

Nope

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their friends decides to put a small dose of marijuana in the console.

"People aren't worried about you, they're worried about themselves, so know who your friends are," said Judge Bollinger.

He also spoke about alcohol being one of the "oldest legal drugs."

"I've been a prosecutor and judge for 35 years. I've heard every possible testimony as to what alcohol does to the human body. The first thing it does is shuts off that common sense part of the brain."

He explained the drug court at the jail.

Some people arrested on drug charges have a chance to attend counseling — both one-on-one and in groups — and at different levels to suit their needs. If they stay clean and attend all the sessions, the state drops the case, he said.

A recent drug court graduate spoke to the assembled group of parents and teenagers. He began his path with drugs with marijuana when he was 14 and living in California.

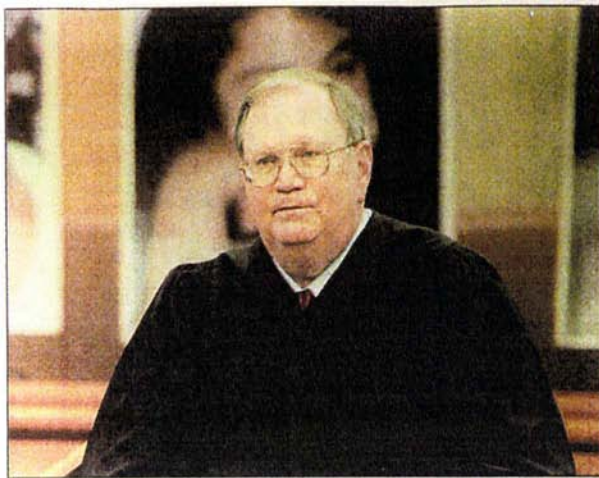
He became so addicted to marijuana that he spent \$1,100 a month on the drug. When it finally was not enough anymore, a friend of his turned him on to cocaine, he said. So, he urged parents to do what they have to do to help their children.

"My parents weren't in my business enough when I was 14 and one thing I tell parents is to get in their kids' business, let them be mad at you," he said.

Overdose

Sgt. Wilbur warned people to stop thinking an overdose can never happen to them or anyone they know.

"I've done drug overdoses



Hobie Hiler/staff photographer

Palm Beach County Drug Court Judge William Billinger, also a member of the NOPE Task Force, spoke during a recent presentation at the North Palm Beach Village Hall.

on the streets, in trailer parks and in million-dollar homes. It doesn't discriminate," he said.

Two of the most common occurrences he sees in overdose cases are that alcohol was the gateway drug and that the victims were on their backs and suffocated because they wanted to vomit, but because their bodies had shut down enough, they couldn't move, said Sgt. Wilbur.

He also told parents to get into their kids' business. Parents should hide their prescription drugs when they are out of the house and their children are home, especially if they have friends over.

Expanding on his precaution, Ms. Carhart told parents to keep tabs on the amounts of prescription drugs in the house because children may "farm," or only take a few pills at a time so their parents won't notice any are missing.

Dana Waldron spoke about her twin sister, Blair, who overdosed at 21.

"Blair overdosed five times and 'died' five times, but the sixth time, she really died," said Ms. Waldron.

She spoke about how she had been the rebellious one

in middle school, but in high school she straightened up and her sister started to have problems.

Blair was prescribed Zanax when she was 14, which was when her problems with drugs began. At 16, she became pregnant and throughout her pregnancy was sober, and the happiest her twin sister had ever seen her.

After Blair had her baby, she got back into using drugs.

Eventually, she went through rehabilitation programs.

The night she died, she was supposed to be at the rehab facility but had improved so the facility released her, said Ms. Waldron.

She, her mother and Blair's 5-year-old daughter went out to dinner. When they returned home, it was too late. Blair had taken a cab to a fast food restaurant where a dealer met her to sell her the drugs that would end her life.

The facility had not called the Waldrons when they released Blair. When they found her in her bedroom, she was face down, foaming

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at the mouth and had been reaching for the phone, which was on the dresser and she couldn't get to it because the drugs paralyzed her, said Ms. Waldron.

The dealer who sold Blair her last dose of drugs is now serving 17 years in prison. Ms. Waldron attended the sentencing to watch him be put away, she said.

John Divine, a chaplain at the Hanley Center, an adjunct professor who teaches medical professionals about drugs, a therapist and father of two, spoke to the crowd about the medical ramifications of drugs on the body.

"What I want to emphasize here tonight is when the person comes to the point of addiction, they have a disease, just like cancer or diabetes. Their mind is in a damaged place," he said.

The same biological drive to get food and water after going a week or more without it is the same drive the drug addict has for their drug, said Mr. Divine.

The group ended its presentation with a video montage of people who overdosed that have friends or family speaking about their experience as part of NOPE.

The video began with a 911 call from a mother thinking her son had overdosed. Suddenly, a regular heartbeat pulsed and to a blank screen, and the audience heard the sounds and discussions of a child being rushed into the emergency room due to a drug overdose. The heartbeat increased as images of gravestones came on the screen.

The council chambers

were silent as people watched, jaws dropped, tears began to roll down cheeks and heads went into hands.

Lisa Rawe, a Village resident, attended the event to become informed as a parent.

"I came tonight because a girlfriend of mine took a bottle full of pills when she was 15 because she was upset over a boy. She asked me not to tell her parents, but I did. She's OK now, she's married and has children, but my 14-year-old stepdaughter was just put on medication and I'm so scared," said Ms. Rawe.

She also has a 17-year-old stepdaughter and a 5-year-old son. Ms. Rawe said she planned to discuss what she learned at the presentation with her family.