

# ★ Youth in Action

Samuel E. Shull Middle School

## ★ How we chose our topic

- We discussed problems in our community
- We chose Drugs and Alcohol
- It seemed to be the most of our concern and we knew people it affects

## ★ Our Research Question

- *Why do teens use and abuse drugs and alcohol?*
- We decided that drugs and alcohol can damage your body and teens should not be using drugs or alcohol.
- We wanted to find out why teens would risk ruining their lives just to drink or do drugs.

# ★ Data Collection Strategy

- We surveyed students to find out if they think drugs and alcohol are a problem and what the causes are.
- We interviewed 5 students on the experiences with drugs and alcohol, and 3 teachers to see why they think students do it.
- We created a quiz to see what students at our school know about drugs and alcohol.

# ★ Our Findings: Student Survey

We surveyed 30 students at Shull Middle School from the 7th and 8th grade on different teams and academic levels.

- 22 students have friends in middle school who use drugs, 14 of those students knew 20+ students who use
- Students ranked the top 4 causes: Depression, Peer Pressure, Lack of Family Support, and Substance Abuse in the Community.
- 13 students have been asked to try drugs or alcohol, but only 2 of those 13 did not end up trying.

# ★ Our Findings: Interviews

We interviewed 2 Shull students who have never used drugs or alcohol and 3 students who have.

Non-User Quotes:

- 1) "I don't want to destroy my life."
- 2) "My parents told me never to do it."

# ★ Our Findings: Interviews

Students who have used:

- 1) “You can’t die from marijuana. You only get high.”
- 2) “It’s not like my parents don’t know I use alcohol... My mom drinks with me.”
- 3) “I am an honor student so it doesn't affect my work... In ten years, I see myself in college- still smoking.”

# ★ Our Findings: Student Quiz

We quizzed 41 students at Shull Middle School from the 7th and 8th grade on different teams and academic levels.

- 33 students do not know that Tobacco kills more people each year than cocaine or heroin.
- 21 students do not know that marijuana has been shown to cause mental illness.
- 27 students do not think that Alcohol is the most commonly abused drug in the US. Most chose cocaine or heroin.



## ★ Conclusions

- 1) Students do not know the effects drugs and alcohol can have on their bodies, academics, or lives.
- 2) There is a direct connection between how parents feel about drugs and alcohol and whether their teen chooses to use them.
- 3) Peer pressure influences many teens.

## ★ Moving Forward

We interviewed 3 teachers to find out if they think drugs and alcohol are a problem with students, and what information students receive:

Teacher 1: “Students don’t know enough information about the side effects, just think that it’s cool.... All we can do is give you the information.”

Teacher 2 (When asked why students learn more about sex and AIDS and less about drugs and alcohol): “We’re required to follow New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards.... I’d like to have more time for health class.”

# ★ Taking ACTION!

- Students need information!
  - \* Teacher 1: "I'd like to take a workshop or have someone come in from the outside to talk with students."
- Parents should be involved.
- Simply sending people to jail won't help
- Anti-Drug and Alcohol campaigns should reach people on a more emotional level
  - \*Example: Montana Crystal Meth Campaign

★ **Any Questions?**

Thank you!