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Drugs, sexting highlight local trends workshop

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Photo by Gery L. Deer for the Greene County Dailies

Stephanie Hayden, Greene County Assistant Prosecutor — Juvenile Division, speaks on “sexting” at IYS workshop Friday.

XENIA — Professionals from the areas of education and law enforcement gathered in the Greene County Social Services Media Room Friday for a day-long workshop focusing on local trends in alcohol/drug abuse, internet safety and “sexting.” Sponsored by Greene County Prosecutor Stephen K. Haller and Integrated Youth Services (IYS), the session featured talks by local officials who demonstrated how these problems are affecting Greene County at school, home and the local community.

Lesia Inlow is a clinical director with IYS and has worked for the agency for the last 8 years. “We’ve been working with Greene County Prosecutor Stephen K. Haller and the Agencies for Combined Enforcement (ACE) task force on preventative programs,” Inlow said. “Every year we try to do two or three county-wide programs and we decided this time to focus on some of the trends among young people and that included drug and alcohol abuse, internet safety and sexting, which is becoming a big problem.”

“Sexting is a combination of sex and texting,” explained Stephanie Hayden, Greene County Assistant Prosecutor - Juvenile Division. “It is the act of sending sexually explicit messages or photos electronically, primarily between cell phones.”

Hayden said that the practice begins early and that the average age at which a child receives his or her first cell phone is 8 years old. “On average, 20% of teens, ages 13 to 19, have sent or posted nude or semi-nude pictures or video of themselves.”

Other presenters at the workshop included Bruce May, director of the Greene County ACE Task Force. May talked about the growing drug problem in the county and the outside influences that are affecting local communities. “Our county is not impervious to outside influx of drugs and we have had a lot of success in stopping major drug organizations and other associated crimes such as burglary.”

“There is a misconception that drug abuse is wrongly perceived as a victimless crime,” said May, who is a 10-year veteran of the agency. “Your taxes go to paying for rehab programs, the terrible pain and expense to the parents of drug-dependent children and teens make everyone victims.” May also exhibited samples of various types of drugs and paraphernalia so that teachers and law enforcement officers could familiarize themselves with these

items first hand.

Also presenting was Khristian Scohy of Fairborn City Schools, who offered information and tips relating to general internet safety. Community-focused educational programs such as this one are funded partially through the use of seized drug money and revenue from the sale of confiscated property related to alcohol and drug abuse crimes.

Integrated Youth Services is part of the Mental Health & Recovery Board of Greene County. The organization offers many programs for children and families related drug and alcohol abuse prevention and treatment. From assessment to individual counseling and outpatient programs, the organization assists adolescents and their families to develop a dependency-free lifestyle. For more information on upcoming programs, go online to www.iysgreene.org or call 937-427-3837.

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