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Schools Drug Survey

FH moving in positive direction

By Ryan Winslett
Times Editor

Drug and alcohol use among youth in Fountain Hills is lower than the state average, according to a recent study.

Shelly Mowrey, Fountain Hills Coalition Director, shared these findings with the community group at its last meeting of the school year, though additional details have been added in the following weeks.

One of the focuses of the Coalition is to gather data pertaining to local trends in order to better target its efforts each school year, specifically pertaining to drug and alcohol use in the community. The group is made up of everything from teachers and students to community members, businesses owners, church officials and town leadership. From the Safe Homes Network to providing early action kits to parents in need, boosting the Text-A-Tip program and more, the Coalition spends its time combating substance abuse among the local youth while celebrating their successes.

According to Mowrey, these most recent findings pertaining to substance abuse in Fountain Hills are worth celebrating.

One of the first questions on the recent survey pertained to use of various substances over the course of the most recent 30 days. The areas of alcohol, cigarettes and marijuana have been on the decline since 2010, though Mowrey noted that prescription drug abuse has seen a slight uptick since the 2014 survey. This area, she informed the Coalition, will require extra attention moving forward.

The results for teen

substance use over time follows a similar trend. Youngsters reporting use has gone down in the areas of alcohol, cigarettes and Marijuana over the past six years, though prescription drugs saw a slight uptick since the 2014 findings. The good news is that prescription drug use between 2012 and 2014 witnessed a massive drop off.

As Mowrey pointed out, the findings in Fountain Hills are actually below the state average which, she said, proves something (or more likely a combination of things) is earning positive results locally.

Talking stats, the difference from 2010 to 2016 over time has seen a 44 percent decrease in "past 30 day use" of alcohol, a 67 percent decrease in cigarettes, a 37 percent decrease in marijuana and a 51 percent decrease in prescription drug abuse.

Another trend Mowrey pointed out is that the number of senior students surveyed who have reported abstinence of lifetime substance use in Hills is on the rise.

Starting with alcohol, 72 percent of high school seniors reported they had not partaken in their lives while that number is up to 82.6 percent in 2016.

Over that same course of time, 57 percent of seniors said they had never smoked cigarettes in 2010 while the number rests at 74.3 percent in 2016. The figures are 55.2 percent to 62.9 percent for marijuana and 31.5 percent to 46.4 percent for prescription drug abuse.

Survey

Also providing data to help guide the Coalition's future endeavors was a recent community survey, asking locals to chime in

on their perception of substance abuse in Fountain Hills.

According to the survey, alcohol and substance abuse ranked as the number one perceived public health issue in Fountain Hills, followed by anxiety/stress. Depression was the third ranked issue with juvenile delinquency rounding out the top four.

Participants were also asked to state whether or not they were concerned about local youth using certain substances. While those who took the survey seemed very concerned about youths misusing prescription drugs and heroin, 21.7 percent said they were not concerned about youths drinking alcohol and 29.6 percent were unconcerned about marijuana use.

Digging deeper, one in four adults said they think it is okay for youths to try alcohol while one in five said they think it is okay for youths to drink under adult supervision.

Over to marijuana, one in six reported they feel it is okay for local youth to try marijuana while about half felt marijuana is less harmful than other drugs.

Finally, almost 100 percent of survey participants reported it is not okay for youth to even experiment with prescription drugs while one out of seven think that misuse is not as harmful as heroin.

Through the summer, Mowrey said the full survey will be further evaluated in order to develop new communication plans and strategies.

The Coalition is open to community members interested in taking part and meetings will resume once the fall semester begins. For more information, visit safehomesfh.org.



EVIT settling in

The external changes are subtle, but a temporary sign and a fresh coat of purple paint indicate that the East Valley Institute of Technology (EVIT) is gearing up to open the doors of its Fountain Hills satellite campus starting this fall. Housed on the campus of the former Four Peaks Elementary School, the building is currently undergoing renovations to prepare for the initial crop of local courses including various CET programs, cyber security and more.

Budget and salaries on Board agenda

The final Fountain Hills Unified School District Governing Board meeting of the 2016-17 academic year is set for Wednesday evening, June 28, with a possible teacher salary increase and budget adoption set to headline the proceedings.

During the action agenda, the Board will consider a number of items, including an intergovernmental agreement with Maricopa County Community Colleges for dual enrollment programs in the upcoming academic year, as well as board meeting dates for 2017-18.

Also receiving a vote tonight will be a 1.06 percent salary increase to all

teachers for the 2017-18 academic year. This particular increase is actually a requirement of Senate Bill 15222 and the only real stipulation is that the teacher receiving the raise had to work for the district through the 2016-17 academic year.

The 2017-18 budget is also up for possible adoption at the June 22 meeting. The budget being proposed is the same as the one presented at the June 14 meeting. A public hearing of the \$12.3 million budget will precede the adoption.

This meeting is open to the public and is set to begin at 6:30 p.m. in the District Learning Center.

Retirement

On Monday morning, June 26, *The Times* received an addendum to this week's personnel report stating that long-time athletic director, baseball coach and Fountain Hills High School Dean of Students Mike Briguglio will be retiring.

Briguglio began his tenure in FHUSD in the fall of 97 and began coaching the year after.

Amanda Baca, local educator and girls basketball coach, will take over as athletic director beginning with the 2017-18 academic year.

The high school will now begin the search for a new dean of students and baseball coach.

Host families sought for exchange

ASSE International Student Exchange Programs (ASSE) is looking for local families to host boys and girls between the ages of 15 to 18 from a variety of countries: Norway, Denmark, Spain, Italy, Japan, to name a few.

ASSE students are enthusiastic and excited to experience American culture while they practice their English. They also love to share their own culture and language with their host families. Host families welcome these students into their family, not as a guest, but as a family member, giving everyone involved a rich cultural experience.

The exchange students have pocket money for personal expenses and full health, accident and liability insurance. ASSE students are selected based on academics and personal-

ity, and host families can choose their student from a wide variety of backgrounds, countries and personal interests.

To become an ASSE Host Family or to find out how

to become involved with ASSE in Fountain Hills, call the ASSE Western Regional Office at 1-800-733-2773 or go to host.asse.com to begin the host family application.

Summer games continue

The Town of Fountain Hills Community Services is hosting the popular Summer Games program again this summer at the Community Center.

Come out and beat the summer heat with games for all ages.

Enjoy a variety of board games, Wii Bowling, karaoke, and root beer floats. It's a great way to spend a Thursday afternoon and a great way to have fun with your family for a couple of hours and it is totally free.

Summer Games is from

11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. every Thursday through July 27.

For more information, contact Corey Povar at 480-816-5170 or visit the Town of Fountain Hills website at fh.az.gov/recreation.

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