



Save A Life Tour Comes to Worthington Campus



Minnesota West college students and 275 high school students got the opportunity to drive drunk at Minnesota West Community and Technical College through a drinking and driving simulator.

The machine has a car seat, a steering wheel, pedals, blinkers and a gear shift. A screen in front shows what a person would see through a windshield. Screens on both sides of the driver simulate side windows, and there are also rearview and side view mirrors. The driver starts out the three-and-a-half minute simulation “sober,” but the longer they drive, the more “drunk” they become. The reaction time of the machine slows down, which can cause the driver to make wider turns, stop and start with jerks, run red lights and possibly crash into another vehicle or a building.

Chris Geysbeek has worked with the Save a Life Tour for more than five years and travels most of the year with the simulator. He speaks with students about driving drunk and tells of his own experience with losing a loved one to a drunk driver.

“This is a lifestyle for us,” he explained. “Everyone that works with the program has been personally affected by drinking and driving.”

Alex Solem, a second year student at Minnesota West said, **“It looks easier than it is, it is very difficult, and it gives you a real sense of drinking and driving.”**

When a person finished the simulation, he or she is handed a bracelet to wear that states, “I’ll take the keys.”

Minnesota West Program Director Kile Behrends tried the simulator herself. **“It feels very real,” she said. “I think the simulator is definitely a real situation and will get students to realize, ‘It could be you.’”**