

Teens get sense of driving while drunk, and vow not to do it

By OSEYE T. BOYD

Ashley Losh sat in the driver's seat with a large TV screen in front of her and two more on the side, concentrating on the road ahead. As she drove, her reaction time became slower and slower, her peripheral vision decreasing little by little.

Losh, a senior at Wapahani High School in Selma, learned how it felt to drive while drunk during the National Difference "Save A Life" Tour. The tour, complete with a car that simulated impaired driving, stopped at Wapahani on Friday. The car started off sober then gradually increased alcohol content based on the person's weight and gender to show the driver what drunk driving is like. The weather also changed to further simulate real life situations.



Melanie Maxwell / The Star Press

Wapahani senior Jenny Straub laughs as she attempts to keep control of the car while she participates in a drunk-driving simulator on the Save a Life Tour, which visited the high school Friday afternoon.

"It was harder than it looked," Losh said. "It was really hard. I don't want to drink and drive anyway. I'm not a drinker. It makes me scared because I live right down the road from a bar."

The week of prom is alcohol awareness week and the tour is another way to show students the importance of making good decisions, school nurse Nancy Thomas said. Students who plan to attend prom today were required to sit in the simulator.

"When we look at high school statistics, alcohol is the number one drug for high school students," Thomas said.

Mandy Hart never has driven drunk, but she knows some friends who do. The simulator experience will make her more vigilant about taking their keys away if they drink, she said. She believes the simulator could change the minds of some students. Hart was grateful the school brought the tour to Wapahani.

"It brings, like, something different to the school" the high school senior said. "Most schools don't get to have the 'Save A Life Tour' come in."

The simulator had its intended effect on junior Cain Priddy -- he won't drink and drive.

"I thought it was really cool," Priddy said. "It made me scared to drink and drive. I've never drank and drove. I guess, it gave me an idea of how it felt. Makes me not want to do it."