

“Changing Attitudes: It’s not a ‘rite of passage.’”

April is Alcohol Awareness Month

Founded and sponsored by NCADD (National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence) Alcohol Awareness Month was established in 1987 to help reduce the stigma so often associated with alcoholism by encouraging communities to reach out to others each April with information about alcohol, alcoholism and recovery. With this year’s theme being “Changing Attitudes: It’s not a ‘rite of passage’”; Central Community School enlisted some partners to provide information and begin to challenge attitudes – as well as have some fun!

The event, held April 11 involved Substance Abuse Services for Clayton County, Inc. (SASCC), Leonard/Grau Funeral Home and 5C (Clayton County Community Collaboration Council) members. 5C brought their ‘Hidden in Plain Sight’ exhibit to the school to educate teachers and other adults. The exhibit is set up as a teenager’s bedroom and features a number of items related to alcohol or drug use, as well as other indicators of substance abuse. Adults go through the room to see what items they can identify, and knowledgeable hosts are available to answer questions and help identify overlooked items. 5C is willing to host ‘Hidden in Plain Sight’ anywhere in Clayton County, free of charge. For more information contact them at claytoncountyyccc@gmail.com.

As youth are not allowed to view the mock bedroom, a simulation experience involving a pedal kart and Fatal Vision goggles was also available to engage youth and adults both. Law enforcement personnel from the Elkader Police Department and the Clayton County Sheriff’s Department were on hand to assist participants in the use of goggles; which simulate intoxication, as a means of alcohol and drug prevention. Officers and prevention assistants directed participants through the driving course and a mock field sobriety test to test motor skills and give them a safe way to encounter impairment. Participants and observers were quick to point out that motor skills perceptions by those wearing the goggles is not accurate.

In Clayton County and the public at large, it is certainly time to change attitudes and prevent underage alcohol use. Research shows that those who begin drinking alcohol early in life have an increased risk of substance abuse problems later. Alcoholism is a chronic, progressive disease, genetically predisposed and fatal if untreated. However, people can and do recover. In fact, it is estimated that as many as 20 million individuals and family members are living lives in recovery! For more information visit www.ncadd.org or contact SASCC at 563-245-1546.

