Traffic Safe Communities Network (TSCN) in Santa Clara County

976 Lenzen Avenue, San Jose, CA 95126
Tel: (408) 792-3744 Fax: (408) 792-3745

James T. Beall, Jr.,
Board of Supervisors
Santa Clara County
Martin Fenstersheib, MD, MPH
Health Officer for Santa Clara County

TSCN Project Director:

Guadalupe S. Olivas, PhD
Director, Public Health Department

Program Manager:
Alma Burrell, MPH
Public Health Department

Work Group Co-Chairs:
Alcohol & Impaired Driving:
Jackie Masso
Mothers Against Drunk Driving

Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety:
Ellen Corman, Stanford Trauma

Dieckmann Cogill, City of Sunnyvale

Roadway Safety:
Ananth Prasad
SCC Roads and Airports

Participating Agencies *(partial listing):*
Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC)
ALTRANS
American Medical Response (AMR)
Bicycle Solutions
California Highway Patrol
California State Automobile Assn.
Caltrans - Region 4
City of Campbell
City of Cupertino
City of Gilroy
City of Los Altos
City of Milpitas
City of Morgan Hill
City of Mountain View
City of Palo Alto
City of San Jose
City of Santa Clara
City of Sunnyvale
Drinking Drivers Program Assn.
Friday Night Live
Los Gatos/Monte Sereno PD
MADD
Metropolitan Transportation Commission
NCADD
Palo Alto Area American Red Cross
Safe Kids Coalition
San Jose Medical Center Trauma Services
SCC Board of Supervisors
SCC Emergency Medical Services
SCC Office of the District Attorney
SCC Probation Department
SCC Roads & Airports
SCC Sheriff's Office
SCVMC Trauma Services
Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition
Stanford Trauma Services
State Farm Insurance

For Immediate Release
Interview and Photo Opportunities
April 6, 2007

Contact: Margaret Headd (408)792-3743
Email: Margaret.headd@hhs.sccgov.org

Real DUI Trial at James Lick High School Gives Students a Sobering Look at the Consequences of Drinking and Driving

San Jose, CA – Normally teenagers see car crashes and courtroom trials only in movies and on TV. And they know they are fake. On Friday, April 6, local high school students will participate first hand in the real thing as Superior Court Judge Hector Ramon holds an actual Driving Under the Influence (DUI) trial before approximately 250 students at James Lick High School. The trial and subsequent presentation will be at the school at 57 North White Road in San Jose from 8:15 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.

This is not a mock court, but rather an actual criminal trial of a 25 year-old Santa Clara man arrested on September 20, 2006, by California Highway Patrol at 21st and Santa Clara Street, in San Jose. The defendant was allegedly drinking before his 2:10 a.m. arrest. A lab test conducted after his arrest indicated that the defendant's blood alcohol level was 0.13 percent – almost twice the legal limit of 0.08 percent.

Following the trial, Judge Hector Ramon will make a brief presentation and co-facilitate an interactive civics lesson. The intent is to allow for significant dialogue among the students, defendant, judge, attorneys, witnesses, law enforcement officers, teachers, and special guests.

"I hope that through observing a live DUI trial, students will think twice before drinking and driving. Too many lives have been lost in crashes that could have been prevented," states Assembly Member James Beall, Jr., former Traffic Safe Communities Network's Co-chair.

Conducting a real DUI trial in a high school setting is an innovative strategy to help reduce community alcohol problems, including motor vehicle crashes. Students will witness the legal consequences of drinking and driving, learn about the defendant's arrest, jailing, public trial and, if convicted, the imposed fines and penalties. They will also have an opportunity to learn more about the judicial branch of government.

Judges ponder in their courtrooms daily about individual and community problems created by DUI offenders. Many judges are looking for innovative ways to help reduce alcohol-related problems. This prevention program is designed to help students make more informed choices for resisting alcohol industry, media, peer, and social pressures to drink.

Recently, the American Medical Association reported that underage drinking is a factor in nearly half of all automobile crashes. Additionally, the Centers for Disease Control reported in a 2005 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance that during the 30 days that preceded the survey, 9.9% of students in grades 9-12 nationwide had driven a car or other vehicle one or more times when they had been drinking.

Furthermore, motor vehicle crashes remain the leading cause of death for 15-19 year olds - with the primary collision factor being alcohol. Statewide in 2005, there were 726 drivers age 15-20 involved in fatal collisions with some degree of impairment, of these drivers 16.9 percent had been drinking.

James Lick High School is the nineteenth local high school to host an actual DUI trial since the inception of the program in 2001. The DUI Court in the Schools program was developed by Traffic Safe Communities Network in Santa Clara County and is a cooperative effort involving the Santa Clara County Public Health Department, Superior Court, Office of the District Attorney, Office of the Public Defender, and East Side Unified High School District. Santa Clara is the first county in California to offer this kind of program. This program is funded by a grant from the Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

MEDIA COVERAGE OF COURT PROCEEDINGS

Media organizations requesting permission to photograph, record, or broadcast (Rule 980) the James Lick High School trial must submit the completed forms MC-500 and MC-510 at the school's Multi Purpose Room on Friday, April 6, 2007. No flash photography will be permitted while the court is in session.