CALLAWAY-JONES PARTICIPATES IN TEXAS ALCOHOL & BEVERAGE COMISSION'S SHATTERED DREAMS PROGRAM

Just weeks before the Bryan High School Prom this past Spring, there was an accident on Bryan High Avenue, the small narrow road which separates the High School from the football stadium. One student is dead. Another student lays unconscious in the back seat. When police arrive on the scene the driver is given a field sobriety test and quickly fails. Consequently the driver is handcuffed and escorted to the back seat of the police car and taken to jail.

Accidents like this happen all too often, and the Texas Alcohol & Beverage Commission (TABC) conducts a mock version of these types of accidents around the state. This past spring, our funeral home was asked to participate in the mock accident located on the road between our local high school and the football field. When asked if we could help, I immediately said yes!

Our duty as the funeral home was to arrive at the scene, make the removal of the deceased student from the wrecked vehicle, and transport her back to the funeral home as if it were a real death. The weekly meetings we held for several months prior all came together in an instant, as nearly one thousand Juniors and Senior high school students sat on the adjacent hill and watched the scene unfold.

Our hearse was parked in the Wal-Mart parking lot, just around the corner and out of sight, next to the fire truck, ambulance, and police cars. The patrol cars were the first on scene, then the paramedics, ambulance and fire truck. Next, the life flight helicopter landed on the scene, where a "victim" of the crash was airlifted to St. Joseph Hospital only several miles away. We were the last to arrive on scene. The firefighters used the jaws of life to cut the roof off the car, allowing us to remove the "deceased" from the vehicle. We placed her on the cot and loaded her into the back of the hearse. The local news was at the scene, as was the newspaper.

The next day, a Memorial Service for the deceased was held in the gymnasium at the high school and all the students attended the "service" instead of class. The parents of the victims spoke, as well as several of their classmates. We set-up a casket and flowers in the gym as if it were a real funeral service. We wanted the idea to hit home that drinking and driving really does kill.

Volunteering to help with this program benefits everyone all around. Shattered Dreams is an educational program that can help save lives of young people and others. Planned by both the community and school personnel, the program shows high school juniors and seniors how their dreams and those of families and others can be shattered as a result of underage drinking, and drinking and driving.