

Outreach event deters drunk and drugged driving

by Staff Sgt. Darnell T. Cannady
18th Wing Public Affairs

12/15/2010 - **KADENA AIR BASE, Japan** -- While many are preparing for the holidays this December, members of the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Treatment program in conjunction with the 18th Medical Group are spending their time educating people on the dangers of drunk and drugged driving.

Before the holidays there is an increase in driving under the influence cases throughout the Air Force and December is designated the National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention month. Throughout the month, members of the 18th Wing have been provided with information and events that help inform them of the hazards of driving under the influence.

One such event was held Dec. 15 and gave participants a firsthand perspective on the dangers of drunk and drugged driving.

"We want to educate people on responsible drinking and how driving while under the influence of anything is a bad combination," said Capt. Michael Rath, the 18th Wing Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Treatment program manager. "This decision can ruin your career and ruin the lives of others."

With the assistance of "drunk goggles," Captain Rath and Senior Airman Anissa Harwood, 18th Wing ADAPT program technician, gave members of the 18th Wing the experience of being in different blood alcohol content levels and performing different tasks.

Many people think that only being drunk or on drugs will affect their driving, but being under the influence of medications like Nyquil or prescribed medications can be just as bad.

"I believe this event will make people more aware of the effects that alcohol and drugs do to them by putting them in normal situations that normally wouldn't provide much of a challenge," Airman Harwood said. "Most people don't realize how much drugs and alcohol affect their abilities."

The event showed how simple tasks such as walking a straight line, shooting a ball in a hoop a few feet away, or navigating a course require a lot more concentration while inebriated.

"That was a lot harder than I thought it would be," said Tech Sgt. Derrick Wilcox, 18th Logistics Readiness Squadron maintenance supply liaison, after trying to walk in a straight line while wearing drunk goggles with a .25 blood alcohol content level.

Not only was performing the tasks while wearing the drunk goggles difficult, but actually preparing for the tasks proved to be challenging for some as well. Just picking up a basketball to take a shot, standing on the line to begin walking, or sitting on the bike to navigate the course became more difficult.

"Wearing the goggles definitely made everything more difficult," said Senior Airman Brett Stanbery, 18th Medical Group's public health flight. "I almost missed the seat just getting onto the bike."

By mixing having fun with providing information, this event taught members of the 18th Wing how being under the influence changes their ability to perform.

"We would just like to help decrease the number of driving while under the influence during this month and ensure that everyone safely and responsibly enjoys the holidays," Captain Rath said.



Master Sgt. Tevin Austin, a member of the 18th Medical Group, tries to navigate the "drunk buster" bike around cones while wearing drunk goggles during a National Drunk and Drugged Prevention Month outreach event at Kadena Air Base, Dec. 15. This event demonstrated how navigating a simple course becomes harder while under the influence. (U.S. Air Force photo/Staff Sgt. Darnell T. Cannady)