

Anti-drug message hits students

High school students in Annandale's auditorium were asked if they knew anyone who was injured in a car accident which involved drinking and driving. About a third of the students raised their hands.

Not surprising, because one in four people who drink and then drive, or ride with a drunk driver, end up in the hospital -- or in a grave.

Garry Whyte, keynote speaker with Teen Communications, brought an anti-drug message to Annandale students on Monday.

Mr. Whyte knows about drugs. Since he was 13, he has been in trouble with the law. At 15 he was injecting hard drugs into his system with needles.

"I couldn't handle rejection," he told his audience. "I wanted to be popular, and that meant drugs and alcohol."

He later got into the drug market and dealt in thousands of dollars of drugs each week.

"I had to pay hard. I wasted five years of my life sitting in a lousy stinking prison cell because of drugs and alcohol," he said.

He has been straight since the spring of 1988, when he was released from prison.

Mr. Whyte explained that only one beer can impair driving, and that one joint of marijuana contains 421 different chemicals, most of which are poisonous.

Ernie Coones and Karen St. Arnault also spoke to the students about their personal experiences.

The program concluded with a plea to enter a "Lifesavers" agreement. The agreement is between two friends who promise to take a taxi if they have been drinking.