

# Presentation sheds light on teen relations

julie jacquez | staff reporter

One out of six males, and one out of four females will fall victim to sexual assault before the age of 18, and 80 percent will know their offender. Statistics like these are part of a “No Means No” campaign which made its way to campus Jan. 21.

Principal Randall Woods requested the presentation. He said it was necessary for students to be informed.

“The last couple of years we have had some incidents,” Woods said. “Students get themselves in situations without knowing the consequences. The law has changed, and students are unaware of them. They’ve changed in application and interpretation.”

Freshmen, sophomores and student athletes took part in the presentation. Woods had his reasons for not inviting juniors and seniors.

“Seniors have only six months left here at Burges and are already making decisions on their own,” Woods said. “We can make the most impact with the limited resources we have because the last couple of years it has been the freshmen who make these mistakes.”

Justin Tompkins, spokesperson for the Center Against Sexual and Family Violence, says there are more cases of teen domestic violence, and it is important to educate teens on its consequences.

“Domestic violence can start with emotional or verbal abuse and can even lead to physical violence,” Tompkins said. “I hope that anyone that listened to this message gets that it is okay to speak up. It is okay to say something, and most importantly to make smart choices.”

Calling the presentation informative, sophomore Marcela de la Torre admitted she felt uncomfortable at times.

“Even though we have heard this can



Student athletes gather in the main gym Jan. 21 to listen to a presentation by Justin Tompkins, spokesman for the Center Against Sexual and Family Violence. He gave his “No Means No” presentation Jan. 21-22 to freshmen and sophomores during their social studies classes.

happen to us, it is always good to learn and be informed,” De La Torre said. “I personally did not like the presentation because of how graphic some of the information was presented.”

Social Studies teacher Victoria Torres said she was also bothered by parts of the presentation.

“I understand why administration felt it was necessary,” Torres said, “but I think parents should take care of this at home. They should inform their children about sexuality. It is not the school’s place. It was a little too graphic for me. I was uncomfortable, so I left.”

Woods said he receive no complaints about the presentation.

“I understand that it made some people uncomfortable,” Woods said, “but it is something students need to

understand very clearly. These are decisions that can potentially ruin their lives. I know individuals here that this has happened to, and if we can help even one person, it’s worth it.”

Freshman Adan Ponce said the presentation was an eye-opener.

“If this happened to someone that I know, I would do anything possible to defend them and encourage to seek help,” Ponce said. “There was so much I did not know about dating violence. It can be not just hitting, but also controlling and intimidating your partner. This happens more often than I thought before I listened to the presentation. I’m sure it is very scary, and I bet most people don’t know what to do in this situation. Hopefully now, everyone knows finding someone to talk to is the first step in getting help.”

## Speech team starts semester with new coach

mark williams | staff reporter

For an entire semester, the speech and debate team has been on its own, racking up awards and going to meets with outside help. But that’s all changed with the hiring of a new teacher.

First year teacher Salvador Cabrera joins the staff and said he looks forward to working with his team.

“I met them at the most recent tournament and they seem like amazing people,” he said. “I plan to expand the team to create a department dedicated to speech and debate like they have in eastern schools. I also want to maintain the energy and continue the success that the team has had in the past few months.”

Principal Randall Woods said the hiring delay was because Cabrera had to get his teaching certification.

The team was left without a coach when former coach Kaddisha Meneses resigned near the beginning of the year. Since then, Angelica Urbina, dual credit speech teacher, has helped the team schedule tournaments and after-school practices.

“I’m not familiar with debate, but I did what I could to help the team,” Urbina said. “I did the paperwork for tournaments. I don’t take any credit for their success.”

Cabrera is a welcome addition according to member Seth Van Matre.

“I’m very excited for the rest of the season, and I can’t wait to see what Cabrera has to offer,” he said. “It’s great to have more help, especially experienced help. I think with the help of a coach, we will do even better than we have done before.”

# EPISD Board of Trustees makes decision to close school for papal visit

ari amezaga | staff reporter

Pope Francis’ historic visit to Juarez Feb. 17 has area school districts closing all campuses and reassigning days off.

Originally, schools were to be closed Feb. 15 for President’s Day. Now that students and teachers will get Feb. 17 off, the make-up day is Feb. 15.

“President’s Day was already slated on our official calendar to be a make-up day,” Gustavo Reveles, director of EPISD Community Engagement, said. “In other words, the holiday was always in our books as a potential day to make up a school cancellation due to weather or other circumstances.”

Canutillo ISD is the only area district opting not to cancel classes for the pope’s visit.

District officials had to consider a number of issues, including safety because of the large number of visitors

expected, street closures and the number of students and staff who would want the day off to experience the papal visit. Finding enough substitutes to fill the void could be difficult.

“This is not a Catholic issue or a manner of religion,” principal Randall Woods said. “This is a big deal whether or not you are religious. The fact that someone of this magnitude is coming to our region is a once in a lifetime experience. We want to give our students this opportunity whether they go see him in person or watch him from home because it may never happen again.”

UTEP and El Paso Community College are also canceling classes. All county offices will be closed. District administrators have also decided to give Area I schools, which include the Jefferson and Bowie feeder pattern schools, early release Feb. 16 and late start Feb. 18.

Describing the pope’s visit as “amazing,” freshman Amy Saucedo is

happy about the district’s decision.

“Even if you’re not religious,” she said, “this is a really big deal. If my dad, who works out of town, gets off early, my family and I plan to stay at a relative’s home in Juarez a few days before the pope’s visit. We want to attend the mass.”

Pope Francis will celebrate mass at 4 p.m. just 100 or so yards from the border. More than 450,000 people are expected to attend the mass. Those who can’t make the trip or don’t get tickets can still see the mass from a two-way system set up at the Sun Bowl. The pope will be able to see the crowd assembled there because of live streaming.

Senior Baldomero Velasquez said safety is a major concern.

“Hopefully, there are no incidents that day,” he said. “But in case there is, it will be so much easier for parents to keep track of their children. The majority of people in El Paso are of Catholic religion and will attend, so why waste that day if

no one will show up [to school].”

Absences on Feb. 15 will be excused but students are still advised to attend.

“I understand why they’re closing school, but I think that President’s Day should have been given off as well,” junior Anamarie Arellano said. “Kids shouldn’t have to worry about making up work. It’s good that they’re taking safety precautions, but there wouldn’t have been a difference if it was made up at the end of the year.”

It’s expected that anywhere from 100,000 to 500,000 people on this side of the border will either travel to Juarez or gather near the border to catch a glimpse of the pope.

“I expect absences that whole week,” Woods said. “The reality is it will be difficult to have a worthwhile day. This is a big deal. In this day and age, there is always potential of a threat. If you are attending, be careful, be on high alert and stay close to your family.”