

Youth Forum

October 5, 2011

Things that the youth liked best about Atchison County:

Small, family, nice people, education, college part of community, schools, family atmosphere, sports, people, everyone knows one another, school support, Amelia weekend, nice school, caring, new hospital, like Highland tech center, simple, welcoming community.

Notes from group led by BC students as facilitators-

How did these health rankings make you feel? Embarrassed

What changes can we make to improve the health rankings? Community bike ride

Biggest areas of concern?

Unemployment

Adult obesity

Smoking

Air pollution

Teen pregnancy

Children in poverty

Allison added violent crime and substance abuse, low birth weight

What factors are included in a healthy lifestyle?

Healthy eating, having money to eat healthy. Exercise, family.

What do you think about the environment of Atchison? Ok for the most part.

Are there opportunities to live a healthy lifestyle?

Room for improvement- clubs for physical activities. Activities for those not involved in school sponsored sports.

Concerning graduation rate, why do you think this is? Drugs, student-teacher ratio, teen pregnancy.

These different issues are linked together. Do you see these links between these concerns?

In 10 years...

-community exercise programs to address obesity issue.

More health food availability

Education classes about obesity and health

Schools do not include a lot of healthy eating or health education or nutrition education. Only one semester required usually.

Articles in newspaper about making healthy meals. Nutrition education in student newspapers.

What do you think is the main cause of obesity in Atchison?

Lazy

A lot of fast food

Lack of exercise

Need Bigger healthy lunch in school so students don't supplement with snacks.

Healthy food is expensive.

High cost of membership at health clubs, fitness centers

Smoking-

Is there a lot of smoking at high school?

Yes.

Chewing is bigger at ACCHS. AHS- a lot of smoking (also weed)

How are kids getting access? How does it begin?

Makes you seem like a MAN, feel cool. Fit in with older crowd. Access by older friends.

Does sports keep you from smoking, etc...?

A lot of people "calm down" when they are involved in a sport or after school activity.

We need drug testing.

What is the biggest cause of smoking in Atchison?

You grow up with it.

A lot of popular students smoke.

People smoke because of stress.

Easy access.

Don't card enough.

Text messages from people saying they have access to.... (cigarettes, beer, weed)

What would convince people to take initiative and control that part of their health?

Strict punishments

Fines.

Monthly seminars telling risks of smoking for example.

Do your friends that aren't in sports know the effects? Not always.

What would help with this problem?

Think of more activities that don't involve sports. Sometimes if we have some of these clubs, such as Spanish Club, they don't meet often enough to keep kids busy.

Can you think of ways that would convince your friends to quit smoking?

Activities such as school movie night.

Make it harder for them to get it.

Older brothers smoke or "do it".

Get parents involved so kids have parental support. Don't know how to do that.

Move up the age for smoking to 21.

Take a class that depicts what jail is like and the booking process, etc..

Don't have any thing else to do on the weekends, etc...

Smoking is "the hangout" thing to do. It IS the activity.

Movie in the park idea, large screen. Kids may not just want to see a movie, but if "everyone is doing it", it might work.

What would you like to see on the weekends to do? More stuff like Amelia weekend. Pool tournaments, games to go to and participate in. Activities for the whole town.

Concert in the parks. More often activities.

Air pollution. Do you see effects of it? Smell of MGP in some areas. Air pollution causes health problems. Respiratory.

Less cars? Car pools. Biking. How do you increase these things? Increase bus options.

Unemployment-children in poverty.

How do you see opportunities for employment in At. Co.? Not a lot of places hiring. Need new businesses. More community centers. Boys and Girls clubs closer to downtown.

Food drives for the poor.

Teen pregnancy—

What do you think would help teen pregnancy?

Is it possible to have condoms handled out at schools.

Education only covered in a semester health classes.

Do you think you know much about STDs? Do you think it would help if more education was in school?

More education would definitely help with STD and pregnancy. Start education in middle school. You don't want to start too early because it might scar the kids.

They talk about health, but don't specifically talk about STD and pregnancy.

(Tiffany Eis) guest speaker who lost her legs because of drugs to speak to convince kids. Experienced speakers of telling risks.

Make it a class.

Not even addressed at Catholic schools. Not going to be a class in catholic school.

Catholic school has a "stand" but doesn't address how to...

Small town, not enough going on.

Pregnant girls have a lot of support and no one thinks much of it.

Normal to drink and not think of consequences.

A lot of these problems could be solved if there were things to do on the weekends.

Too awkward to talk to parents about these issues.

Top 5 Causes of low ranking and two ways to address each one.

1. Drinking/drugs/tobacco-harsher punishments, after school programs (something to do)
2. Obesity- Classes about eating healthy and exercise, community exercise programs
3. Teen pregnancy-health classes that focus on sexual education, Speakers that speak of their own experience/hardships.
4. Poverty-Boys and Girls clubs more available to everyone and more well known, more central. Donations. Work ethic and morals
5. Graduation rates-tutoring opportunities, students helping students. Make tutoring place be cool and not a punishment, more of a hang-out. Speakers to present on firsthand experiences of dropping out, etc...

Behaviors such as drinking effects teen pregnancy.

These behaviors lower graduation rates.

Smoking weed lowers ambition.

Pregnancy hinders staying in school.

Having firsthand speakers on the different topics were viewed as an effective means of educating students about these issues.

Other issues.

Verbal bullying.

In 10 years what does At. Co. have to brag about?

More community events. Clean up certain areas., sports clubs in different schools, bike paths, trails, park that everyone goes to with basketball courts, something for everyone. Healthier places to eat. More rec centers. More education and tutoring programs.