RHS meeting to spotlight underage drinking

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A young man’s life changed drastically when he drove off at the wheel one day and lost control, resulting in a collision and the death of a 17-year-old girl.

Neville High School graduate Brian Russell, who spoke at an underage drinking awareness meeting last spring at Dubach High, will tell his story of bad decisions and the time in prison again this month at a meeting for Ruston High teachers, students and parents.

The student-run meeting titled “Prevent, Don’t Provide” is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. Oct. 30 in the RHS cafeteria. The meeting is designed to raise awareness of underage drinking, teen substance abuse and driving under the influence.

“We’re expecting a strong attendance and ordering food for 500-600,” said Addie Smith, coordinator of North Central Alliance Partners in Prevention, one of the event sponsors.

The goal is that the adults who attend the event will take it home with them and have a conversation about drinking and driving.

Russell, an RSHS student and advisory board chair for the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission, said she was impressed last spring with the presentation of Russell, who talked about how he led a "double life," going to church on Sundays and abusing alcohol on other days.

"It was very powerful not only for the children but also for the parents," Kilcoyne recalled. "He addressed how they might be contributing to (young) drinking and driving by allowing them to drink under their roof."