

## Safety stressed at PARTY program

Written by Kyle Arnoldy

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There were many wide-eyed freshmen with dropped jaws Thursday, April 24 as the young HHS students took part in the annual Preventing Alcohol and Risk-related Trauma in Youth program.

Put on by Melissa Memorial Hospital as part of its trauma prevention education, the nationwide program aims to provide young teens with the information and insight to make responsible choices that could save their lives.

“The main goal is to connect with kids at an early age before they are set to drive to get them to think about risks related with accidents,” said Susan Deslauriers, MMH trauma and event coordinator.



**Holyoke Volunteer Fire Department members work to remove the doors and roof from a vehicle during a vehicle extrication demonstration for HHS freshmen as part of the PARTY program.□ □**

**—Enterprise photo**

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The day was a community effort, with information and help provided by MMH, EMS services, Holyoke Volunteer Fire Department and the Sterling Police Department.

In an effort to dissuade teens from making life-risking decisions, freshmen spent the morning listening to grizzly details from car accident sites. Graphic images and videos were also shown to get kids to see all of the consequences of mixing alcohol and/or drugs and driving.

With the group of students approaching the driving age, the importance of seat belts was continually stressed throughout the day. Distracted driving was also discussed at length, noting how serious, life-threatening accidents can be caused from unruly passengers, music and especially texting while driving.

Life after serious auto accidents was further explored as students were selected to try living with disabilities such as blindness, an injured neck, broken hands and being confined to a wheelchair as a quadriplegic.

Fatal Vision Goggles (beer goggles) were also used to explain to students how alcohol affects the senses. Led by Barry Winckler, detective with the Sterling Police Department, students were asked to complete simple roadside tests while wearing the goggles.

Participants struggled not only to walk in a straight line, but to maintain balance, further driving home the point that driving under the influence is a serious hazard.

In the afternoon, the students watched as four members of HVFD performed a vehicle extrication. A car was cut and pried open to demonstrate how victims are removed from vehicles after serious crashes.

Following the extrication, students continued the program by touring the emergency room and morgue at MMH. Students were also able to experience what it is like to be in the back of an ambulance.

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~~stands flat against a backboard as Jacque Vance, pictured in the middle, and S~~

~~St. Joseph Police Department Detective Barry Winckler helps guide Oscar Hernandez as the freshm~~