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Heroin Epidemic Reaches Local Schools

The local community of Bucks County is known for its outstanding blue ribbon school district, historical landmarks, and beautiful scenery. But the most important issue facing Bucks County is not the financial growth, the expensive of the new Justice Center or any other concerns discussed at county meetings. The heroin outbreak that has hit the local high schools and even taken lives is the bigger problem at hand.

Central Bucks school district educates approximately 20,000 students and is ranked top in the area compared with other surrounding districts. Located in the heart of Doylestown is Central Bucks High school South, and the other two schools located within Bucks are East and West. All three schools work well to provide their students with the highest quality education and faculty. Standardized tests and PSSA scores reflect just how well this district prepares the students for the future. Although, along with pushing students to achieve their best, local administrators are coming together to push out the drug problem that has now infected these local High Schools.

The batch of heroin called “Bad News” has definitely lived up to its name, spreading bad news to many families and teens. It is no surprise that heroin overdoses have doubled in the Bucks County area, since 2012. According to authorities six overdoses have occurred within March 2014, two of which were fatal. Marsegila who spoke in front of the Chamber of Commerce has said local heroin cases have risen to “epidemic levels.” Officials say heroin has grown popular because it is a cheaper alternative to expensive prescription narcotics. The brand stamped “bad news” seems to also be laced with another drug called fentanyl. This brand of heroin has been linked to multiple deaths in the area.

The principle of Central Bucks High School East, Abram Lucabaugh, has taken this matter into his own hands. He talks openly about the problems the school faced last year after numerous students were referred to treatment facilities for heroin use. He does not take the matter lightly and feels it is only inevitable that if the community is facing drug issues then it is only a matter of time it becomes a problem in the schools. He mentioned how many people don’t want to face the reality and the community and parents need to come to the realization it can happen to anybody. He believes the public should work together to keep students safe and parents should be more aware of the issues.

Abe Lucabaugh proceeds to talk about the parent of a former heroin user. Getting her help was the first thing on their list and the day she got to walk on graduation was a day many teachers, family members, and that girl were grateful for. The father proudly hugged one of the four principles at Central Bucks East and thanked him for saving his daughters life.

Many people in the Bucks County area are unaware to the fact that heroin has

crept into the schools and the community. The Bucks County Drug and Alcohol Administration shows that 742 uninsured heroin addicts entered rehab in 2012, which is a 58 percent increase since 2009. This proves that this is becoming an issue that needs to be addressed. Kevin O'Donnell who is vice president of Fulton Bank says, "It didn't surprise me, I see it in the neighborhoods, its visible in the kids in Central Bucks and Bensalem" (BucksCountyCourierTimes). Heroin has now replaced alcohol as the leading drug.

Many programs are being implemented in the schools and in the community of Bucks County. District Attorney David Heckler spoke about a new Tip-line that is up and coming to help police track down local drug dealers in the area. He also encourages families to get rid of old medicine and prescriptions because many users start out on prescription medicine. The schools are also setting up programs to help students become aware of the issues and to seek the help they need. Also parents are now being informed so that they can keep a watchful eye in the community.

The concern of this heroin outbreak is high. The district attorney has spoken out about this as well as locals, teens, and the principle of one of the nearby High Schools. They are trying to fight this battle. What will this do to the future generations? Will the problem ever go away? Those are key questions that have yet to be answered. During a district meeting Assistant DA Weintraub states, "It is time to stop being passive and start being aggressive in the fight to end this heroin epidemic in Bucks County"(BucksCounty.org).

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