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Be a Piece of the Puzzle: Positive Spin on Prevention Vernonia Prevention Coalition -Year 3



Prevention is about three things: Preventing people from experimenting, reducing the experimentation time, and lessening the long term damage if engaged in abusive behavior. To provide support and influence positive community norms, Vernonia Prevention Coalition (VPC) has partnered with over 20 organizations to improve collaboration and partnerships. This year alone, children have had the opportunity to participate over 7500 times in school programs and events on bullying, healthy relationships, leadership, ATOD Prevention on campus, support groups, career exploration, personal development, curriculum enrichment, mentorship, summer meal programs events, after school programming, plays, etc...

Additionally, adults in our community have been exposed over 44,000 times either actively or passively, to articles, ads, programs, volunteer trainings, best practice information, coalition meetings, planning events, attending events and more. Vernonia 47J School district administrators, staff and volunteers have had participating Safe School initiatives, emergency response training, bully intervention and prevention. This has all been in effort to improve services to our children.

Behavior modification curriculum has been purchased by the VPC to be used in both elementary classrooms and groups. These programs help address the social and behavioral issues faced by young people today so they can be better equipped to deal with negative community norms surrounding ATOD abuse in their communities. Since October 2010, 150+ young students between

k-6th grades participate in these programs weekly.

To counteract the sharp increase of experimentation of ATODs by students in middle school, supportive materials and training has been provided to the staff of the Vernonia schools. **EVERY** seventh grader has participated in the Project Alert program that reinforces resistance skills when it comes to peer influence. Student's role play resistance skills and team teach on the dangers experimenting and benefits of never using ATODs. Further, **EVERY** eighth grader has participated in healthy relationship building and resistance to physical abuse.

In response to the increase suicide ideation in Columbia County, suicide prevention and intervention programming has been increased. To empower our youth to work with their peers, over 60 teens have been trained in QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) Suicide Intervention training. VPC sponsored the High School leadership class to attend conferences highlighting issues that confront kids today: Bullying, positive school environment, leadership in tough times and student body interaction. Additional efforts were made to help many groups to attend programming outside of school so they could bring back information to benefit their school.

OSSOM has continued and is bigger than ever. This year 30+ students hosted a Teen Health week in April 2011. Over 500 students attended a health fair designed and implemented by teens. The staff was overjoyed at the information shared and the kids reported back it was a good thing. These kids met up to three times a month to ensure planning and preparation was completed for this

week of education for their peers on the dangers of ATOD's and the long term effects it can have on their health. Every 15 Minute program was again included in the weeks happening as well as a school town hall to highlight the dangers of underage drinking.

This year the VPC has stepped up even more in an effort to connect free services to our kids. With the direct help of Heather Lewis, Resource/Volunteer Coordinator, resources and connections have been greatly enhanced between school, community programs, schools of higher education, health resources and much more. This is to provide additional opportunities to engage our children and increase protective factors of their lives. The greater the number of protective factors increases the opportunity for young adults to make informed healthy choice for their future. This is the actual environmental change that is needed to ensure a healthy community.

Further, in partnership with numerous agencies, St. Helen's School district, churches, programs, volunteers, parents, students and paid staff, the First Annual Summer Meals Program has been a resounding success. On average, the meal site provides over 85 meals a day to children between 1-18 years of age. Sports camps, summer school, summer bible school, daycare and families are utilizing this FREE program. Serendipitously, adult meals are being purchased on an average of 5 a day. Even greater, over 40 registered, back ground checked and approved volunteers are fed on the day they work! Next time you see Nic Welch, thank him for being the greatest SMP Volunteer Coordinator there ever was!

All this is not done by one lone

staff person. The VPC is a collaboration of individuals whom represent 12 identified sectors to give voice to community needs. But it doesn't stop there. It is the purpose of these sector representatives to speak to their peers and gather information that actually formulates the plan for the year. Questions are asked about how individually they see a healthy and safe community working. Even further, it is asked of individuals to measure that success. It is the mission of the VPC is to develop safe and healthy neighborhoods through collaborative planning, community action, policy advocacy and enforcement. If you would like to know more about the VPC, please contact DeAnna Pearl, Director, @ 503 369 7370 or DeAnna@vernonia-or.gov.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-TALK (8255)
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Are you feeling desperate, alone or hopeless? Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline a free, 24-hour hotline available to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. Your call will be routed to the nearest crisis center to you.

Veterans Suicide Prevention Hotline
1-800-273-TALK (8255) Press 1

Kids Can Eat FREE 5 days a Week

Summer Meal Program

June 20th — August 19th

Vernonia Middle School Cafeteria

Breakfast	Scheduled Activity	Lunch
8:30		11:30
Adults \$1.25	9- 11	Adults \$2.00

All REGISTERED volunteers & staff are provided a meal on the day they participate



The Vernonia Summer Meal's Program committee has agreed to provide a set of guiding principles that help ensure the sanitation and safety of the whole

Participant Standards

- All youth under the age of 10 must be with an older sibling, parent or care provide(ORS 163.545)
- Any youth, under 10, without a chaperon&WILL be fed and sent home if they cannot provide name of older care provider
- All participants WILL have shoes and shirts (T-shirts available to borrow)

Any questions please contact
Cathy Meyer (503) 429-8033 or (503) 522-5311

Don't Miss Out
On The Fun

USDA and the State of Oregon are
equal opportunity Providers and Employers



Upcoming Events That Support Our Youth

- August 1-19** **Summer Meals Program**
Vernonia School Cafeteria
Breakfast 8:30 Lunch 11:30
- August 5** **Vernonia Talent Show/Fundraiser**
Washington Grade School
7—10pm
- August 5-7** **Jamboree and Logging Show**
Vernonia, Oregon
- August 8-9** **Echoing Evergreen Day Camp**
Camp Wilkerson,
Columbia County Park
- August 24** **Vernonia Night Out**
Anderson Park
Fun Begins at 4:30
- August 30** **5th Tuesday Coalition Meeting**
"Bullying: What's New"
6:30 —8:00 pm

Be a Piece of the Puzzle
Volunteers Keep It Together!