



Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency

Healthy People, Healthy Communities

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Press Release

Date: 10/18/11

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

One Year California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) Grant Comes to a Close

Over the past 12 months, the SOber and Safe Teens (SOS) program offered Mendocino County middle and high school students an array of traffic safety educational opportunities (described below). The program was provided by the Prevention And Planning Unit (PAPU) of the County's Health and Human Services Agency.

Pomolita Middle School, Potter Valley Jr./Sr. High and Ukiah High Schools participated in a Seatbelt/Cellphone Challenge. Two hundred twenty-seven (227) observational pre-surveys were taken during the spring of 2011. Cars and their passengers leaving school parking lots were observed during peak traffic times and compliance was recorded. An extensive media campaign was implemented at all three sites for one month impacting a total of 2,341 students. The media campaign was followed by a post-survey in the spring. Student compliance increased at all three school sites.

An educational campaign addressing drinking and driving was provided to all County middle through high schools during April, which coincided with Alcohol Awareness Month. Additionally, California Drivers License companion cards, signs, banners and bookmarks with "Buckle-Up" and "No texting while driving" messages were distributed to all high schools.

The "Every-Fifteen Minutes" program took place at Ukiah High School and Anderson Valley Junior/Senior High School touching the lives of

1,850 students. The two-day event simulated a mock-crash scene and demonstrated the devastating effects of drinking and driving on family, friends and the community. Planning in both communities took place over a period of nine months and involved local community agencies including staff from the schools, Anderson Valley and Ukiah Valley fire departments, Mendocino County Sheriff's Office, California Highway Patrol, North Coast Opportunities, Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency/Prevention And Planning Unit, students, parents, and many other dedicated volunteers from various sectors of the community.

Alcohol and Drug Prevention Education and Traffic Safety presentations were made to students at Potter Valley High School, Ukiah High School, Pomolita Middle School, Noyo and Lighthouse Schools. Additionally, a multi-media "Big Screen" presentation was provided to approximately 1,000 students at Mendocino High School, Fort Bragg High School and Ukiah High School. The presentation used television and movie action clips that were youth focused to drive home the point of making healthy decisions.

Funding for Sober Graduations was also provided to Willits, Ukiah, and Fort Bragg Sober Grad planning committees.

Responsible Beverage Service (RBS) training provided certification to over thirty businesses countywide. RBS is a research-based environmental prevention strategy found to be effective in reducing hazardous alcohol use at licensed establishments. This practical, participatory workshop provided owners and their employees with the professional server's standards established by the California Department Alcoholic Beverage Control. Participants learned about current liquor laws and the implications these laws have on owners and their employees.

According to Armand Brint, PAPU Manager, "Traffic Safety is a critical piece of our community prevention efforts. And this year's SOS program was especially comprehensive. In the future, we look forward, to providing more interactive programs that engage kids and families on the topic of traffic safety." Funding was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

If you would like additional information, please call Annie Robinson at (707) 472-2750.

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