



Helena Middle School students learn about effects of alcohol from interactive game

By ALANA LISTOE Independent Record | Posted: Saturday, October 1, 2011 12:00 am

Sixth-graders at Helena Middle School were surprised to learn it takes 30 seconds for alcohol to move from the mouth to the brain.

The majority knew, by show of hands, to say no to alcohol, but few admitted to talking to their parents about underage drinking.

The school assembly at Helena Middle School aimed to encourage students to open that dialogue in their home environments. It also relayed messages about making healthy choices in their own language, said Dana Fudurich, of the Century Council, an organization supported by the alcohol industry fighting to eliminate drunk driving and underage drinking.

Ask, Listen, Learn: Kids and Alcohol Don't Mix, is a multimedia program, interactive game where players choose from four, multi-level activates where they are challenged to answer questions about how alcohol affects their body, the basics of good nutrition and the impact of making healthy decisions. More than 50 questions randomly appear as participants race to school or workout in a dance studio.

Classmates Max Coopersmith and Elijah Harant were two of the students selected to demonstrate the game in the school's auditorium.

They liked the idea of mixing gaming and a social message about the dangers of alcohol. Coopersmith says it's like having a teacher in the game.

"It exercises you physically and mentally," Harant said.

Attorney General Steve Bullock attended the game demonstration and spoke briefly to the tweens at his alma matter.

"As a dad, I know what your parents worry about," Bullock said.

The game is based on research by Harvard Medical School's Dr. John Ratey that says a person needs movement for a brain to function at its peak.

The Century Council took that information and hopes to decrease the numbers put out by the National Survey on Drug Use and Health that found 16 percent of 12 to 14-year-olds reported using alcohol in the past month.

Principal Josh McKay said talking about the dangers of underage drinking is incredibly important. He hopes students left the assembly more aware of saying no to alcohol and making healthy choices.