

Students Learn About Highway Safety

Click It and Ticket Event Provides Important Tips

By Deidre Ortiz

Franklin County Prevention Coalition recently organized a Click it and Ticket (CIAT) Youth Leadership Project one bright and early morning at Franklin County High School.

The event started before dawn in the school's parking lot on April 8, and students from the P3 group (Positive Peer Pressure) helped stop cars to check and see if their peers were wearing their seat belts or not. The P3 students asked their peers to be responsible and always wear their seat belts and practice safe driving.

The main reason for the project, according to Prevention Coalition Director Tabatha Curtis, was to promote highway safety among Franklin County's teens.

"Click it and Ticket events focus specifically on increasing seatbelt compliance," Curtis said.

"The project, intended to be directed by teens themselves, also promotes leadership development and ownership of high safety."

Though the campaign endorsed by the Tennessee Governor's Highway Safety Office is actually called Click it *Or* Ticket, "Click it *And* Ticket" is meant to be a play on words. CIAT rewards those students who arrive to school wearing their seatbelts with a "Citation of Good Behavior" and any students found not to be wearing their seatbelts are given a "Warning: Poor Choice" citation. A total of 271 tickets were written during the event at FCHS.

"Those who received a good citation were eligible to win \$10, \$50 or up to a grand prize of a \$100 gift card," Curtis said. "The number 100 is symbolic because it is 10 times the amount typically ticketed to a teen found not wearing their seatbelt. The grand prizes were provided on behalf of State Farm and the Governor's Highway Safety Office. Local State Farm agent Billy Freeze provided 47 door prizes to give away as well."

Besides an abundance of prizes given, the students also received a lot of valuable information. The students' citations included relevant statistics and resources related to teen driver safety, and several brochures on Tennessee Graduated Driver's License policies (GDL) and the risks of using alcohol and drugs were also available.

GHSO Director Kendell Poole stands behind events such as these, stating the Click it and Ticket project offers students an opportunity to realize the consequences of not wearing their seatbelt.

"Teens need to remember whether they are driving across town or just around a neighborhood, wearing safety belts is the best way to protect themselves and their passengers from severe injury or even death," Poole said. "Wearing your safety belt costs nothing, but not wearing it could cost you your life."

LEARN AND EARN—FCHS students Kayla Holt and Sarah Reavis participated in the Click It and Ticket event at the high school and were the lucky \$100 and \$50 dollar winners of the raffle held. Eight other students were also awarded \$10. The prizes awarded were given on behalf of the Governor's Highway Safety Office, State Farm and local State Farm agent Billy Freeze.

VISIT FROM A GOOD NEIGH-BEAR—State Farm Agent Billy Freeze dressed up as the Good Neigh-Bear for the Click it and Ticket event. Pictured is Winchester Officer Dan Ferguson, Mr. Billy Freeze and Clint Shrum from the Governor's Highway Safety Office (to view photo click on <http://www.tntrafficsafety.org/CIAT/hs/Franklinco/Franklincomemories.asp>).