

Mobile County, Alabama Sheriff's Department

Mobile County Sheriff Sam Cochran had a problem; the county was facing a serious increase in crystal meth addictions among its most vulnerable citizens - the young. Crystal meth is not only very toxic, it is also one of the most addictive of drugs. Since statistics show that 92% of first time users repeat and become addicted, a reasonable approach would catch these youngsters through prevention before they were exposed to the drug for the first time.

The sheriff acquired Face2Face system, a new high-tech solution to help his department educate young people in the county. Face2Face is a hardware/software combination, consisting of a 3D camera and software that runs the program. After initial training Deputy Vanessa Matthews was charged with deploying Face2Face to scheduled drug education classes at high-schools around the county. After initial overview of the devastation caused by crystal meth, Deputy Matthews usually asks students to volunteer to have their 3D picture taken.

Operating the 3D camera is not different from taking pictures with any other digital camera. The generated stereo-pair of pictures is then transferred to the deputy's laptop and the image processing begins.

Face2Face software turns the digital images into a real 3D heads that can be rotated onscreen and previewed. Once the deputy clicks of one of the 3 buttons on the screen, the software transforms the head to show the effects of 6 months, 1 year and 3 years of meth abuse.



By showing young people the physical effects caused by crystal meth, which includes premature aging, rapid tooth decay (the famous “meth mouth”), young people can vividly look into a not so bright future that crystal meth use offers. Most recoil at the sight of changes to their faces and promise never to experiment with the drug.

“You come from an area of the county that seems to have an inordinate amount of people who use meth -said Sheriff Cochran to educators at Mary Montgomery High School in Semmes. As leader of your school you’ll have so many opportunities to prevent them from getting on meth.”

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