Insight into a teen party

Production asks parents to help stop kids' drinking

By Gareth W. Dodd
Special to The Star

The empty booze and beer bottles strewn about the Camarillo Boys & Girls Club's stage conveyed a message: Make it stop.

"It," teenage drinking and drug parties, is what nine county teenage actors with the Straight Up reality improv group portrayed Monday night during a skit titled "The Secret Life of a Camarillo Teenager."

The minidrama and guest speakers were part of a parent awareness program sponsored by Saving Lives Camarillo, Straight Up, the Boys & Girls Club and Chabad of Camarillo.

The event, funded by Ventura County Behavioral Health Department Drug and Alcohol Programs, gave parents and teens a stark, realistic view of what can go on at teen parties.

The actors used such terms as "beer bong," "keg stand" and "beer ping-pong." They spoke of popping pills, frequent fights and "random drunk girls" targeted for sex after they pass out.

"Instructions for drinking games are easy to find on the Internet," one actor said.

"And the girls are keeping up with the guys," replied another.

"Alcohol is not the only drug at parties," said another.

Another scene featured a girl passed out on a sofa as a middle-age man gazed luridly at her.

"I find out about the parties on Facebook and crash them, no problem," he said.

At the skit's end, the performers went to the front of the stage, urged parents to get involved and then shouted, "Make it stop!"

Cmdr. Steve DeCesari of the Ventura County Sheriff's Department.
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ment said a lot of parents turn a blind eye to what goes on at teen parties.
"I can't tell you how many times we've gone to parties and the parents were upstairs," DeCesari said. "They knew what was going on. What we found out is prescription drugs were a big problem."

Sheriff's Sgt. John Gleason told the assembly that most prescription drugs obtained by teens come from their parents' medicine cabinets.

"Plus, there are the street drugs: cocaine, meth, heroin and marijuana," said Gleason, adding that over-the-counter drugs are also a problem.

"Peer pressure is the No. 1 reason for alcohol and drug abuse. Some kids get so far over the straight line, we never get them back. Our target group are the kids on the bubble."

Katherine Kasmir, Straight Up project di-

Cmdr. Steve DeCesari of the Ventura County Sheriff's Department makes a presentation during an event to discourage underage drinking Monday night at the Camarillo Boys & Girls Club.

rector, said the terms and slang used by the performers were taken from real life.

"We didn't make any of these lines up. They come from thousands of kids we've talked to in Ventura County," Kasmir said.

"The parties are out of control, and the parents don't have a clue."

Marissa Maas of the reality improv group Straight Up talks to the audience about teenage drinking during a minidrama, "The Secret Life of a Camarillo Teenager," on Monday night in Camarillo.
Members of Straight Up reality improv group stage a teenage drinking party at the “Secret Life of a Camarillo Teenager” community event Monday night at the Camarillo Boys & Girls Club. The event was presented in collaboration through Saving Lives Camarillo, Chabad of Camarillo, Boys & Girls Club and Straight Up.

Mitchell Boring (left) and Marissa Maas (right) with reality improv group Straight Up, give a stage performance of a teenage drinking party at “The Secret Life of a Camarillo Teenager” community event Monday night at the Camarillo Boys & Girls Club.

Katherine Kasmir, program director of Straight Up Ventura County, talks with audience members at “The Secret Life of a Camarillo Teenager” program Monday night at the Camarillo Boys & Girls Club.

Marissa Maas of reality improv group Straight Up talks to the audience about teenage drinking during “The Secret Life of a Camarillo Teenager” program Monday night at the Camarillo Boys & Girls Club.
Cmdr. Steve DeCesari of the Ventura County Sheriff's Department makes a presentation at "The Secret Life of a Camarillo Teenager" program Monday night at the Camarillo Boys & Girls Club.

Jace Meadows (left) and Mitchell Boring of Straight Up act out a scene from a teenage drinking party during "The Secret Life of a Camarillo Teenager" program Monday night at the Camarillo Boys & Girls Club.

Rabbi Aryeh Lang, director of Saving Lives Coalition and director of Chabad of Camarillo, addresses the audience attending "The Secret Life of a Camarillo Teenager" community forum Monday at the Camarillo Boys & Girls Club.