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Local Youth Work to Educate Peers About Dangers of Substance Use

National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week Posters Hit School Halls

SHELBY, NC – Shelby Middle School Youth Council students celebrated National Drug & Alcohol Facts Week (NDAFW) by participating in a poster campaign at their school. NDAFW is an annual event focused on the science of drug use and addiction that educates and empowers youth to make informed decisions about substance use and their health.

Youth council members developed a variety of posters, each with one fact about the dangers of substance use. The posters were then placed around Shelby Middle School for all students to read as they are walking to class, eating lunch, or coming into school for the day.

The posters feature prevention messages focused on vaping, underage drinking, and the dangers of fake pills. One of the posters reads, “99% of vapes contain the highly addictive chemical, nicotine.” Another reads, “4 out of 10 people who drink alcohol before age 15 become addicted,” with additional information about what alcohol does to the developing brain. Another message reads, “7 out of 10 fake pills contain a potentially lethal dose of fentanyl.”

“We are really excited about this project and proud of the students for their creativity and willingness to jump right in shortly after we formed the council” said Carmen Barbuto, Drug Free Cleveland County Coordinator for the Cleveland County Health Department. “Youth led councils are vital to the success of youth prevention because we know it empowers young people to address issues that directly affect them and helps create prevention messaging that speaks to them and their peers. We are incredibly grateful for this partnership with Communities In Schools and Shelby Middle School for supporting this initiative,” added Barbuto.

Recently established in February 2025, the youth council is a partnership between the Cleveland County Health Department, Cleveland County Schools, Communities In Schools, and Drug Free

Cleveland County – our local substance use prevention coalition. The poster campaign was the youth council's first school-wide project. They will continue to work on projects as the school year comes to an end with plans to continue their youth substance use prevention work next school year.

To learn more about youth substance use, local resources, or how to get involved in our work, please visit www.drugfreecc.com.

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