
For Immediate Release

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High School Students Put to Test with Impaired Driving Obstacle Course

Sherwood Park, AB - Archbishop Jordan Catholic High School (ABJ) and Citizens on Patrol organised an impaired driving simulator for students to better understand the effects of driving while under the influence on March 8, 2023. A second date with a media availability is scheduled for the afternoon of March 15.

Orange pylons, stop signs, and stuffed animals were used to create an obstacle course in an ABJ gym that students were asked to safely navigate in a pedal kart while wearing vision-altering goggles. They also had the opportunity to try to keep their balance while walking along a straight line.

ABJ Assistant Principal Fiona Wimmer said the program is vital for students. "We have young drivers, and we care about our kids. And a part of caring for them is showing them the boundaries, how to be safe, and the risks. And there are risks with impaired driving – whether you're the passenger or the driver. This simulation activity could potentially save lives," she said.

Cliff Smith is a Director for Citizens on Patrol who oversees the simulator. "We really want to get young students that are just starting to drive – learners permits or even full licences – and make sure they are aware of what it's like a little bit to drive impaired, but also more importantly, what the consequences are if they get caught or if they have some kind of an accident," he said.

He added: "We have several goggles with different degrees of impairment that start out with less than 0.06 Blood Alcohol Concentration. The legal requirement in force is less than 0.08, but even at 0.06, things aren't quite right visibly as they go around the course and when they're walking on the line trying to maintain their balance."

Impaired driving and healthy choices are also discussed in ABJ's mandatory Career and Life Management courses in Grade 10. It's also embedded in the Grade 9 Health curriculum, where teachers talk about healthy and unhealthy risks.

"Impaired driving has touched our school community. A number of years ago, we had a student who passed away after being hit by a drunk driver, and so this impacts our Archbishop community deeply," Wimmer said. "We don't want to have that situation ever again, and the more we can do to educate people, the better we feel about it."

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