

Comal Independent School District

NEWS RELEASE

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Speaker impacts SBMS students during Red Ribbon Week

Students at Spring Branch Middle received a lesson during Red Ribbon Week that will benefit them for years to come.

J Anthony Garcia, a Drug and Alcohol Prevention Specialist, spoke to the entire student body throughout the day in the school's gym.

Garcia made excellent points to students about how alcohol is ingrained into the Texas culture. He added that it is an undeniable fact that alcohol is a drug that kills more than 600 youth annually in Texas alone.

"Young people don't know when to stop drinking," Garcia said. "They binge drink and that leads to drinking and driving fatalities and unplanned pregnancies."

Garcia encouraged SBMS students not to give in to the many temptations they'll encounter in the future.

"Alcohol is so prevalent in public places," Garcia said. "It's everywhere during spring break; it's in ice coolers in convenience stores basically promoting drinking and driving, but you don't have to give in to these pressures society puts on you to drink. Alcohol is so harmful to your body. It attacks your brain, heart and liver."

Garcia also talked about the dangers of drug use.

"Drugs can not only cause immediate harm, but they can lead to degenerative diseases like diabetes and heart disease," Garcia said. "The fact is this is the most dangerous time you can start using drugs because they are so potent to your body. They can hinder both mental and physical development and greatly diminish your chance for a successful future."

SBMS student Paul Hall said Garcia's message was powerful.

“He wants to keep us alive,” Hall said. “The way we can do that is by making smart decisions. Today I learned that drugs and alcohol can kill you fast or slow.”

Fellow student Christian Galik-Martinez agreed Garcia was an excellent person to have on campus during the anti-drug and alcohol Red Ribbon Week.

“He tells the truth,” Galik-Martinez said. “The examples he gave about what can happen to you if you take drugs or use alcohol were pretty scary.”

Bernadette Gugliotti, Comal ISD prevention specialist with the Keystone Program, said it’s very important for students to have this kind of education as early as possible.

“They are at such a critical age in middle school,” Gugliotti said. “The more resources we can tap into for them the better. J Anthony Garcia is so engaging. He’s not just flipping slides. He gets their full attention and they are asking him questions during and after the lecture, so there’s no question his presence here was a great success.”

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IN PHOTO: J Anthony Garcia, a Drug and Alcohol Prevention Specialist, speaks with Spring Branch Middle students about the dangers of drugs and alcohol.