

Odyssey Drug House production gives families a dose of reality

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Scenes from the Drug Odyssey 2012 event Wednesday at Cape Christian Fellowship in Cape Coral.

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[Zoom](#)

Dallas Stobb, 18, is arrested by Lee County Sheriff's Deputy Diego Orjuela during a mock traffic stop Wednesday at the Drug Odyssey 2012 event at Cape Christian Fellowship in Cape Coral. / Kin fay Moroti/The News-Press



[Zoom](#)

Dallas Stobb, 18, is arrested during a mock traffic stop Wednesday in Cape Coral. / photos by Kin fay Moroti/The News-Press

Teens, alcohol and driving

- About 5,000 people younger than 21 die each year as a result of underage drinking, with 1,900 of those deaths from auto accidents.
- About one in three high school students has been a passenger in a car driven by someone who had consumed alcohol.

- Alcohol is involved in 31 percent of teenage car fatalities.
Source: Lee County Coalition for a Drug-Free Southwest Florida

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- [Drug House Odyssey 2012](#)

A young woman is taken away from the scene of a car accident, her t-shirt covered by droplets of blood.

“Ashley, Ashley, I’m sorry!” she screams. “Please my God, let her be OK!”

The passenger in the car is bleeding from the head, unconscious and unresponsive. Both had been out partying, and the night ends with one dying and the other eventually going to jail.

This scene wasn’t real, but that actual event happens far too often.

It’s the harsh reality that Drug House Odyssey painted Wednesday night for parents and children in the name of prevention.

Families followed professionals in law enforcement, hospital workers, Lee County EMS, state attorney’s office and 30 other agencies through a day in the life on their job.

The moving, 40-minute production staged over three days at Cape Christian Fellowship acts out the experience of four young people who, by their good or bad choices, see their lives changed forever. Groups are moved from place to place beginning at a party, to an arrest, to a very tragic ending.

They see the entire process and what can happen to someone who decides to drive under the influence or abuse drugs and alcohol.

“I’ll never do drugs,” said Jocelyn Watkins, 9, of Fort Myers, shaking her head furiously.

Her brother, Skyler, 13, agreed. “It’s a good lesson,” he said.

The family sat together, cuddling around their mom, Destiny Watkins, as the crowd got to the hospital scene where the character’s mother found out Ashley had died in the car crash.

Her wails followed them out of the room.

“It’s all very realistic, with real judges and real police. I knew it’d only get worse,” Watkins said. “I need them (her kids) to see it this way, not in real life.”

Only one character decides to stand up against peer pressure.

Kathleen Kerswig, 51, of Fort Myers wipes a tear from her eyes as she walks away from the crash scene.

“It’s very real,” Kerswig said. “I can’t believe how quickly it can happen.”

It’s the 19th year that the event has been sponsored by the Lee County Coalition for a Drug-Free Southwest Florida. Now, the organization is working to make an evidence-based program to find out the true impact Drug House Odyssey has on youth.

“It was so powerful I had to bring my daughter,” said Andrea Hollan, a fifth- grade teacher at Allen Park Elementary who brought her class to see it earlier in the day. “We don’t have the DARE program any more, but they still get the message.”

For parents to see it with their families is really the best-case scenario, said Deborah Comella, executive director of the Lee County Coalition for a Drug-Free Southwest Florida.

“They can see it together,” Comella said. “Prevention starts in the home.”