

Simulator attempts to scare students sober

Chelsea Growden 9/28/06

An alcohol-related accident claims a life every 31 minutes, according to the Save a Life Tour, which brought its drunken driving simulator to campus Friday, Sept. 22.

The simulator consisted of a driver's seat and three screens that were used as the windshield. It allowed students to "drive" through the game to experience what it is like to drive under the influence and showed them common mistakes drunk drivers make.

Many people participated throughout the day, 34 from GCCC and 10 from South Grey High School, each with different reactions.

"You watch everyone else and when you get into the driver's seat you make the same mistakes," Dionicio Rivera, SGA head of public relations, said. "Some people it did [change their minds], they had driven drunk before and didn't realize the impact."

Brian Beldgia, Save a Life Tour, has found that not everyone is receptive to the simulation.

"I feel like this is a good program but it's kind of built for you to lose," Tyson Kirksey, Lefton, Texas, said. "We aren't drinking and driving at least not tonight."

Beldgia said he knows not everyone is receptive, but he's still willing to try to make an impact.

"I know for a fact I don't get to 50 percent of these kids," Beldgia, said. "You can't reach everybody, but you have to try."

Beldgia said that most people don't learn until something bad happens.

"It's just mistakes people make. Most people don't think about the consequences until they happen," Beldgia said. "People learn three ways: that ticket, that accident, or death."

Another member of the Save a Life Tour said the tour is about convincing people not to drink and drive rather than an anti-drinking campaign.

"We're not trying to talk to people about not drinking if you're of age," Patrick Ralston, Save a Life Tour, said.

Rivera agreed that the simulator wasn't made to be against drinking, but was to show how a person reacts while driving under the influence.

"It wasn't showing how to drive drunk," Rivera said. "It was demonstrating the reaction of the brain."

With the simulator on campus the day before homecoming, Rivera said he thought it could have showed people what could happen when driving home from the after parties.

"I feel that we should have promoted the simulator a lot more with homecoming coming up," Rivera said. "It would have given students a realistic view before going out partying."