



PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cornelia Connelly School Partners with CHP and First Responders in Sobering “Every 15 Minutes” Program

April 20, 2018, Anaheim, CA – Cornelia Connelly School partnered with the CHP, Anaheim Police Department, Anaheim Fire Department, and other agencies, on April 19, as part of the CHP’s “Every 15 Minutes” program. A quiet neighborhood street located across the street from the school was successfully transformed into a mock, horrific, alcohol-related traffic collision. Connelly’s entire student body, accompanied by faculty and staff, witnessed a real-time, dramatic presentation about the consequences of driving under the influence of alcohol.

The program was derived from statistics from the 1990’s that every 15 minutes someone in the United States dies in alcohol-related traffic collisions. The two-day program endeavored to have students personally experience a tragic accident in hopes that they will remember that they must make responsible, mature decisions regarding drinking, driving and personal safety. Several local agencies worked together that day, including the CHP, local law enforcement, emergency medical responders, a local funeral home, and even Knott’s Scary Farm makeup artists for added realism, to name a few. Through a very realistic and dramatic presentation that involved classmates as both perpetrators and victims, Connelly’s student body witnessed the physical and emotional anguish of all involved in an alcohol-related tragedy.

The day began with a uniformed police officer, reading pre-selected students’ obituaries in Connelly classrooms. Shortly afterwards, a simulated drunk driving collision was staged that also used pre-selected students. A 911 call triggered a response by law enforcement, firefighters, and paramedics, who used the drill as a training exercise to simulate real life responses.

The Connelly student body watched the drama unfold in real time and witnessed firefighters treating injured students in a horrifically staged car accident that portrayed their fellow classmates in badly-injured and bloodied states. Firefighters pried away a mangled vehicle’s door to remove a student. Another student was declared dead and taken away in a hearse. One student, who was designated as the drunk driver, was given a field sobriety test and was subsequently arrested for driving under the influence, handcuffed, and driven away in a police car to the OC Jail. The audience, all Connelly students, faculty and staff, watched in sobering silence.

The program concluded the next day at a special assembly for students and parents that showed a video that captured the whole experience including the staged accident; ensuing rescue and treatment from first responders; parental notification of their child’s “death” by law enforcement; the drunk driver being booked in the OC jail; and the arraignment in court of the drunk driver.

A parent, grandparent, and students spoke at the assembly, sharing their emotionally charged experience. In addition, guest speaker Jason Barber shared a very power and impactful personal experience as someone who has lived with the consequences of driving drunk, and the life he was responsible for taking – his own brother’s. Counselors and therapy dogs were on hand both days to be with students who needed to talk about the emotions they were feeling. This was a truly amazing life-changing and life-saving program that Cornelia Connelly School is honored to have been chosen to take part in. Funding for the program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Cornelia Connelly School in Anaheim Founded and sponsored by the Society of the Holy Child Jesus in 1961, Connelly is a Catholic, independent, college-preparatory high school for young women. The school is a member of the Holy Child Network of Schools and is sponsored by the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus. The Society of the Holy Child Jesus operates schools – preschool through college level – in the United States, Europe and Africa. Exchange programs offer Connelly's students unique opportunities to study at Holy Child Schools in the United States and Europe. Connelly's exceptional curriculum and programs prepare young women to be leaders based on an underlying philosophy of trust, reverence and respect. For more information about the school, please go to www.connellyschoolanaheim.org.



Caption for above photo 1 (*2018-every15minutes-firefighter-help.jpg*): A Cornelia Connelly School student is attended to by an Anaheim firefighter as part of a mock, alcohol-related automobile accident during the CHP-sponsored *Every 15 Minutes* program.

Caption for above photo 2 (*2018-every15minutes-somber-audience.jpg*): Connelly students watch in somber silence during the CHP-sponsored *Every 15 Minutes* program.

Caption for above photo 3 (*2018-every15minutes-candles.jpg*): Connelly students were memorialized during the CHP-sponsored *Every 15 Minutes* program.