

Parents learn dangers of vaping during “Evening with the Experts”

SCRANTON – The U.S. Surgeon General has called it an epidemic and local experts agree, highlighting the importance of parents understanding and taking action regarding youth e-cigarette use.

“Statistics show that in 2018, more than 3.6 million youth, including one in five high school students and one in 20 middle school students were e-cigarette users,” Trooper Robert Urban said during an “Evening with the Experts” on Dec. 5, 2019.

Recognizing the health risks associated with vaping, the Diocese of Scranton Catholic School System put together a program featuring panelists from the fields of law enforcement, health and education. More than 30 parents and educators attended the session which was held at the Diocesan Pastoral Center.

“Less than a decade ago, the e-cigarette was an obscure product marketed as a safe, tobacco-free alternative to conventional cigarettes by a single company in China,” Trooper Urban explained. “Now it is a \$3 billion global industry with over 600 brands and 8,000 flavors and liquids.”



Trooper Robert Urban with the Pennsylvania State Police presents information on the dangers of vaping during an “Evening with the Experts” program on Thursday, Dec. 5, 2019. (Photo/Eric Deabill)

The panel began by explaining exactly what e-cigarettes are -- battery-powered devices that deliver nicotine, flavorings and other ingredients to the user. The panelists then explained that they do not create harmless “water vapor,” instead they create an aerosol that can contain harmful chemicals.

Benjamin Tolerico, principal of Holy Cross High School in Dunmore, highlighted that every school district is confronting problems associated with vaping and e-cigarette usage.

Tolerico highlighted the

difference between the current use of e-cigarettes by students and the cigarette-smoking generation decades ago.

“Years ago, if a kid was smoking in the bathroom, you could certainly smell it...now it’s not these giant plumes of smoke or vape. You really can’t see anything and they’re odorless,” Tolerico explained.

As of Dec. 4, 2019, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported 2,291 cases of lung injury linked to vaping. It also reported 48 deaths have been confirmed in 25 states and the

District of Columbia.

Dr. Sreelatha Naik, a specialist in pulmonary, critical care and sleep medicine with Geisinger, explained many of the health dangers associated with vaping.

“There is so much inflammation in the lungs that it is hard for the lungs to take oxygen from the air,” Dr. Naik said as she showed photographs of lungs damaged by vaping and described her experiences in treating patients locally.

The panel explained that e-cigarettes come in many shapes and sizes. Some look like regular cigarettes, cigars or pipes while larger e-cigarettes such as tank systems – or “mods” – do not look like other tobacco products.

Parents also learned that some e-cigarettes look like other items commonly used by young people, such as pens and USB flash drives.

Judy Price, First Assistant District Attorney for Lackawanna County, ended the panel discussion by discussing ways that local, state and federal officials are working to tackle the vaping problem.

“Right now, it’s not illegal to buy or sell to minors vaping products, under our (Pennsylvania) laws as they exist. It’s illegal to sell

tobacco so we are trying to broaden our tobacco laws to include vaping products,” Price said.

Price also emphasized that all Lackawanna County school districts, including the Diocesan School System, participate in the Safe Schools Coalition where information on topics like vaping is discussed on a regular basis.

This was the second “Evening with the Experts” hosted by the Diocese of Scranton Catholic School System. The first program, held earlier this year, focused on the potential dangers associated with social media usage.

What can you do as a parent or caregiver?

- Talk to your child about why e-cigarettes are harmful. It is never too late.
- Set a good example by being tobacco-free
- Learn about the different shapes and types of e-cigarettes and the risks for young people at www.CDC.gov

A Commitment to our children...Bishop Bambera continues visiting our students and classrooms



Notre Dame High School & Elementary School, East Stroudsburg



Monsignor McHugh School, Cresco



Saint Clare / Saint Paul School - Primary Campus



Holy Family Academy, Hazleton



Saint Clare / Saint Paul School - Main Campus

Diocese of Scranton
CATHOLIC
 SCHOOL SYSTEM
 FAITH • ACADEMICS • SERVICE

The Diocese of Scranton is committed to educating our students in an environment that is academically excellent and facilitates the development of moral judgment and Christian decision-making. We are proud to share the following successes of our students in the classroom and in their service to others. Each day, our schools are fulfilling their mission of preparing today's youth and young adults to become tomorrow's faith-filled leaders.



All Saints Academy in Scranton



Students and their families from **Saint Clare/Saint Paul School** in Scranton recently collected hundreds of mittens, hats & scarves that were donated to Mollie's Mittens and distributed to the less fortunate in the region.



Saint Jude School in Mountain Top



Diocese of Scranton principals and faculty **STREAM** (Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) Coordinators recently attended a professional development seminar. The day focused on new resources that are available and offered the opportunity to register for the Notre Dame (University) Educator Trustee Fellow Program.



Student Council Induction at **Holy Redeemer High School** in Wilkes-Barre



Saint Mary of Mount Carmel School in Dunmore



Students from **Wyoming Area Catholic School** in Exeter collected winter necessities like gloves, mittens, hats, scarves and socks and donated them to the Kids Closet, located in the Care and Concern Clinic in Pittston, which helps children under the age of 16 with clothing items.



Chess Club at **Good Shepherd Academy** in Kingston



Notre Dame Elementary School in East Stroudsburg



The Individualized Instruction students at **Holy Cross High School** in Dunmore have completed their Christian Service at Marley's Mission. Nodyia deFreitas and Anna Brundage are shown here with Marley's Mission staff. Under the direction of their teacher, Ms. Regina Krieger, the girls had the opportunity to work the horses and help around the stables over the last few weeks.



Holy Family Academy in Hazleton



Sophomores from **Saint John Neumann Jr./Sr. High School** in Williamsport hold the Advent gift baskets that they made and then delivered to local pastors and religious sisters.



"Sally Sells Seashells, and You Can Too!" was the fall musical presentation of the seventh & eighth grade classes at **Notre Dame Jr./Sr. High School** in East Stroudsburg.



Saint Nicholas/Saint Mary School in Wilkes-Barre



Saint John Neumann Elementary School in Williamsport



La Salle Academy in Jessup