



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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P.A.R.T.Y. PROGRAM GETS NEW TOOL TO TEACH RISK REDUCTION

VICTORIA - Organizers of the P.A.R.T.Y. (Prevent Alcohol and Risk Related Trauma in Youth) program have a new tool to teach Vancouver Island Grade 10 students to reduce risk in the decisions they make. Students going through the P.A.R.T.Y program this year will try the 'DriveWise Simulator,' a driving education tool which shows young drivers how distractions can negatively affect their driving skills.

"DriveWise will have students use fatal vision goggles while driving a designed route on the simulator, and illustrate the dangers of both talking on the phone and texting while driving," said DriveWise BC owner Arthur Harris. "Our driving school is excited to be partnering with the P.A.R.T.Y program to make sure young people on Vancouver Island are educated about the dangers of these distractions, while staying safe by using our driving simulator."

P.A.R.T.Y. is a national program aimed at reducing alcohol and risk-related trauma in youth. Program partners include the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA), ICBC, police and ambulance services, post secondary institutions and school districts.

"P.A.R.T.Y. offers first hand perspectives to youth about the consequences of their decisions," said VIHA Board member Brenda Nunns Shoemaker. "Students learn that making a smart decision can actually avert a tragic event, which is vital for building strong communities and reducing pressures on our healthcare system."

Students going through P.A.R.T.Y get real-life information from trauma professionals through resuscitation simulations and hands-on experience to demonstrate the impact of injuries that can result from risky behaviour. Participants also receive tours of the hospital's trauma care areas, and hear poignant stories from injury survivors.

"I have seen too many cases of young people who were terribly injured or killed after making poor decisions," said Dr. Stephen Wheeler, VIHA Medical Director, Emergency Services and Trauma. "P.A.R.T.Y delivers strong messages, and if they convince even one young person to make a smart decision, like calling their parents for a ride, then this program is doing exactly what it was intended to do."

The first session of the 2008 school year took place September 4th at the Victoria General Hospital (VGH), with sessions every Thursday at VGH and approximately monthly in other locations throughout Vancouver Island, wrapping up in June. The program has already educated more than 6,000 youth in south and mid-island communities about traumatic injuries they could sustain during high-risk activities such as speeding, drinking and driving, and not wearing seatbelts.

Media are invited to attend any or all of the P.A.R.T.Y. sessions being held in communities across Vancouver Island. For more information, visit our website: <http://www.viha.ca/trauma/party/>.

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