

Young ‘Leaders in Life’

Imagine a large convention and hotel complex where every conference room features high and middle school age students discussing youth issues with peers from other campuses. Years ago that is what California Friday Night Live Partnership and California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs envisioned when they encouraged students to have their own Leaders in Life Youth Conference. Supported by the Kern County Superintendent of Schools, local school districts, businesses and agencies, it took root with the latest gathering taking place on March 3 at the Rabobank Arena Theater and Convention Center/ Marriott Hotel in Bakersfield.

The conference for youth is planned entirely by youth designed to help them overcome academic and personal issues through “inspiring and encouraging” leadership training. Approximately 75 percent of the students selected by their schools come from lower socio-economic backgrounds and from slightly below average to average achievement levels. Through the conference, these young people from various races, economic backgrounds and academic achievement levels are brought together to focus on youth advocacy and let their voices be heard in shaping their schools and communities.

Adults are invited as catalysts to get discussions started and present expert information on various subjects affecting youth. Most have a relevant story to tell, such as **Josh Shipp**, an in demand motivational speaker who was abandoned as a youth but rescued by a foster family.



Speaker Rick Phillips gave his Leaders in Life audience a sobering update on the effects of bullying on campus.



Young students excitedly exchanged information in the Peer Buddy Program workshop.

Rick Phillips, presenting a seminar on “Youth as Peacemakers,” got his audience’s attention when he told them, “Nationally, 160,000 students stayed home today because they were afraid.”



Leaders in Life gave students such as Arvin High’s Courtney Johnson and Ariel Woggn a relaxed forum to share experiences and create friendships.

Et cetera

Brad Ruff passes along that Thompson Junior High recently became one of only 135 schools in the country to be honored as an Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) National Demonstration School. On Feb. 23 Thompson’s AVID teachers, students and administrators made presentations and had classrooms observed by the AVID Center Validation Team. They also took part in a panel discussion with Panama-Buena Vista Union School District officials. The county office administers AVID’s Region 8, which includes Kern, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo and Ventura counties. AVID works to close the achievement gap and increase college-going rates for students from low income and minority families. Ruff is the program coordinator for the office.

More than 20 staffers were scheduled to donate at the most recent county office blood drive for the Houchin Community Blood Bank held on March 5 at the City Centre. Those on the list to contribute included: Mary Baker, Trudy Blanco, Gabriela Bravo, Deana Claffin, Erin Clerico, Teresa Costa, Julie Coleman, Corey Eby, Hazel Fields, Christine Frazier, Shannon Green, Alicia Kidwood, Roz Korman, Lissa Lefler, Leslie Lund, Nidya Madrigal-Navia, Mary Alice Means, Alicia Mil, Kelly Reve-nough, Melissa Spray, Tracye Taylor and Bobbette Wellwood.

Kern County
Superintendent
of
Schools

MISSION STATEMENT

As advocates for children we provide leadership, education and support for students, school districts and the community through programs, services and fiscal accountability.