

**Fanwood Community Policing Alliance
Borough of Fanwood
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Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

The Fanwood Community Policing Alliance, in conjunction with the Fanwood Police Department and the Scotch Plains Fanwood Municipal Alliance Committee hosted a drunk-driver awareness event for students at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School and seniors of Union Catholic High School on Friday, October 21st in the parking lot of Saint Bartholomew's Church in Scotch Plains.

Students from SPFHS Health and Physical Education class, along with a group of seniors from Union Catholic HS were invited to learn "hands on" the effects of alcohol on their ability to drive and perform basic functions. This was done with "The Safety Buggy", which is a modified Volkswagen Beetle that a trained operator controls while a student is driving along with student passengers in the back seats. The car is driven through a short obstacle course and then made to "act drunk" with a loss of steering, brakes, etc. The Safety Buggy comes from the Pennsylvania Driving Under the Influence Association and tours the region all year long. Also used at the event were "Fatal Vision Goggles" which simulate vision impairment at different levels of alcohol consumption.

"The Safety Buggy is a learning experience that is very worthwhile for the students because they can feel the lose of control and delay in their reaction time in a safe structured environment. Often young adults believe that are invincible and this program proves to them they are not, by breaking through their denial, it gives them a reality check," said Liz Knodel-Gordon, the Substance Awareness Coordinator for the SPF School District.

Danielle Zoller, a UC Senior said, "I really understand what the effect of alcohol has on the brain after trying to walk with those goggles on, it was funny but also scary to imagine someone trying to drive with those on." "Driving in a car that simulated what one drink would do to a person reinforced my decision never to get in a car with someone who drinks," added Pan Heaney, a UC Senior. And Tarrell Calloway, a UC Senior, commented, "I'm pretty coordinated; I play Varsity Basketball and have to make quick decisions throughout the game. Trying to catch a ball with the goggles on really made me think about the effects that alcohol has on the body."

[Photo Caption: With the assistance of Fanwood P.D. Sgt. Thomas Jedic (center), Union Catholic H.S. Teacher and Track coach Mike McCabe tries on a pair of the Fatal Vision goggles which simulate different levels of impairment due to alcohol consumption, while Seniors Pam Heaney, Kim Hannam, Obi Nwizugbo, Tarrell Calloway, and Even Challiet observe. Photographed by Allan Wright.]

Started in 2004, the Fanwood Police Department organized a Community Policing Alliance (CPA). The CPA invites all residents and those working in Fanwood to attend any meetings and become a member of the CPA. Our goal is to create a link between the police and the community that will address a wide array of topics, including crime prevention, child safety and community events. The CPA meets monthly on the fourth Wednesday of every month at the same time/location. For more details, please go to our website at www.FanwoodCPA.org.

The Scotch Plains Fanwood Municipal Alliance Committee (MAC) is dedicated to providing substance abuse awareness programs for residents and students in Scotch Plains and Fanwood. Started in 1988. The MAC receives its funding from NJ State Drug Enforcement Demand Reduction fines and penalties. Several general committee meetings are held each year locally along with several countywide meetings. New members are welcome and encouraged to call the MAC Coordinator Kerry Bridge, at 908-232-0724 if interested.

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