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Miramonte students open discussion about distracted and drunk driving

By Jennifer Wake



From left: Jennifer Giron and Gracie Guidotti
Photo provided

Inspired by the Every 15 Minutes organization that creates drunk driving simulations at schools, Miramonte High School juniors Jennifer Giron and Gracie Guidotti presented a video about distracted and drunk driving to the entire school during a breakout session April 27 at Miramonte.

"We used videos created by other organizations (cited at the end of the film) due to time and budget constraints," Guidotti said. "I edited the videos and combined them in order to incorporate both distracted and drunk driving in the seminar. We included some statistics as well to add more information."

After watching the video, students and teachers participated in a short discussion and completed an anonymous survey.

Of the 569 survey respondents, 15 percent of students stated they have driven under the influence of alcohol and 75 percent have engaged in distracted driving, according to Guidotti. "Some responses as to why students drove distracted included, 'To pick up a call, answer a text or a Snapchat, or put directions in on maps,' or 'I get nervous when I see that I have received a text. I feel the need to respond to it immediately.' In terms of why students drive drunk some quotes were that 'They need to bring their cars home so their parents

aren't mad or suspicious' and 'I don't want to get in trouble by my parents or I just want to get home,'" Guidotti said. "The main reason for driving drunk was to avoid parental suspicion. However, 81 percent of students reported that this video and discussion would prevent them from driving distracted or under the influence."

Guidotti and Giron asked students what more Miramonte and the community can do to prevent drunk or distracted driving.

"The most common responses were that the school should raise even more awareness about these issues," Guidotti said, "and that parents need to set better examples in terms of distracted driving, and that parents need to be more understanding and willing to help out their children when they are under the influence." Guidotti said a key problem is that students do not want to call their parents for a ride because of fear of punishment.

The two juniors say they hope to continue this effort and make the video viewing and discussion part of an annual event so that students can be as informed as possible about the risks of drunk and distracted driving. To watch the YouTube video, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s1ymZNeBnvY>.

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