

# Delivering a strong message

Anti-drug program  
uses fun to reinforce  
dangers of tobacco,  
alcohol, other drugs

**KAREN MEANEY**  
The Journal News

**PELHAM**— Pelham Middle School seventh-grader Sara Weschler said each ball Bill Ross juggled as he discussed the dangers of tobacco reminded her of a heart stopped by smoking.

"The balls hitting his hand made a heartbeat sound," she said.

Juggling, unicycle-riding, music and personal experience were all included in the substance abuse prevention show "No Buts About It!" that Ross presented to Pelham seventh-graders yesterday.

"I'll remember this because he didn't just say, 'Don't do drugs,' he showed us in a fun way," said student Quinn Casal.

Ross, who is in his 11th year of spreading his "good choices" message around the country, uses his own life story and acrobatic accomplishments to reach out to students.

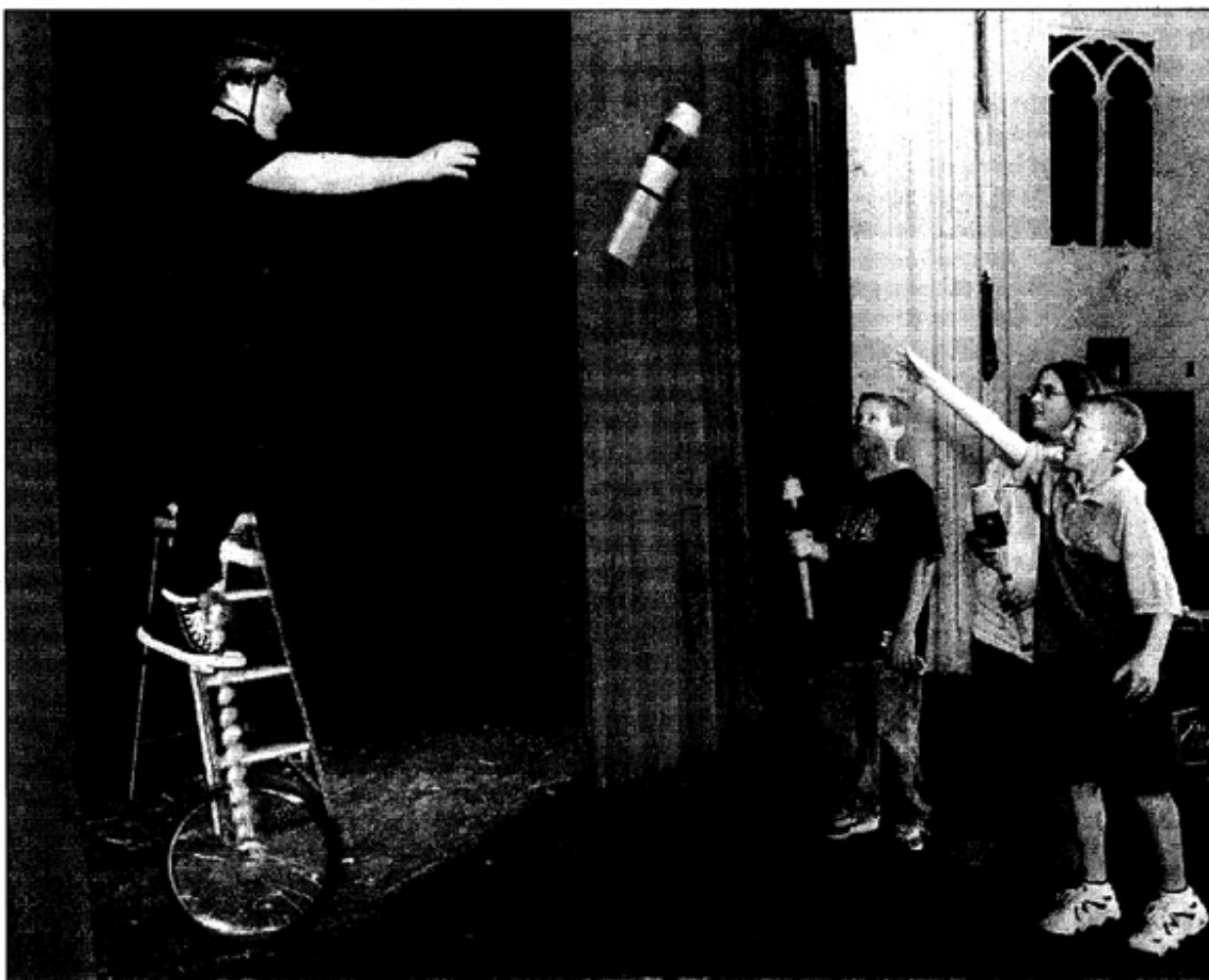
"Even at an early age, I wanted to do things my way," Ross told the students. He detailed how his use of cigarettes, alcohol and other drugs got him in trouble at home, at school and with police.

Ross kept the attention of the

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Susan Farley/The Journal News

**Bill Ross juggles with seventh-grade students at Pelham Middle School yesterday during his substance-abuse prevention show, "No Buts About It!"**

students by juggling pins, knives, a crystal ball, a flaming torch and a bowling ball. The props were changed to relate to the story at hand and bounced off the floor or Ross's head when he talked about picking himself up or making a stupid choice.

Ross ended his presentation by delivering an original poem while perched on a six-foot unicycle. "When you reach for the stars, you'll be on top of the world," he proclaimed.

He also pointed out that he needed the help of a ladder to get on his unicycle and reminded students that counselors and teachers are there to help them with their choices.

"Self-confidence and self-esteem are the most valuable things to develop," Ross said. "When you feel great about yourself, you can do anything."

"No Buts About It!" is sponsored by the Westchester County STOP-DWI program, which uses

money from fines to pay for educational programming.

The show also was performed yesterday at the Briarcliff Middle School. Additional performances are today at John Jay in Somers and Alexander Hamilton in Elmsford; tomorrow at Emerson in Yonkers and Rye Neck in Mamaroneck; Thursday at the Museum Middle School in Yonkers and Fox Lane in Bedford; and Friday at Croton and Tuckahoe middle schools.