou Ann and Doug Martin, Tanya and James Wright, and Jodi and Billy Starr.

Other students participating as "Living Dead" or "Guardian Angels" were Bernadette Baker, Andrea Balderas, Shelby Bray, Nicole Bush, Laura Buttler, Stefanie Clingan, Caitlyn Curnutt, Kasandra Day, Nicole Deleon, Lauren Despain, Molly Duncan, Brittany Dyer, Celina Fontenot, Angelina Gaspero, Joseph Graham, April Hernandez, Haley Hernandez, Kailie Hyde, Meghan Isbell, Brooke Jackson, Jillian Jones, Kimberlee Langston, Haley Linthicum, Justin Martin, Sierra McCaleb, Krista McPhail, Victoria Mouton, Michael Newman, Lacey Olive, Crystal Padilla, Jessica Pierson-Turner, Julio Portillo, Leyna Saultz, Ranais Serna, Samantha Shepard, Erica Staska, Sydnie Suggs, Kayla Syzdek, Amber Tempel, Brittany Turner, Ariel Vega, Jessica Wachel, Jordyn Watson, and Erin Wolfe.

Members of the Shattered Dreams planning committee included Jason "Mac" McConnell, coordinator; Sam Zaborowski and Steve Regan, LPTV; Karen Hall, PALS (Peer Assistance Leadership) Christy Crislip, TRUTH (Teens Reaching Upward Toward Health); Mary Wacey and Jaime Orlando, Student Council; Kathy Kimball, American Sign Language and National Honor Society; Christina Tschappat, historian; Jerry Herd; Vanessa Ayala; Josh Conaster; Terri Cook; Jake Evans; Will Joiner; Lana Listi; Allison Morrow; Santos Ramirez; Lisa Syzdek; Ronnie Thibodeaux; Jeff Tippit; and Lisa Waligora.

Student Planning Committee members were Josh Conaster, Rand Cook, Krystal Dearman, Michael Galvan, Shelby Slate and Erin Wolfe. The Shattered Dreams film crew included director Sam Zaborowski, assistant director Steve Regan, and students Chris Warner, Taylor Holt, Kurt Adams, Kyle Juel, Rand Cook and Erin Wolfe.

Portraying the "Grim Reapers" were Kevin Dorsey, Matthew Parsons and Thomas Sephus.

Also helping to make the event possible were Sheila Henderson, Don Horton, Joanne Kolius, Pam Woolie, La Porte Rotary Club, La Porte Lions Club, La Porte Optimist Club, Houston Safety Council, TDC Inmate Outreach, La Porte Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary, Bayshore Hospital, Bayshore Sun, DeWalt Towing, La Porte Emergency Medical Services, La Porte Fire Department, La Porte High School Faculty and Staff, La Porte ISD, La Porte Municipal Court, La Porte Police Department, La Porte Police Officers Association, PHI Helicopters, LPISD Maintenance Department, Pasadena Police Department, Paul U. Lee Funeral Home, Kroger, Dina's Floral, Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission, La Porte Automotive Towing and KP Photography.