

Club Drug Culture forum provides wake-up call about illicit substances

FORUM: Irvine Youth Action Team and Irvine Community Drug Prevention hosted a forum about commonly abused drugs.

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Students from high schools in Irvine gathered at the Irvine City Hall conference room to listen to Executive Director of the Center for Drug Free Communities Dr. Bill Beacham's presentation concerning illicit drugs commonly used at clubs and rave parties on Oct. 10.

Hosted by the Irvine Community Drug Prevention and the City of Irvine High School Youth Action Team (HSYAT), the Club Drug Culture forum invited students from Northwood, Irvine, Woodbridge and University High School, as well as students from Tustin and Irvine Valley College to attend the event. HSYAT served free buffet dinner and provided an opportunity to over 200 students to claim detention credits.

"We got a lot of people [to attend this event], considering it was competing with several activities, including a football game," Irvine HSYAT club co-president Natalie Bui said. "The interest level was high, too."

During the 90-minute session, Beacham discussed the different



PHOTO BY GENE BAIK

Dr. Bill Beacham informs students on Oct. 10 at the Club Drug Culture forum held at the city hall about illicit drugs commonly used in clubs and rave parties.

types of drugs used most frequently by teens, such as Speed, Crystal and Liquid Ecstasy. He covered the drugs' legal consequences, long and short term effects and what the drugs look like.

"I came to this event because I wanted to learn about [club drugs] more in depth," Junior Britton Kirk said. "It was pretty interesting [and] not as boring as I thought it would be."

At the end of the forum, students were given the opportunity to ask Beacham questions regarding drugs, alcohol and substance abuse. A lecture about legal consequences by Officer Mike Hallinan, Irvine Police

Narcotics Unit, along with a panel featuring Irvine Police Department's School Resource Officers, followed the question-and-answer session.

While on the first phase of drug use, teens are drawn to drugs by curiosity, rebellion and even boredom, according to Beacham. To prevent addiction and misuse of substances, Beacham advises parent involvement and self awareness.

"This is my job. My job is to try to get [the teenagers] to look at things differently," Beacham said. "The decision, when it comes to taking drugs, is [made in] a split second. If I can delay that for just a few seconds, I've made a huge difference."