

Every 15 Minutes

Elmira High School

October 22-23, 2019

Every 15 Minutes is an in-school teen drinking and driving prevention program. The program was started by the California Highway patrol in 1990 in an effort to combat the ever growing number of teens being killed or injured as a result of alcohol or drug related traffic crashes. These types of crashes are the leading cause of death for teenagers in this country. In 1990, there was a traffic related death every 15 minutes which is how the program became known as the Every 15 Minutes program.

In Lane County, the program is put on by the Lane County Sheriff's Office and the Oregon State Police, along with other law enforcement and community partners, and has been presented in Lane County schools for over a decade. Unlike other programs, Every 15 Minutes attempts to approach this topic not only by looking at the effects of drinking and driving as it relates to traffic crashes, but also the emotional side of these incidents. It demonstrates how these crashes not only affect the teen, but their family, friends, and the community. The program has also recently started to incorporate distracted driving as a topic as well, given the prolific use of cell phones and other distractions that can reduce a driver's focus on the road and their surroundings.

This program requires the collaboration of many agencies in the community. These include, but are not limited to the schools, law enforcement, fire departments, and many volunteers throughout the community. In order to ensure the program's success, it is important that the families of these students be involved in this program as well. This begins weeks prior to the event when the parents or guardians of our involved students are encouraged to speak to their students about the impacts of choices they make, and how to handle tough situations they may encounter. This begins, or continues, a dialogue about drunk and impaired driving that will continue throughout the program and allow the students to feel supported as they participate in the program.

Below is an outline of what to expect from the Every 15 Minutes program that we have asked your son/ daughter to participate in. Parent / guardian permission is required for students to participate. The last page of this packet is a permission slip that must be signed by both the student and the student's parent / guardian to be part of the program. We are excited to work with Elmira High School and hope to help decrease the number of alcohol and distracted driving related crashes and fatalities with this impactful program.

Day One:

Day one begins on October 22nd at the start of the school day. Students will have been pre-selected to participate in this program prior to the event. If you are receiving this information, your student was selected to participate. At the start of the school day, a member of law enforcement dressed as a grim reaper will go to each participating student's classroom along with clergy and remove each selected student from their class. Students removed from class serve as a visual representation of potential loss of life due to a drunk or impaired driving incident. After the student is removed from the class the chaplain will read to the class the obituary written by the parents/guardian of the student. This form will be provided to you to complete prior to Day One of the program.

The student is taken to a room in the school and is made up with face paint and a full black hooded gown to signify to other students that they will be involved in a life changing event. They are then asked to create their own headstone and to write on it what they would want to be remembered by. The student then places the head stone in a mock cemetery located at a focal point at the school. The student then returns to class for the remainder of the morning. They are only able to speak with other living dead students, and only when out of the presence of other students. This is to simulate what it would be like for students to be missing from class as the result of a drunk or impaired driving crash.

During the course of the first day, event staff will be taking pictures and video so that a video of the first day's activities can be shown at the assembly the next day. This provides a way for students, staff, and community members who were not directly participating in the program to be part of the learning experience.

At the lunch hour all of the participating students return to the event room and are treated to lunch along with all the event staff. Six of these students are then made up by a moulage artist so they can become the victims and involved persons in the staged traffic crash, which is set up on school grounds.

At approximately 2:00 pm, all students will be escorted to the crash scene and they will be briefed on what they are about to witness. The crash simulates a two-car, drunk or impaired driving crash that results in the death of one teen occupant and injuries to several others. The crashed cars are set up in the crashed position ahead of time for safety, and students are staged in the vehicles as though the crash had just occurred.

Police, fire, and EMS will respond to this crash along with Reach (a helicopter medical transport) in the same manner as they would any other crash of this nature. Fire personnel sometimes

utilize tools to extricate the students from the vehicles. Once fire/EMS have concluded patient treatment and the victims have left the scene (either on foot, by ambulance, or helicopter), the at-fault teen driver will be processed for DUII and arrested. This will conclude the crash and the students will then be escorted back to the school.

The participating students have a chance to clean up and are then taken to Camp Harlow in Eugene where they will stay the night. Students are supervised at the Camp by program coordinators from local law enforcement agencies and often school staff. At the retreat there are other event related activities such as a presentation by Lane Fire Authority which explains what your body goes through in a crash, the financial burdens and the injuries that can incur, etc. There will also be other team building exercises for the students to participate in as well as an opportunity to decompress with games and basketball. The night will conclude with a letter writing exercise where students will write a letter to someone in their life as if they had lost their life in a drunk / distracted driving related crash. This is a very emotional part of the program that allows students to consider the gravity of their decisions and how important their family and friends are to them, and how those people could be impacted by their decisions.

A secondary purpose of the retreat is to allow the families and friends of the involved students the realism of their child/friend not coming home that night as would be the case if they were in fact injured or killed in a real traffic crash. This allows family and friends to be a part of this experience and illustrates to the student that the impacts of their decisions are far reaching.

As part of this program we will ask one family to participate in mock death notification in the evening of October 22nd. Police and clergy will go to this family's house and make a mock death notification, which is done as any real notification would be done. These family members will then speak about that experience the next day at the assembly and share how this impacted them. *Your participation in the mock death notification is not required for your student's involvement in the program.*

Day Two:

Day two begins with a group breakfast at Camp Harlow with the involved students, chaperones, and Lane County Sheriff Cliff Harrold. At approximately 8:00 a.m., we all return to Elmira High School for the second part of the program, which is an assembly. **The assembly STARTS at 10:00 am and is open to anyone in the community that wishes to attend.**

Lane County Sheriff Cliff Harrold will narrate the program, which includes the video from the activities the day before. We then ask the family members who participated in the mock death notification to speak to the assembly, sharing the impact that had on them. The program also

includes 1-2 guest speakers who have had their lives greatly impacted by a drunk or impaired driving incident.

In past events, several of the students that wrote letters to their parents the night before have volunteered to read their letters and share any feelings they may have regarding the events they have been involved in. At other events, students have asked the student body to take a pledge to not drink and drive, or get into a car with an intoxicated person. Each groups of students is different and we look forward to seeing how the Elmira High School students make this part of the program the most impactful for their student body.

As you might imagine, the assembly can be quite emotional for all involved. The gym lights will be down to protect people's privacy and to allow them to be emotional, which is often the case for everyone in attendance, public safety representatives included. In addition, a pledge wall that will have been started the night before at the retreat will be placed in the gym and all students will be allowed to write on and/or sign it. By signing this wall, students are taking a pledge to not drink and drive, and to never ride with someone who has been drinking. This wall can then be used by the school over the course of the year as they see fit.

Once the assembly is over, the event staff will stay as long as needed. Students should be allowed to talk about what they feel and the emotions that have come out. Event staff will also be impacted by this simply by the nature of the presentations as well as by any personal and professional experiences they may have had or been involved in.

Videos from previous events can be found by going to YouTube and searching "Every 15 Minutes Lane County Sheriff".

The permission slip on the next page is required for your student to participate in the Every 15 Minutes Program. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact either of the below law enforcement representatives.

Sergeant Carrie Carver, Lane County Sheriff's Office	541-510-2862
Sergeant Erik Fisher, Oregon State Police	541-510-2506