



## Superior Court of California County of Orange

# **News Release**

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### **Court Awarded Funding to Educate Teens About the Dangers of Drinking and Distracted Driving**

The Superior Court in Orange County has been awarded a grant for a program aimed at teaching youth the dangers of drinking and distracted driving. The \$20,000 grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, will fund 18 presentations of the "Choices and Consequences" program to high school students on campuses throughout the County.

The interactive program, created and presented by Superior Court Judge Kimberly Menninger, explains the choices and consequences of driving under the influence (DUI) and underage drinking. The Orange County Superior Court holds court in each school hearing defendants plead who wish to plead guilty and sentencing them in front of the school for violations of driving under the influence and alcohol related charges.

The 90-minute program also includes presentations by two youth counselors who discuss the reasons why people use alcohol and drugs to cover their emotional scars, and by a former teen star athlete who presents his story of how DUI convictions resulted in his loss of educational opportunities and scholarships and how he eventually quit drinking, acknowledged those scars and found his passion in life, of coaching kids to reach their potential on and off the field.

"As a school administrator of many years I have witnessed many programs in schools and Choices and Consequences" is among the very best," said Tim O'Donoghue, Principal of Hillview High School in Santa Ana, California.

The DUI Enforcement and Awareness grant assists local communities in their efforts to reduce the number of persons killed and injured in alcohol- and drug-related collisions. In 2008, in California, more than 3,200 youth who were involved in fatal and injury collisions were found to have been drinking alcohol, and 103 California drivers between the ages of 15 and 21 were killed due to alcohol-related traffic accidents. During 2008, 66 Orange County drivers were killed due to an alcohol-related accident.

"We can't let up on the efforts to promote and enforce traffic safety, especially to our youth," said Christopher J. Murphy, Director of the California Office of Traffic Safety, "These are the lessons they will take with them throughout their driving careers."

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School presentations can be arranged through the Collaborative Courts office, by contacting Lynn Fenton at [lfenton@occourts.org](mailto:lfenton@occourts.org).