

Testimonials
Illinois Judges Association's Presentation:
'7 Reasons to Leave the Party'

Judges Schuering & Drummond,

Thank you again for taking time to be here at U-High earlier this week, your presentation was powerful and after talking with some of our students, I know it made an impression on our student body. There were a couple things I thought of after you left that I wanted to communicate to you in hopes that you could use the information in future publicity.

First, presenting your message to our parents the evening before the student presentation was critical. That presentation helped parents to understand exactly what message their students would be receiving the following day, it helped to provide important information to our parents as well as our students, and sent the message that supporting our students truly is a collaborative process that involves the students, the school, and the home. Several parents commented on how much they appreciated you taking the time to talk with them, and that the presentation was equally powerful for them.

Second, having originally scheduled the presentation in our gym, I was so glad that we were able to move it to our auditorium. That was important because it allowed our entire student body to hear the presentation and it provided the means for everyone to see the information you included in your Power Point presentation. Although we schedule presentations like these just prior to Prom every year making it primarily relevant to our Juniors and Seniors, this setting allowed our entire student body to hear your message. Your message is just as relevant to Freshmen and Sophomores as it is to Juniors and Seniors, how lucky we were to provide the means for everyone to hear your message. Regarding the Power Point, the information and the pictures were also critical to the presentation. The information supported what the students heard (reaching both audio and visual learners), but the pictures (especially the pictures of Jacqueline at the end) gave students a visual representation of what you talked about. You were right, ending the presentation with pictures of Jacqueline was powerful. The auditorium, and our entire student body (approximately 610 students and 60 faculty and staff) was silent.

Finally, your attempt to be proactive and provide students with ideas on how to avoid getting in to serious trouble, and more importantly avoid harming themselves, is greatly appreciated. Too often we find ourselves reacting to situations instead of planning to avoid them. This presentation gave students the tools to reflect on negative situations before they found themselves in them, and come up with ideas on how to avoid them, or get out of them if it was too late.

Many thanks to both of you and the Illinois Judges Association for your great work. I wish you all the best and would be happy to serve as a reference for anyone interested in your presentation who would like to talk to a practicing administrator about any questions they may have. Feel free to use any portion of this e-mail in promoting your work.

Thanks again and best of luck,

Stephen M. Wilder, Assistant Principal
University High School

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“Our parents, teachers, and students learned from this interactive assembly. The Illinois Judges Association has put together a ‘must see’ assembly that will get adults and teenagers thinking about the consequences of using and abusing substances. The legal details provided in this presentation are current, real and sobering. Thank you for coming to Central Catholic High School for a moving parent presentation and dynamic student assembly.”

Joy Allen, Principal, Central Catholic High School

“Judge Mark Drummond’s presentation on ‘Seven Reasons to Leave the Party’ had a positive and life changing effect upon many of our students. The Teen/Parent Contract served to initiate dialogue between parents and teens that otherwise may not have occurred. We are grateful to have had the opportunity to host Judge Drummond this past school year and look forward to his return in the near future.”

Rebecca Dommer, AVID Coordinator, John Hancock High School

“What a great presentation. The judge was an excellent speaker and the information should be told to every student in the building.” “I loved the assembly. The honesty from the judges really seemed to make an impact on my seniors. I think they will remember this one.”

The Staff at Vernon Hills High School

“The presentation ‘7 Reasons to Leave the Party’ was a well thought out and informative dialogue from a judge that deals with true to live experiences every day. He delivered actual facts that students could understand and relate to daily in their lives as teenagers. Numerous students complimented me for bringing an assembly to school that told what actually can happen if you make the wrong choices and the consequences for continuing to make wrong choices.”

Norm Bohnenstiehl, Principal, Edwardsville High School

“Judge Drummond's message is authentic. He speaks to students as people capable of making decisions rather than speaking to them as if they are children being told what they should and should not do. The information provided empowers them to make positive decisions because they are made aware of very specific legal consequences for scenarios they are very likely to face.”

Kate B. Jones, MSW, LCSW, Director of Counseling/Director of Seminar, Lake Forest Academy

“I wanted to send an e-mail to thank you [Judge Larry Dunford] for your presentation at Tri-Valley High School last week. It was very well received and we certainly appreciate your work. Thanks again for an amazing program.”

David Mouser, Principal, Tri-Valley High School in Downs

“Thank you [Judge James Epstein] for the fine service provided to our young people through the Illinois Judges Association presentation, ‘Seven Reasons to Leave the Party.’ The assembly at Mount Assisi Academy on November 12, 2008 by Judge Laurence Dunford was very well received by our student body. The presentation generated many important questions and thought provoking discussions. We are all very appreciative of the service provided to our students through your organization. We thank you for this service and your dedication to keeping our young people safe. We look forward to working with your organization in the future and we hope Judge Dunford will be available for future presentations to our community.”

Sr. Mary Francis Werner, Principal, Mount Assisi Academy in Lemont

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"I just wanted to let you know that I went out to a school (North Lawndale College Prep) today to observe the program. Judge Timothy Joyce did a phenomenal job presenting to the students. I also wanted to share the evaluations that I collected. I have attached the staff evaluation and the tallied student evaluation, if you would like to take a look. I also encouraged my colleagues to get out to schools and observe the program when possible. I will talk to you soon, thanks again."

Jaimee Natale, Communities In Schools of Chicago

"The feedback on last Thursday's assembly at the high school has been great. Our oldest son is Chairman of the School Board. Supt. Cowger told him it was the most organized and best delivered program he had seen. I talked to a few students. They all told me you were really good! They were a little embarrassed by some of the questions of their fellow students. I told them we knew not all students were of the mindset of a few. Anyway, thanks again for presenting the program. I have emailed Supt. Cowger with our thanks for his cooperation in allowing the program to be presented."

Resident Circuit Judge David K. Frankland

On Judge Mark Shaner's presentation at Edwards County High School in Albion

"This is another avenue that Saint Patrick High School is using to try and get these important messages to our Shamrocks. It's a win-win situation to be able to partner with a group like the IJA to offer students another perspective of the importance of being smart and responsible young adults."

Emmett McGovern, Director of Student Services, Saint Patrick High School in Chicago

"The presentation was excellent. A few of my seniors commented to me how they tend to forget how easy it is to get in a situation, just by association. Please thank Judge John Griffin for me again. We really appreciated his time."

Mary Corral, Senior Counselor, John Hancock High School in Chicago

"Dear Judge Epstein: I personally want to thank you and your association for the incredible presentation we were privileged to witness on Wednesday, January 21, 2009. *Seven Reasons to Leave the Party* was informative and a great education in reality for our very diverse student population. A total of 250 students between 15-18 years of age were present in our library annex over two sessions. The Honorable Mary Karen Simpson, Susan Clancy Boles, Patricia Piper Golden of the 16th District, and Justice Ann B. Jorgensen were extremely-student receptive and sent a firm and real message. This program is essential to the state's children as they need to be able to ask the questions before they need representation to ask the questions. *Seven Reasons to Leave the Party* needs to be seen by as many students and parents as possible. If this preventative maintenance impacts one in the group of many, it is well worth the time. Thank you for your support of this program for our children of the State of Illinois."

Charles J. Feldmann, Safety Education Teacher, Dundee-Crown High School in Carpentersville