



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STUDENTS CHOOSE TO BE LEADERS

Fifty- five high school students from Mason, Lake, and Oceana Counties participated in the 2017 Youth Summit on May 16th hosted by District Health Department #10 (DHD#10) and The Oceana Prevention Partnership for Change (TOPPC) Youth. It was a day of hands-on, high-energy learning at Grace Adventures in Mears, MI.

The one day event aims to empower youth to think about personal choices and future goals, recognize the power they have to be a part of positive change in their communities, and discuss the risks of underage substance abuse and experimentation.

The TOPPC Youth started planning the event in October 2016 and picked a theme of “I Choose to Be...” This theme set the tone for the entire summit.

“Students can choose to be anything; they have the ability to find their own individual purpose and passions. We want them to have the tools and support to follow their dreams all while maintaining a drug free lifestyle,” said Kate Donaldson, Health Educator, District Health Department #10 and Youth Summit Lead Coordinator.

Students were partnered with students from other schools and participated in group activities and speaker sessions that focused on leadership, mental health, and substance abuse prevention.

TOPPC Youth led their peers throughout the day in activities that included icebreakers, team building, dancing, and a brainstorm session on how to be a change-maker.

“It’s really amazing to see students step out of their comfort zone and engage in open, honest conversations about tough topics like prescription drug abuse, mental health, and the everyday pressure of high school. With a welcoming, non-judgmental environment, students shared personal experiences and perspectives with students they just met!” said Donaldson.

This is the second year the Youth Summit was hosted and DHD#10 hopes to see the event continue and grow in size next year.

About DHD #10

District Health Department #10 (DHD #10) is Michigan's largest geographical health department, mandated to promote and protect the public from unsafe and hazardous conditions and provide methods of promoting good health and disease prevention. Some of the vital programs provided by DHD #10 include Immunizations, Infectious Disease Control, STI Testing and Counseling, WIC, Children's

Special Health Services, Hearing and Vision Screening, Family Planning, Cancer Screening, Worksite Wellness, Smoking Cessation, Substance Use Prevention, Chronic Disease Prevention, and Environmental Health Services. DHD #10 serves Crawford, Kalkaska, Lake, Manistee, Mason, Mecosta, Missaukee, Newaygo, Oceana, and Wexford counties. For more information, visit www.dhd10.org.

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