

Sharing some facts on youth vaping in Amherst

In late March 2023, six members of the Amherst Youth Consortium attended the first ever Young Adult Change Makers Academy which took place at Alden High School. During the 14 hours of training, led by staff of Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America, they learned the Strategic Prevention Framework, completed a Community Assessment of the Town of Amherst and agreed that young people vaping was a key problem happening in all the middle schools and high schools.

Data from the 2022 Search Institute's Survey of Student Attitudes and Behaviors – Town of Amherst confirmed that though the majority of young people in our community do not vape, there are youth who do.

A question on the survey asked: How many times during the last

30 days, if any, have you vaped tobacco, nicotine or marijuana?

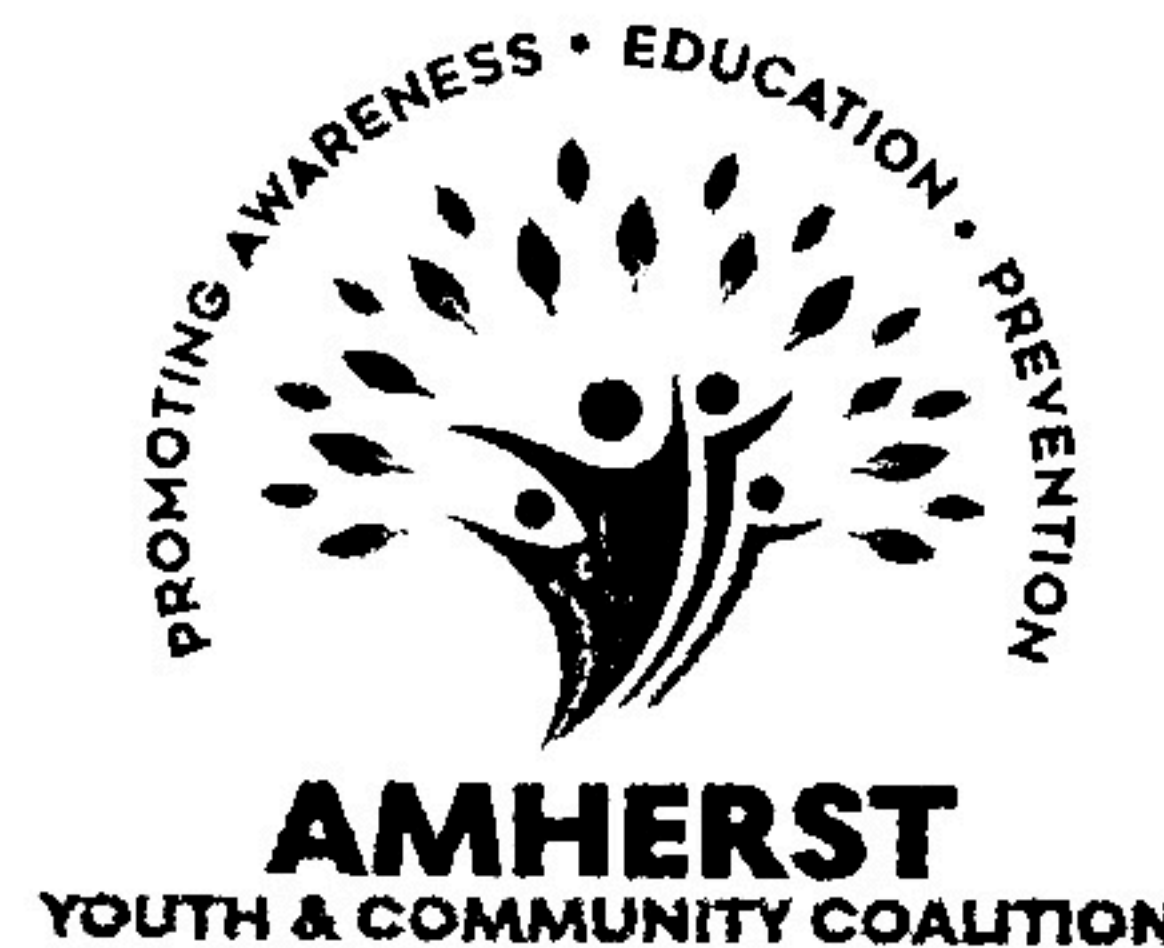
94% of the eighth graders, 86% of the 10th graders and 70% of the 12th graders who responded reported zero times.

However, 3% of the eighth graders, 5% of the 10th graders and 17% of the 12th graders reported vaping in the past 30 days of the survey 10 or more times.

When given this information, some young people in our town were asked, "What would you say to a friend who is vaping?"

High school student, age 17:

"You only get one life ... just one. You have many years ahead of you so don't waste it and cut it short. Find a way to start living a life you



will be satisfied with while you are still so young because

time is catching up with you. Do it for yourself; hold your life dear and live it out to its fullest."

Vidya, high school student, age 17:

"I would ask if they think that vaping is benefiting them in any way. By asking them this question, I hope to make them consider why they're actually vaping and see that there are only negative consequences that can arise from getting addicted to vapes."

The advertising of vapes has made them sound so safe, and at times, even good for you. Back in the '60s cigarettes were promoted in advertisements by "doctors" sending that same message. We all know how

wrong that message was then and continues to be false today regarding vapes. When you vape, you are not just taking a vapor into your lungs where it doesn't belong. After all, we are not fish. Vaping nicotine has a significant negative impact on teens. It is addictive; includes numerous toxic substances; produces an aerosol that contains heavy metals. Don't let them fool you Vaping aerosol causes DNA mutagenesis which have been known to cause cancer, according to Dr. Aaron Weiner, president of the American Society of Addictions.

For more information on vaping, contact the Prevention Council of Erie County at 716-831-2298 or get involved with the Amherst Youth and Community Coalition by calling Kathy Miller at 716- 631-7132. It doesn't take a big commitment to make a big difference.