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'Take5' Takes Hold at Campolindo

By Cathy Dausman



From left, Campolindo High School students Devin Regan, Jake Rider, J.V. Baldwin and Sean Smith.

Amid student council campaign signs plastered on Campolindo High School buildings, there is evidence of a second, campus-wide campaign called Take5. This one, its founders hope, will be something the students take with them long after high school.

Sponsored by the CHS Parents' Club and endorsed by the CHS administration, Take5 has one simple goal: to get students thinking (by taking five seconds) before they act.

"Parents of this school wanted their children to know we know [about the choices they face]," said Parents' Club president Wendy Dunn. She hopes students not only think about how a decision might affect him or her, but also "those around you, your family and [you] for the rest of your life."

To kick off the campaign, Dunn and Take5 co-chair Wendy Feldman peppered school walls with two dozen circular posters after school last month. The posters were an in-kind donation from CHS parent Teddy Yuen. On April 16 the entire student body, in back-to-back assemblies, watched the documentary "Be-



hind the Orange Curtain." Author, speaker and parent Bradley DeHaven, whose son became hooked on prescription painkillers, gave an introductory message. The campaign presented a third assembly to parents that evening.

Principal John Walker called the assemblies "very powerful."

"Behind the Orange Curtain" has a strong message, Walker said in an email, "but the message is one our students needed to hear. This assembly raised awareness of the dangers posed by prescription drug abuse, and it provided students with tools to combat this threat."

"You could hear a pin drop [during the assemblies]," Feldman said. "No one even coughed." Although heavy on well-researched statistics, Dunn and Feldman said the Take5 poster content strives to stay positive. "College: It's not about where you go but why you go," one poster said. But the posters

don't mince words, for example: "Sleep deprived teens are more likely to abuse alcohol, pot & drugs." Feldman's personal favorite is the poster which reads, "No one plans on becoming an addict."

An impromptu interview with several CHS students showed how the campaign has taken hold.

The assembly was "all about choices," said sophomore J.V. Baldwin, who explained how its message is now always in the back of his head. Another sophomore, Jake Rider, called the movie's revelation that drug abusers could be rendered physically disabled "an eye opener."

Freshman Devin Regan expects to share the information with his siblings and carry it with him "for the rest of my life."

Dunn and Feldman say the posters will come down before the end of the school year, but promise to expand the campaign through electronic media (Facebook and Twitter) over the summer. The CHS Parents' Club also hopes to share the program with the other three Acalanes Union High School District schools. To quote the Take5 mission statement: "Five seconds is a long time. Five seconds can change a life."

An unedited version of "Behind the Orange Curtain: The real story of what is happening in Orange County, California," is available online: behindtheorangecurtain.net.

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From left, Wendy Dunn and Wendy Feldman pose near a Take5 poster. Photos Cathy Dausman