

“Words to be Heard” Scholarship

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DUI: Desert Underage Intoxication

Introduction: For my proposal I have created a 3-step program called DUI: Desert Underage Intoxication to be completed in one session with 25 maximum participants. The three steps involved are outlined below.

Step 1: Once all the participants are in the classroom and seated, guest speakers will open the class by saying their name and one fact about drunk driving.

Speaker 1: Everyone says "It's just one drink. It will not kill you." The truth is all it takes is one.

Speaker 2: Every 30 minutes, a person is killed by a drunk driver.

Speaker 3: In 2008, in Pennsylvania alone, youth under 21 years old were responsible for 50 deaths that occurred as the direct result of a young person under the influence of alcohol. 559 people under the age of 18 were arrested for DUI in Pennsylvania.

Speaker 2: Over 40% of all fatal automobile accidents involve alcohol.

After this fact is said, Speaker 2 hands off the microphone to Speaker 1. Speaker 1 is about to state the last fact when suddenly the doors to the classroom fly open.

Uniformed police officers storm the room, in which Program DUI is being held, and lead the students in a single-file line out of the room to the parking lot. In this parking lot, there will be a mock city street set up with stop signs and turns for teenage drivers and their friends to safely navigate. This may sound easy, but there is a catch. The drivers and passengers will all be wearing goggles designed to impair one's vision just like

driving drunk would. There will be a police officer present in the car with the student driver to make sure they do not crash. Everyone will be required to use a seat belt. Once every participant has had the opportunity to either be a drunken passenger or a drunk driver, the officers will take them back to the classroom to continue.

Step 2: Once everyone is back inside the classroom safely, the short film (similar to the enclosed DVD), will be played.

Step 3: Speaker 1 will begin. His story would resemble the following. "It was a beautiful Saturday night. The moonlight shown upon the grassy hill where we lie, drinking, laughing, having a good time. I had my junior license then, only 17 at the time. We were celebrating our first year together. She was my best friend, girl friend, and my whole life. It was the first time we drank, and we did it just because our friends told us it was worth it. I glanced at the time. Already over the curfew, we hurriedly packed up for the 15-minute drive back home. Only 5 of those 15 minutes came. It was the five minutes of my life I will never forget. It only takes one. That one was me. I was driving on the wrong side of the road, swerved to avoid an oncoming car and we just rolled and rolled and rolled. She died immediately. I was arrested. My life turned upside down just as the car did. I MURDERED my girlfriend. How could I be so stupid? I was tried and convicted of vehicular homicide, DUI underage. I tried everything to end my life since that day. I became a slitter, but the prison guards caught me every time as they could see the red river of blood seeping into the drain as life left my body. After five failed attempts, I realized I was here for a reason. I can stand in front of you today because I knew what I had to do. I was fortunate. I got paroled. I am living my life for her now as she could not be here. That day has changed my life; put a label on me I never wanted: MURDERER. Please don't take the fateful sip I took.

Speaker 2 is with us in memory of her son. Every 30 minutes someone is killed by a drunk driver. I am here today to share with you the final moments of my son's life. He was driving home from work on a miserable Thursday night. He called me before he left and said he loved me and would be home soon. He was around your age. He was

asked to work the closing shift because his co-worker was ill. He agreed because he needed the money. He walked to his car, waved goodbye to his friend who closed with him, and they went their separate ways. He was at a complete stop at a red light when a guy behind him became impatient and rammed him. My son was pushed into the direct path of traffic and crashed into again almost simultaneously as the other car had the green light. Three cars were totaled that night and my son died upon impact. There was a drunk driver at the wheel behind him. He was sentenced to a double life sentence in prison because the green light driver was also killed, who was the drunken driver's dad. The driver was only 16 years old and the accident happened 20 years ago to the day.

Speaker 3 is in prison and joining us by satellite. How old are you? Yeah, I was your age then. 14. I went to the best party of the year with my peeps. Beer, drugs, alcohol, you name it, it was there. I was hammered and felt invincible to the world. That only led to my demise. I killed 5 people because I stole a van and loaded up the gang for a joyride. They all died, with me being the sole survivor. I live in this crappy place now where dogs are treated better than us. You do not want to end up like me. I went from juvie to big boys prison. I killed 5 of my best friends. I thought about committing suicide but thought others needed to hear my story. Think before you drink.

The student designed a video presentation and a brochure to go along with this essay.