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## Miramonte Gets MADD

By Jean Follmer



Orinda Detective Nate McCormack leads Joey Epperson (middle) and another student in a mock field sobriety test at Miramonte Photo Jean Follmer

As part of Red Ribbon Week, the Healthy Choices, Safety First Club at Miramonte hosted the Mothers Against Drunk Driving Crash Trailer. The plexi-glass trailer encased a completely destroyed automobile that had been involved in a drunk-driving accident in Santa Barbara. In that case, a drunk 44-year-old man was fleeing police and hit a concrete barrier at about 80-90 mph.

"It's probably a good example of what can happen. It's a good message that this can happen at any age," said Senior Heather Aars after viewing the wrecked automobile. "I'm a parent volunteer and it's my 3rd year to be working with Healthy Choices Safety First. Students want to do something every couple of months around the topic of drinking and driving because they feel it's become an issue for their peers," said Healthy Choices Safety First Club Chair Marsha Harris.

In addition to the trailer, Orinda Detective Nate McCormack was on hand to let students try on Fatal Vision Goggles and attempt to successfully pass a field sobriety test. There were many different pairs of day and night Fatal Vision Goggles and the impairment levels differed. The impaired vision ranged from a Blood Alcohol Level of .06 (which is below the legally impaired level of .08) to 2.5 times the legally impaired level.

McCormack asked the teens to stand on one leg, keep their arms at their side

and raise the other leg up about 6 inches while counting. He also asked them to walk heel to toe, turn and walk back. The teens had a lot of fun trying to pass the pseudo field sobriety tests, but it was clear that none of them would have passed. After trying on the goggles and subjecting himself to McCormack's mock field sobriety test, Senior Joey Epperson was impressed. "I actually couldn't do anything he (McCormack) asked me to do. It's (drunk driving) something that I would never consider doing," said Epperson. (This reporter can attest to what Epperson said after completely losing my balance when I tried on the daytime vision .06 goggles.)

McCormack said the department has had some trouble with teen DUI's but "the Slow Down Lamorinda campaign really helped." He explained the legal level of intoxication for a minor is a .01 BAC and the minor can be charged with a DUI with a .05 BAC. "It's one of the most dangerous misdemeanors that people can commit because people can really be affected and hurt by it," said McCormack.

In addition to not drinking and driving, McCormack said it's important for teens to adhere to all driving laws. When a teen first gets his license, it is illegal for him to carry underage passengers in the vehicle. It's also illegal for the newly licensed teen to be driving after 11:00 pm. Both of these laws are "widely ignored" and McCormack cautioned that offenders can be cited with a loss of license for 30 days if they are caught. When asked if the teens simply don't know the law, Detective McCormack said "I think most of them know it and choose to ignore it and their parents just don't enforce it."

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