

RYDA - Rotary Youth Driver Awareness

Past President Carol Charman participated in the June 2022 Rotary Youth Driver Awareness program and reports on what she saw.



This is the first time I have assisted in this program and I was very impressed with all the presentations.

The program was held over two days at McLean Park, Napier, allowing 4 schools to participate, two on each day.

At the introductory meeting the year 12 students were divided into 4 groups, each assisted by a teacher and a Rotarian. There were 5 activities to complete during the day with a morning tea and lunch break.

Our group began with 'Road Choices' presented by Che. This focused on the choices we make when we drive e.g.: - are we tired, stressed, angry, are there any distractions in

the vehicle young children, phones (talking on the phone steals almost 40% of the mental resources you need for driving); the focus was on what can we do to prevent these from distracting us while driving. A great presentation that gave the students plenty to think about.

The next 'Mind Matters' was presented by Jason. four wonderful role-play scenarios where each group of 5 students had a driver, a road/driver observer, a passenger and 2 others who presented the different scenarios. This was to make the students think about the Mindstate they would be in and how this might impact their driving. Then to think about strategies they could use to overcome the Mindstate.

The 'I in Drive' was presented by Alex and focused on the student's self-awareness - Knowing yourself, Speaking up, Self-control, Risk awareness, and Thinking social. Know yourself, be your own coach and have a plan for risky situations and they were encouraged to think of one strategy of their own for each category.

Crash Investigators was presented by Kate and Seth. this was about understanding the crash factors and identifying ways the Safe System can be (or has been) strengthened. Seth had been in a life-changing accident that left him with brain damage and mobility issues. Seth spoke about his accident and then the students were asked to think of some questions they could ask him that may have contributed to his crash for example what was happening in the 24 hours leading up to the moment of the crash and using the Safe System approach, what factors were involved and how did they impact the severity of the injury ie, road condition, speed, barriers, etc.

Drive SOS was presented by Graeme and focused on being aware of everything going on around you while driving. A short clip was shown from a car driver's perspective and the students were asked to point out the potential hazards where the driver may need to take action. There was also a clip from a truck driver's perspective and the limitation of their areas of view. The students were encouraged to see the road from all perspectives which will help them drive so others survive.



The last session for the day was a practical demonstration of Speed and Stopping. Andrew presented and explained the safety ratings of a car, the need for good tread on tires, and also the correct pressure needed in the tyres. Colin (an ex-race car driver) then drove his car to the end of the car park and a student was asked to judge where he would actually stop after applying the brakes beside an orange road cone, at 40km/hr, 60km/hr. Also, the distance to travel behind another vehicle was discussed and demonstrated by the students stepping out.

The day passed quickly and the students were very interactive and attentive. I am sure they left with a lot to think about and a more in-depth perspective about the way they will drive.