

Students at General Amherst hear first hand how drugs sent Whyte to jail

By Ron Giofu
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AMHERSTBURG — Garry Whyte is a recovering alcoholic and drug addict. He started with drugs and alcohol when he was 13 and was mainlining hard drugs by age 15.

Eventually, he developed a \$400 day drug addiction and became a major drug dealer. This led to Whyte spending seven years behind bars.

But he used his time in jail to turn his life around.

Whyte is now trying to make sure teenagers don't follow the same path he did.

Whyte, a motivational speaker, gave an entertaining yet thought provoking talk to the student body at General Amherst High School Wednesday. His message was plain and simple. Drugs and alcohol aren't "cool."

Whyte was invited to talk to the students by the school's Ontario Students Against Impaired Driving (OSAID) program.



Motivational speaker Garry Whyte entertained and spoke to the students at General Amherst High School on Wednesday. The recovered drug addict told the students what the effects of drugs and alcohol really are.

(Echo Photo by Ron Giofu)

"I wish someone would have told me bad choices lead to bad things," said Whyte. "I made the wrong choices as a teenager."

Whyte tried to dispel the thought that some

teenagers may think they're indestructible by outlining his path. Drug and alcohol problems, he said, starts with experimentation and if teens aren't careful, it could lead to a spiral of self-

destruction.

"There's a lot of jails filled with teens who thought they were indestructible," said Whyte. "There are a lot of graveyards filled with kids who thought they were indestructible."

Armed with audio clips and slides, Whyte illustrated the dangers of drinking and driving as well. Pictures of mangled cars and news reports illustrated the seriousness of the problem.

"This is a totally needless, senseless, preventable thing," he told the students.

Teenagers can relate to his message because they are often confronted with pressures and temptations to experiment. It can be tough at times trying to get through because teens sometimes view him as the enemy.

"Even if one or two are motivated to abstain from alcohol and drinking and driving, it's all worthwhile," he says. "I've been clean and sober for 10 years and I'm having the greatest time of my life."