

Program has kids thinking about drug abuse

In the past two months, Bree, a 17-year-old junior at Walled Lake Western High School has been ticketed three times for being a minor in possession of alcohol and she's worried about the consequences she faces.

"I've heard (Brian MacKenzie) the tough judge on alcohol," said Bree. (Student assistance director Janet Holland asked that last names of the Western students not be used to protect their identity.)

Bree is speaking about the 52-1 Novi district judge who helped initiate Tobacco Alcohol Prevention Program in the community. While Bree hasn't been exposed to the program yet, she knows about the costly fines, random alcohol testing, and treatment and educational programs MacKenzie sentences teens to complete while on probation.

"I've heard he's a psycho," said 17-year-old Ryan, who also attends Walled Lake Western. "I heard he has a personal vendetta against someone who drinks."

MacKenzie said he is not taking the comment personally. In fact, he said he likes it.

"I'm delighted to hear that," he said. Better known as Darth MacKenzie and Mad Mac by local teens, MacKenzie is glad students don't ever want to meet him face-to-face in his courtroom.

Part of the problem with alcohol use in people under the age of 21 is that they don't believe it's a crime," MacKenzie said. "What the program is trying to do, in part, is tell them it is a crime."

Through the Insight program at Western, Holland teaches students ticketed for substance abuse about the tolls alcohol and tobacco use take on their bodies and futures. She said she's seen the positive affects of TAPP.

"Overall, we're seeing a decrease in the numbers," Holland said of students being ticketed.

Of the 583 17- to 20-year-olds ticketed for alcohol or tobacco offenses in the first year of the program, MacKenzie said 17 percent committed a second offense and only 3 percent committed a second offense after being sentenced to probation for the first crime.

"When we got them to a probation sentence, these numbers dropped like a stone," MacKenzie said. "When they got a serious consequence, they started getting the message."

Bree is a repeat offender partly because she has yet to discover the consequences for her actions.

"If students got an MIP (minor in possession) before they got to trial for the first time, the rate of getting (ticketed again) is three times as high," Holland said. "I know that the courts are totally booked up... but the sooner the person can face the consequences, the better."

Bree was hanging out with her friends when she was ticketed for drinking alcohol.

"I wouldn't say I'm an alcoholic," However, Bree said, "I

used to drink every weekend." Ryan and his friend Adam, a 19-year-old Wolverine Lake resident who asked that his last name not be used to protect his identity, were lost in Fenton when the two were taken to jail for being in possession of alcohol.

Neither entered the TAPP program because they were ticketed outside the community. Instead, their records will be wiped clean if the two complete the Insight program and aren't caught using alcohol in the next six months.

"We got off pretty easily," Ryan said. "It was kind of like a wake up call."

Adam, who started drinking at age 15, continues to drink, but limits himself to one beer per hour.

"You drink to what you can handle," Adam said. "And two

years from now, when I'm 21, no one is going to think it's a big deal. I don't like getting drunk. I just like to have a few."

For Adam, a few means about seven or eight beers in an evening. Holland informed him that more than five drinks in a row is considered binge drinking.

Adam and Ryan represent a trend among Walled Lake area students who are realizing the consequences of drinking in their area and either forgoing the behavior or going outside the area to drink.

"They're being more careful," Holland said. "While we don't condone any use... awareness is one step."

And she said, "It protects us in the community if we don't have kids drunk out there driving."



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Publish April 12, 1998

KATHRYN A. DORNAN, City Clerk



CITY OF FARMINGTON ORDINANCE SUMMARY C-645-98 AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND TRAFFIC CONTROL ORDERS

THE CITY OF FARMINGTON ORDAINS:

That the Traffic Control Order issued by the Director of Public Safety of the City of Farmington, dated February 4, 1972, is hereby amended as follows: Chapter 4, Add sections 4.16 as provided for in Section 31-196 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Farmington.

CHAPTER 4 PARKING REGULATIONS:

ADD:
Section 4.16 - Municipal parking spaces:
The parallel municipal parking spaces east of and adjacent to 33304 Grand River. "One Hour Parking, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m."

Publish April 12, 1998

MARY L. BUSH, Mayor
PATSY K. CANTRELL, City Clerk/Treasurer

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(Restaurant)
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