

NEWS FROM

Senator Fred Akshar | Lourdes Hospital



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Hundreds of Students Learn to Teach About Making Safe Choices

(Binghamton, NY) More than 550 middle and high school students from 14 school districts throughout Broome, Tioga and Chenango counties came together on Tuesday for YES Ignites, where they learned role modeling, leadership and public speaking techniques. Students will use these skills as they participate in the drug-free peer leadership program YES LEADS.

YES Safe Choices is a partnership between Senator Fred Akshar and Lourdes Hospital. YES works to help kids in our area learn skills they need to resist using alcohol and drugs. YES also provides parents with useful tips and fun activities they can use as starting points in talking about substance abuse with their kids.

Senator Akshar, attending his first YES Ignites conference, said, "I'm very excited to help kick-off YES LEADS this year. Over the last several months, I've had the opportunity to see how great these kids are and the work they're putting into improving our community. Today's training will give these LEADers valuable skills they'll use to share the importance of living a drug-free life."

YES LEADers will organize dozens of group presentations for elementary school students, and sponsor poster contests, family movie nights and other school and community events.

A representative from Youth to Youth International, based out of Columbus, OH, was on hand presenting a new pilot program called "The pHARMING Effects". Developed in conjunction with the Cardinal Health Foundation, the workshop focused on new ways to educate middle school students about the dangers of prescription drug abuse and their long term connection to heroin.

YES Safe Choices was recently selected from a group of national youth organizations and coalitions to train YES LEADers in “The pHARMING Effects” presentation, and will unroll the program in several local YES LEADS districts throughout the upcoming school year.

By the end of the school year, YES LEADers will show more than 6,000 elementary school students across three counties practical ways they can resist using alcohol and drugs.

Attending Tuesday’s training were students from Afton, Bainbridge-Guilford, Chenango Valley, Maine-Endwell, Norwich, Owego-Apalachin, Seton Catholic, Susquehanna Valley, Tioga Central, Union-Endicott, Vestal, Waverly and Windsor school districts.

For more information on YES Safe Choices and YES LEADS, please visit www.YesSafeChoices.org.

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