



FHHS Student Perspective On Why Vaping Has Become An Epidemic



FOUNTAIN HILLS
HIGH SCHOOL

The Fountain Hills Coalition High School Essay Contest produced outstanding and meaningful work this year. One of the questions students could choose to write about was the epidemic of vaping, what could be done about it and how to prevent future users of vape products. Our second place winner, sophomore, Sarah Wagner, delivered a remarkable essay that gives a teen and high school student's perspective on this epidemic. We think every parent will enjoy and learn from her message.

By Sarah Wagner, 10th grade, Fountain Hills High School

Recently, vaping has become one of the most widespread modern issues among kids in school. Numerous teens and children, some as young as late elementary age, have started an addiction that could potentially influence the course of their life, and affect their health in ways we don't know about yet. There are multiple reasons why vaping has become an epidemic, one of them being that vaping liquid can have excessively high levels of nicotine, even more than a pack of cigarettes. They also make flavored vaping liquids that seem suspiciously like something a child would want to try. With bright packaging and seemingly-sweet flavors, vaping companies are able to make their products seem appealing to young people. When attracting a child this way isn't enough, one's friend may offer them a vape. They might think that trying it once won't hurt them, but it's common for this to be where an addiction starts.

Anyone addicted to vaping could easily start smoking cigarettes. Once in school, a student who sat beside me was feeling bad, so we asked him what was wrong. He told us that his Juul (a common vaping device) had been confiscated, and he was feeling badly because he hadn't gotten any nicotine recently. He then told us about his previous day. He asked his friend if he had a vape, and he didn't, however he did have cigarettes. From what I could tell, this wasn't his first time trying cigarettes. He went on about which brands he liked and which he didn't. At the time, I knew vaping was unhealthy, but I didn't know how bad the addictions were. The further I got through high school, the more I saw how bad the problem was. Kids were showing up late to class because they were vaping in the bathrooms. Students would throw their vapes away in efforts not to get caught when being searched. It's not hard to find the cap from a Juul pod sitting on the locker room floor or just on the outskirts of campus. The problem continues to escalate. Students aren't worried about telling other people that they vape, because most people already know. Vaping has become normalized among high schoolers, and even those who don't vape aren't surprised to hear that someone else does it. While I used to be shocked to hear someone new had adopted this habit, seeing someone vaping in the bathrooms isn't strange anymore.

Students who vape are often uninterested in hearing what people have to say about it. They know they shouldn't be doing it, but they don't realize or care enough to regain control. If they want to stop, nicotine addiction is an extremely difficult thing to overcome. Giving people advice on quitting and making them think about how it affects their life is important. One of the ways we could help those addicted to vaping is to inform them about the negative effects it has on your life. It's especially important for younger students to know the effects of vaping so they can avoid it when they encounter a scenario where they have the opportunity to try it. Schools suggesting how to quit and how to say no in the first place could impact how students think, as well as their will to avoid or quit vaping. Parents and guardians should also be aware of this problem, and try to inform their children about this. Hearing the right things from a close family member can have a strong impact on how adolescents think. Being informative and supportive makes all the difference. A parent wants the best for their child, and staying healthy definitely goes into this category.

Too many teens have been affected by the outbreak of this habit. Young people have died and become severely ill from vaping. It's not only the kids who are affected, but their loved ones as well. The fact that people have had to see their child go to the hospital for something they never new about is devastating. Once, a student in one of my classes said that it's only seven people who have died. As of December 27th, 2019, it's at least 55. That number is only going to increase if nothing is changed. The thousands of people who are sick because of vaping probably thought the same way as that student. That student has never had to see children's parents rush to the hospital to see their child in an increasingly ill position, without a reason why.

FHHS 8th Annual Essay Contest Awards Luncheon

An awards luncheon was held on February 27th for finalists and their families to learn where they had placed in this year's essay contest. Judges read through 134 essays and chose 14 Honorable Mention recipients along with the top three winners



As students' names were read, they were asked to read a few paragraphs that embodied the message of their composition. Anya Feyrer-Melk (1st Place), Sarah Wagner (2nd Place) and Rachel Walters (3rd Place) read their full essays and left the audience in awe of their writing talent.

Click [HERE](#) to see the names of all our winners this year!

A special thank you to our Title Sponsor Verne C. Johnson Family Foundation, all of our community sponsors, English department and Phil's Filling Station for their support in making the Essay Contest a success once again!