



DAZED AND CONFUSED: Speaker LaVarr McBride instructs Autumn Mason as she prepares to navigate her way through an obstacle course with the help of friends out to confuse her, Megan Hansen, Cassidy Heiner, and Jessica Lowthorp. This exercise took place during the assembly sponsored by the RAD club.

Photo Kelly Fullmer

Expert tells real-life stories

After 24 Years in the United States District Courts, LaVarr McBride takes time to visit Star Valley High School and talk about the perils of drug and alcohol abuse.

by Aislinn Lewis
editor

LaVarr McBride was real. He had experience. He brought actual proof of what drugs can do.

After working for federal law enforcement with the United States District Courts for 24 years, McBride retired last year and began teaching in the Criminal Justice Department at Weber State University. Just this past week he came to Star Valley during our RAD Red Ribbon week.

How did SVHS find such a speaker? RAD

president senior Merrilyn Johns said, “We wanted to find someone who really knew what he was talking about, not someone who would just say ‘don’t do drugs.’ When Alisa Winters suggested McBride, we jumped at the opportunity.”

According to senior Ryan Fluckiger the RAD program seems to have accomplished their goal. He said “It was good; it was enlightening, and it was something we all needed to hear.”

McBride started by sharing experiences from his own life. First he demonstrated how he stood up to peer pressure from his best friends. Amidst numerous laughs from the audience and an ever-changing playlist, McBride and several audience members recreated that night, only this time the beer was actually water.

McBride intermixed his life experiences were real stories from those he’s worked with, whether professionally or during his time

under-cover.

McBride spoke most adamantly about having a plan before you get into these types of situations. He spoke about his own son’s plan to hang out with his father rather than put himself in those situations.

Senior Kirsten Mcken said, “It was cool to finally hear it from someone who had experience. It was really interesting and made me think about what my plan would be.”

The whole assembly didn’t just consist of fun demonstrations and light-hearted moments. It took a more serious turn as McBride shared a story about his high school friend Dave who didn’t get out of the car with him. His friend went through several marriages and was unable to stop drinking.

Dave came to McBride five years after the night the story took place to ask for help, but before McBride had a chance Dave disappeared. McBride said he is still looking for Dave, as well as people in his workplaces who are similar to Dave.

As chilling as these experiences may seem, the most sobering moment came near the end when McBride played a reading of a real suicide note. He pressed play and the voice of a teenage girl filled the auditorium.

It was a note recorded on the author’s computer right before she took her own life. Then McBride did something completely unexpected: he said he would leave his phone number with us and that if we ever felt this way, if ever we were having a hard time, we could call him.

The assembly lasted nearly an hour but if senior Klydi Brower’s reaction is typical, it seems to have been well worth it. She said, “I was so inspired by everything he taught. I felt that he meant what he said and that he knew what he was talking about. I am never going to do drugs.”

McBride told many stories but most had an underlying theme, be prepared, have a plan and avoid peer pressure.