

## Richmond Teen DUI Education and Enforcement Project October 2003 – August 2005

For the year 2001, OTS collision rankings placed the West Contra Costa City of Richmond 5<sup>th</sup> out of the 44 California cities in its size category for under-21-year-olds who had been drinking. This was even though Richmond is one of the smaller cities in this category. Based in part on this statistic, Contra Costa Health Services (CCHS) received an OTS grant, conducted in partnership with the Richmond Police Department. This partnership enabled the project to utilize both enforcement and educational strategies.

The project's enforcement component consisted of DUI enforcement conducted during holiday periods and youth events, such as graduations and sports events, and DUI checkpoints. Approximately 110 enforcement shifts and 3 DUI checkpoints were conducted during the grant period. The educational component was in collaboration with two CCHS units, the Injury Prevention Program and the TeenAge Program. The Injury Prevention Program (IPP) coordinated the grant, and the TeenAge Program (TAP) was responsible for direct work with teens. TAP was an essential partner because they already worked in Richmond high schools giving presentations on health-related topics, and had an ongoing youth empowerment/development project called ETA – Empowerment Through Action. TAP implemented two major activities: 1) working with ETA teens to develop and deliver DUI messages to their peers and the larger community, and 2) developing a Teen Driving presentation to be delivered in local high school classrooms.

ETA met weekly during the school year for about 1-½ hours. The ETA component included team building, discussion or interactive exercise, planning, and community activities. In addition to weekly meetings, ETA youth participated in an annual retreat and special outings. Over the course of two school years, ETA youth:

- ◆ Helped develop and conduct a survey on seat belt use at local high schools
- ◆ Were given disposable cameras to take pictures of “the face of alcohol in my community”. These images became part of the project’s “Traveling Gallery” for school and community displays.
- ◆ Participated in a Community Comparison, which documented the visible differences between Richmond and wealthier parts of Contra Costa County with regard to alcohol and drug use.
- ◆ Presented Community Comparison activity and results at the 2004 TeenWorks conference and the 2005 West Contra Costa Teen Summit.
- ◆ Brainstormed and refined Teen DUI slogans for the teen component of our local traffic safety education campaign – Street Smarts.
- ◆ Hosted two Community Nights to highlight activities and DUI messages to parents and other members of the community.

- ◆ Organized and conducted a community “walkabout” which surveyed two areas of Richmond regarding stores’ compliance with local alcohol and tobacco signage laws.
- ◆ Presented walkabout results to Contra Costa Alcohol and Drug Advisory Board and the Richmond City Council as they consider criteria for a new local signage ordinance.
- ◆ Developed the script for and were featured on a local cable television show “Get Ready, Get Healthy”. The segment focused on the parental role in reducing youth DUI.
- ◆ Gave feedback to CCHS/TAP staff on the content, format, and effectiveness of presentations to be delivered in high school classrooms.

In addition to ETA-focused activities CCHS/TAP staff conducted 22 classroom presentations to teens at Richmond area high schools. Following the presentation, students were anonymously surveyed about their attitudes and behavior in several areas related to driving under the influence; e.g. “In the past 6 months, have you gotten into a car with someone who was under the influence of alcohol or another drug?” The content of these presentations was based on trying them out with ETA and getting ETA’s feedback. In addition to giving information, the presentations are very interactive; e.g. in an exercise called “Go-Go Gadget” young people design a “gadget” that will keep their peers from driving while intoxicated.

**Successes, challenges and lessons learned (to date - still analyzing)**

- Collision rankings are going down, we believe we were part of the solution
- Successfully engaged a group of young people to help deliver DUI messages
- Brought attention to the issue at several levels
- Institutionalized the curriculum component in TAP – it will be continued
- The new teen messages will become part of the ongoing West Contra Costa Street Smarts Campaign
- This is a complex issue – steep learning curve for both staff and young people
- The “right of passage” nature of the driving issue may make this issue hard to buy into for teens
- Sometimes, you just have to go with whatever the young people bring to the table; e.g. violence
- Severe budget cuts and staff turnover, both in CCHS and Richmond PD, slowed progress
- The right facilitator is a must with young people, someone who likes them and shows it
- Adults should pay attention to their boundaries, not become over-involved
- Always, make it fun, interactive, and rewarding for the youth
- This type of effort needs to receive greater attention and resources than a short -term grant can provide

For further information, contact Nancy Baer, Project Manager 925-313-6837