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Firefighter wins award for drunken driving demonstrations

By RASHI KESARWANI
 THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

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TRABUCO CANYON – A company in the business of preparing people for their final resting places has presented its first Heart and Soul award to Orange County Fire Authority Capt. Steve Concialdi.

O'Connor Mortuary in Laguna Hills honored Concialdi, a paramedic, earlier this month. He's been educating teens about the dangers of drinking and driving for 20 years.



Captain paramedic Steve Concialdi received the "heart and soul" award from O'Connor Mortuary last week for his work to educate teens about the dangers of drinking and driving.

PHOTO COURTESY STEVE CONCIALDI

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Neil O'Connor of O'Connor Mortuary said his family-run company started the award program to highlight "the tremendous positive individuals and experiences in the community, rather than focusing on negativity," according to a news release.

Concialdi, 39, of OCFA Station 45 in Rancho Santa Margarita, has organized 69 mock DUI crashes at Orange County high schools since 1991, when he first launched Friends Against Drunk Driving as a young paramedic.

"I just saw some horrific traffic accidents involving teenagers and adults," Concialdi said. "I was at the age where a lot of my friends were drinking and driving, and there was no way that I could bring my friends with me to see the crashes."

FADD relies on firefighters and CHP officers who volunteer their time and equipment to set-up DUI demonstrations that show students the potential results of drinking and driving, Concialdi said.

High school students – made up with fake blood to appear wounded, maimed and, in some cases, dead – also take part in the demonstrations, Concialdi said. They act as drunken drivers or passengers in the moments after a fatal collision, Concialdi said.

Even before FADD was formed, Concialdi educated high school students about the dangers of drunk driving through a slideshow presentation he created after a fatal DUI crash in 1989 involving high school students on their way to a winter formal dance. Two people were killed and three seriously injured in that crash, Concialdi said.

The last mock DUI demonstration organized by Concialdi took place at Trabuco Hills High School in Mission Viejo on March 4. Before that, the FADD team was at Laguna Hills High School Feb. 18.

Concialdi started doing video podcasts of the DUI demonstrations in 2007 to help spread the word about the dangers of drinking and driving.

To watch a demonstration, click on "Video #10" here: <http://www.citynewscasts.com>

Story Highlights

Steve Concialdi honored for organizing mock DUI demonstrations at O.C. high schools.

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To see photos from recent mock DUI demonstrations, click on the photo above.

Contact the writer: rkesawani@ocregister.com or 949-454-7347