

Drinking and Driving

“I’ll be fine, I’ve only had a couple,” said the captain of the football team, after drinking a full case of beer at the year-end wind up party. As he stumbled to the car and party goers looked on, his best friend turned to them and announced, “Geoff’s the captain of the football team – he knows what he is doing.” Little did he know but later that night Geoff would have a horrific accident and the eight friends who watched him drive away drunk would be huddled outside a hospital emergency room praying that Geoff’s life be spared.

Statistics show that every 22 minutes, someone will die in an alcohol related traffic accident. Although you probably think that it could never happen to you, experts say everyone has a 40-percent chance of being in a crash involving alcohol use sometime in their life.

I speak to thousands of high school students on a daily basis about the dangers of drinking and driving and the effects of substance abuse. As part of my talk, I show graphic pictures of car accidents. The reality of hurdling 5000 lbs. Of glass and steel against flesh and bone is not pretty. At the end of my presentation, you can hear a pin drop. It’s unfortunate to see high school students laugh and joke about going out and getting drunk with their friends. Little do they know that one stupid decision could change their lives forever. Many people also don’t feel that they are at risk if they are with someone that they look up to, like a positive role model. What they don’t know is that it takes only a split second to be crippled or even worse, dead.

I feel that it is extremely important to understand that if you have a goal or an aspiration in life and you want to succeed after high school, you need to take responsibility for your actions. Think through the consequences before you act. And be a good friend. It takes courage and fortitude to take the keys away from someone you love or admire, but you need to do it. Remember, if you accept a ride from someone who’s been drinking, you’re basically putting a loaded gun to your head. There are no winners in “Russian Roulette.” So make the right choices and live your life to the fullest.