Awareness program educates teen athletes about dangers of pain pills

By Doug Livingston
Akron Beacon Journal/Ohio.com

After 1,200 all-purpose yards and two touchdowns two years ago during his sophomore season, Garfield Rams running back D’Mone Adams had his future invested in another breakout season.

But during the first offensive play in a scrimmage this year, the senior star athlete caught the ball, took a hit, held on and tore every major tendon in his knee. He left the hospital that day in a cast. Three weeks later, after surgery, he went home with something for the pain.

“They gave me ‘Percs,’” he said of the Percocet, a pill whose main active ingredient is a potentially addictive drug called oxycodone.

Research shows most pain pill users don’t become addicted to stronger stuff. But most users of heroin and deadly opioids began with pain pills prescribed by a trusted physician.

Nobody told Adams that. Not the startling stats. Not the danger. “They just said take it every three hours,” he said, speaking with fellow student-athletes to a reporter in a discussion arranged by his coach Kemp Boyd.

“Thank God D’Mone didn’t get addicted,” said Boyd, who also works for Pastoral Counseling Service as a counselor embedded in Akron Public Schools.

Parents might be concerned if they knew how little some students know about the perils of pain management.

Five of the six students assembled to talk said a strong mind can overcome addiction. They see themselves as invincible with a firm grip on their futures.

Refugee girls build self-confidence, creativity skills through craft classes

By Katie Byard
Akron Beacon Journal/Ohio.com

At first, the girls seemed puzzled about learning macramé, the art of tying cords into knots.

The girls weren’t familiar with the craft — popular in the ’60s and ’70s — that is having a resurgence.

“I could see the kids are looking at me, thinking, ‘Why are you doing this craft?’” recalled Gabi Oberdorfer of Bath, who is a volunteer with the tiny Akron nonprofit called DAWN that works with area refugees.

The mood in the room then quickly shifted, Oberdorfer said, recalling the craft class she was teaching earlier this year. “There was a lot of enthusiasm

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Grants strengthen youth education, arts programs

In 2017, the Millennium Fund awarded grants totaling $42,800 to 31 nonprofits, bringing its cumulative grant-making total to more than $700,000. The following grants were awarded this year:

**ACCESS**, to provide meals, clothing, health assessments and academic support for children living at the shelter, $1,000

**Akron Children’s Museum**, to provide free tickets to the museum for disadvantaged children in Greater Akron, $1,000

**Akron Public Schools, North High School**, to create a new digital learning lab that will enhance the school’s robotics and technology programs, $1,500

**Art Sparks**, to support a movement and music fitness program at Akron Public Schools, $1,000

**Battered Women’s Shelter**, to provide enrichment activities and field trips for children living at the shelter, $1,000

**Big Love Network**, to support a civic engagement program for teens, $1,000

**Birthcare of Medina County**, to provide winter pajamas for babies in need, $500

**Boys & Girls Clubs of the Western Reserve**, to support after-school reading programs for at-risk youth, $500

**Bright Star Books**, to provide books to young children in Summit County, $2,000

**Caring for Kids**, to purchase gifts to celebrate the birthdays and accomplishments of children in foster care, $1,000

**CASA Board Volunteer Association**, to provide winter pajamas for abused and neglected children in foster care, $2,000

**Christ Child Society of Akron**, to provide essential newborn items to mothers of at-risk babies, $1,500

**Dancing Classrooms Northeast Ohio**, for the annual Colors of the Rainbow Team Match event, $1,000

**DAWN: Developing Alternatives for Women in New Communities**, to purchase art supplies for craft classes for refugee girls, $500

**Family Promise of Summit County**, to purchase linens, toiletries and diapers for homeless babies and children, $2,000

**First Congregational Church of Akron**, to provide students in need with healthy food for the weekend, $2,000

**Magical Theatre Company**, to support theater productions and drama workshops for homeless youth in Akron, $1,000

**Medina Community Police Activity League**, to support after-school field trips for students in Medina County, $1,000

**OutSupport**, for support services for transgender youth, $1,500

**Pastoral Counseling Service**, to support a drug abuse prevention program at Akron Public Schools, $1,800

**Proyecto Raices**, to provide transportation for students in the Proyecto Raices program, which provides a safe space for Hispanic children in Greater Akron to celebrate their culture, $2,000

**Rape Crisis Center**, to help prevent teen dating violence by educating students about healthy relationships, $2,000

**Red Flags National**, to support a mental health awareness and education program at Akron Public Schools, $2,000

**RePlay for Kids**, to support a workshop where volunteers can learn how to adapt toys for children with disabilities, $1,000

**South Street Ministries**, to support an after-school program for students in the Summit Lake neighborhood, $2,000

**Students With A Goal**, to support a mentoring program for young adults that develops leadership and life skills, $2,000

**Summit Choral Society**, to support the Children’s Choir Program, $1,000

**Victim Assistance Program**, for a picnic for children who have witnessed or been victims of violence, $1,000

**Victory Gallop**, to provide scholarships for children in the therapeutic horseback riding program, $2,000

**Weathervane Community Playhouse**, to provide theater scholarships for children from low-income families, $1,000

**Women’s Auxiliary Board, Summit County Children Services**, to create safer sleeping conditions for kids in the care of children’s services by providing families with beds and cribs, $2,000

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**Ways you can give**

Thanks to your generosity, the Millennium Fund officially reached $1 million in assets this year! Gifts of any size make a real and lasting difference in the lives of local children. Please consider a gift of:

**Stock**: Gifts of stock offer a twofold tax savings by allowing you to avoid capital gains taxes while giving you a deduction for the full fair market value of your stock. Initiate transfers by Dec. 20 to ensure year-end processing. For instructions, visit www.akroncf.org/StockTransfers.

**Retirement Assets**: If you are age 70 ½ or older, you can donate up to $100,000 from your IRA without paying taxes on the distribution. Learn more at www.akroncf.org/IRA.

**Cash/Check**: Postmark your gift by Dec. 31 or donate online before midnight at www.akroncf.org/give/Millennium.

See more giving options at www.akroncf.org/MillenniumWaysToGive.
Small gifts snowball into big change for area children

Philanthropy isn’t just the domain of the wealthy. In fact, small amounts can yield big returns, especially when giving to an endowment fund like the Millennium Fund for Children. Akron resident Rose Marie Schreier has given modestly, but what makes her donations impactful is her diligence: She’s given every year since the fund’s inception in 1999.

“I don’t give a whole lot,” she said. “I can’t afford a lot, but at the end of every year I have given something. What little amount I give, I hope it helps.”

Schreier, 84, read a newspaper article about the establishment of the Millennium Fund in 1999, prompting her initial donation. What appealed to her most was its mission of improving the lives of area children.

“I think a childhood should be a happy time and a carefree time,” she said. “I’m just all for children. I just want them to have happy childhoods.”

Area children are raised in a completely different environment than previous generations, she said: “What’s going on in the world today is the fact that children can’t be safe someplace and ride a bike and play tag and do all those things that children should be doing.”

After her husband passed away, Schreier renewed her focus on good deeds, seeking work at Mature Services and the United Way, along with staying involved in the community.

“My husband passed away 31 years ago, so I have really been busy all those years,” she said. “I worked for quite a number of years, and I like to work in the yard. I try to stay as active as I can.”

While her donations are often in the single digits, Schreier’s contributions are among the many that helped the Millennium Fund reach a new milestone this year when the fund surpassed $1 million in assets.

Her gifts, combined with thousands of others, have enabled the fund to award more than $700,000 in grants to programs that change the lives of children throughout Greater Akron.

Past grants have given toys to kids in foster care, introduced students to live music and theater performances, provided food and clothing to at-risk youth, and much more.

Through small, consistent gifts, Rose Marie Schreier has made a big difference for local kids, who she says deserve to be carefree and ride bikes.

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Only one student questioned the effectiveness of the “just say no to drugs” mentality of some policymakers. They got a handle on this and they always will, most of them said.

Boyd, and his employers, are trying to get these wide-eyed, confident students to recognize the consequences of underestimating addiction.

Boyd, simultaneously a coach and counselor, is taking a drug prevention, awareness and youth empowerment program developed by Pastoral Counseling Service to help students find healthy ways to cope with the stresses of adolescence and early adulthood. This year, Generation Rx will reach the middle and high school student body in Akron, Norton, Wadsworth and Woodridge.

The program includes documentaries and testimonies of students and athletes who abused drugs and have lived to talk about it. Boyd said he’d like the students to hear from experts, too, like Akron-area orthopedic surgeon Dr. Derek Klaus, whom he met in Leadership Akron.

“My job is to give young guys a platform so you can be educated and go educate others,” Boyd told his student-athletes. “My staff and I are not just going to throw stats at you. That’s a waste of time. We want you guys to take ownership of your own group.”

There already are signs of positive impact based on a recent conversation between a reporter and six of the first 90 participants.

“It makes me not want to take them anymore,” sophomore football player Lamont Evans said of pain pills.

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You, too, can make a permanent impact on area children with a gift to the Millennium Fund. Learn more at www.MillenniumFund.org.
Bhutanese family arrived in the United States from a camp in Nepal in 2010, is looking forward to the classes resuming. “I like to make craft things,” she said. “I like to make clothes like a hat.”

This fall, she made a fleece hat and scarf for the winter. The project wasn’t too hard, she said. “I knew that I could do it, I could make them.”

Read the full story on Ohio.com at www.ohio.com/akron/special-projects/millennium-fund.