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Anti-meth program called a success

By *JIM SECKLER/The Daily News*

KINGMAN - The Mohave County supervisors heard Monday on the success of an anti-meth program aimed at middle school students in the county.

Brian Velarde, director of the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Colorado River, gave the board an update on MethSMART, an anti-meth program through the Boys and Girls Club that targets sixth-graders in Bullhead City, Fort Mojave, Mohave Valley, Kingman and Golden Valley schools.

So far, about 632 students have gone through, or are going through, the program, which focuses on the educating students on the dangers of meth.

“We’re getting a positive feedback from the students,” Velarde said. “As you can see, it is making a difference.”

The six-week program deals with the effects of meth, how to resist the peer pressure in using the drug and also shows the signs that someone is using the drug. Velarde blames television and movies for glamorizing drug use and providing false information about using meth.

The program is also planned to take place in Lake Havasu City but that city does not have a Boys and Girls Club.

Dist. 1 Sup. Peter Byers chastised state legislators for not putting any money into fighting meth in this year’s budget and asked members of the audience to write to their legislators.

Mohave County recently contributed about \$118,000 to Maricopa County to be used for the Arizona Meth Project.

Velarde also showed a video of students at a Bullhead City middle school relating their experience of going through the program.

A Kingman middle school student also spoke telling the supervisors how she has seen the physical impact of meth on her mother’s clients. Her mother is a defense attorney with the county’s legal defender’s office.

Noreen Frisch, director of the Boys and Girls Club in Kingman warned that high energy drinks can be a precursor to using meth. She also said many students are already affected by meth with older siblings or parents using the drug.

One Kingman teacher said her son was addicted to meth and she ended up raising her grandchild. The boy’s mother, who is in prison, told her that more than 60 percent of prison inmates are in custody because their crimes are meth-related.

The Colorado River club is handling the program for Bullhead City, Fort Mojave and Lake Havasu City.

The Aha Macav club is handling the program in Mohave Valley and Kingman chapter is covering schools in Golden Valley and Kingman.

MethSMART is offering programs for children 6 to 9 years old, children 10 to 13 years old and teens 14 to 18 years old.