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Lourdine Florek
 owner/publisher

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I Sing the Body Electric releases 2008 youth survey results

High school students – 3,071 of them - from 12 high schools in Vermilion County have expressed their attitudes and reported their health behaviors through the 2008 I Sing the Body Electric Youth Risk Behavior health survey.

Results of the survey, the first step in this three-phase health education and prevention program, were released Thursday at a news conference held at Provena United Samaritans Medical Center.

“Through the lens of this survey, we have a very good image of what is on the minds of our youth in Vermilion County,” stated Dottie McLaughlin, I Sing the Body Electric program coordinator. “However, we’re interested in more than the data – we want to assist our youth in finding long-term solutions to the health concerns they’ve expressed.”

Sheriff's department suspends investigation into area shooting

The investigation of the shooting of a Hoopeston man has been suspended due to lack of cooperation from the victim.

The shooting occurred just before 10 a.m. on January 5 on County Road 3800N, southeast of Hoopeston. The victim, Robert Israel Smith, called 911 to report he had been shot. Smith was taken to Hoopeston Community Memorial Hospital, then transferred to Carle Foundation Hospital in Urbana.

Since the incident, Smith has declined to assist the Vermilion County Sheriff's Department with its investigation, said chief investigator Capt. Rod Kaag. Smith was the only witness to the shooting.

The investigation will remain open in case new information becomes available but for now, it is being placed on the back burner, Kaag said.

Chad Hays, V.P. of Development and Mission Services at PUSMC Foundation, explained the history of the program, a collaboration among Provena United Samaritans Medical Center, Provena United Samaritans Medical Center Foundation, Danville Area Community College, Danville District 118, the Vermilion County Regional Office of Education, the Vermilion County Health Department, the Center for Children's Services, Hoopeston Multi-Agency, and Hoopeston Community Memorial Hospital.

“I Sing the Body Electric is a terrific example of Provena United Samaritans living our mission outside the four walls of the Medical Center,” Hays said. “In conjunction with wonderful community partners, we are making a positive difference in the healthy lifestyle choices of adolescents throughout Vermilion County.”

The Vermilion County Health Department, one of the partners of I Sing the Body Electric, has played an active role in this program since its inception. Linda Bolton, health department Community Relations/Health Education Program Coordinator, explained the importance of this survey data to Vermilion County. “We are so fortunate to have the I Sing the Body Electric program in our

See SURVEY on other side

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Survey continued from other side

Vermilion County community and to be able to benefit from this truly important survey data. These are not just numbers; this data allows us the opportunity to better understand our children, the challenges they are facing, and how we can help them build a healthier future.”

Dottie McLaughlin echoed Bolton’s comments. “This survey, based on the national Centers for Disease Control Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance survey, has been administered every two years beginning in 2002. The four years of data we’ve compiled provides tremendous insight into risk behaviors of our youth.”

McLaughlin presented the survey report at the news conference. She stated that there have been numerous improvements in critical health risk areas:

- Tobacco use continues to decline.
- Current alcohol use and incidents of binge drinking have declined.
- Marijuana, cocaine, methamphetamine, and ecstasy use are all lower.
- The percentages of youth who have ridden with someone who has been drinking alcohol have declined as have the percentages of those who drink and drive.
- Fighting on school property is at its lowest percentage since the first survey in 2002.

The majority of Vermilion County youth choose exercise and sensible eating as their top two methods of weight control.

The survey information also pointed to continuing concerns, however:

- Over one-half of our teens report having had sexual intercourse at least once in their lifetime.
- Nearly one-third of our students consider themselves slightly or very overweight.
- Over one-quarter (25.8%) of Vermilion County teens had their first drink of alcohol at 13 or 14 years of age; nearly 12% of youth smoked their first whole cigarette at 13 or 14; and 11.6% of students first tried marijuana at those ages.
- Almost 30% of VC teens have felt so sad or hopeless almost everyday for two weeks or more in a row that they stopped doing some of their usual activities.
- Deliberate self harm (cutting or hurting oneself on purpose) was reported by 31.2% of females and 16.4% of Vermilion County males.
- Rates of attempting suicide, though decreasing, are

still nearly twice as high for VC youth (13.7%) as national youth (6.9%).

McLaughlin announced the five top health concerns identified by youth taking the survey: alcohol/drinking and driving; sexual activity; body image; drug use; and depression/suicide.

McLaughlin explained that the survey was only the first step in this three-phase program. The five top health concerns now become the focus of prevention messages created by the high school students using the arts. Mini-grant proposals written by the students assist with the costs of producing the projects and assure that any student, regardless of economic means, can be involved. The culmination of the project production phase is an I Sing the Body Electric Arts and Health Festival which will be held at DACC on April 26.

In the final phase, the completed projects are taken on tours to schools in Vermilion County as well as to community events, health fairs, and businesses. Tours educate the community about the health concerns of youth and encourage youth, in particular, to form healthy behaviors and make good choices in their lives.

Additionally, many of the visual projects are turned into posters that are now displayed in 16 permanent sites across Vermilion County. The posters give wonderful exposure to the program as well as broaden the scope of people who are able to view the students’ messages.

The major goals of I Sing the Body Electric remain the same in 2008 as they were at the program’s inception in 2001: to provide a supportive framework to nurture resiliency, reduce risk behaviors, and build leadership in youth as they investigate and communicate healthy lifestyle choices to each other, and to the larger community, through the arts. Through evaluations and survey results, we’ve seen that the health/prevention messages of our student artists have touched lives, changed attitudes, built self-esteem, and redirected the lives of many.

Hard copies of the survey report as well as frequency

Weather



Snow likely today. High 19. Tonight, chance of snow. Low 9. Tomorrow, mostly sunny. High 20, low 15.

For current weather conditions, call Hoopeston Weather Service, **(217) 283-6221**.

tables which break down each of the 120 questions into gender and grade level responses are available from the I Sing the Body Electric office. For more information, call Dottie McLaughlin at 217-442-6594.

I Sing the Body Electric is an outreach program of Provena United Samaritans Medical Center Foundation.

Police News



No tickets or injuries were reported in an accident at 430 p.m. Sunday in the 1000 block of West Orange.

Police said Janet L. Lindsey, of Hoopeston, in a 1996 Mercury, entered the westbound lane and hit a 2005 Hyundai driven by John D. Peterson, of Rossville.

Lindsey was at fault for failure to reduce speed to avoid an accident.

Classifieds

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