Hailey and Will

Reporters- Physical Health

Physical Health Article

D-Term (named in honor of Linda Douglass) is the couple of days before winter break in which 8th grade students volunteer and do community service according to their group. Our group was physical health.

These are a couple of the issues we encountered during our research:

AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is a disease caused by HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) from infected blood contact or unprotected sexual engagement. It wasn’t first identified until the early 1980’s, giving the virus plenty of time to spread. Today it is estimated that 3.3 million people have been affected by the AIDS pandemic. This life-threatening disease causes a weaker immune system when the HIV cells attach and destroy white blood cells, causing the reproduction of more HIV in the body.

Teen pregnancy is another big problem. Teens have sex (illegally, for ones under 17) and the result is a child. Governments don’t want to have to deal with that. Thirty percent of pregnancies end in abortion. Becoming pregnant at a young age causes many legal issues such as marriage, child custody, and child support. A rising question is whether pregnant teens should have a pregnancy leave.

Weight management is yet another huge problem in America, with over 64% of all adults being overweight or obese. Obesity rates have tripled in the last 30 years. A child that is overweight has a 70% chance of staying overweight in adulthood. That 70% chance increases to 80% if the child’s parents are also obese. Texas has a 27% obesity rate which has steadily grown over the course of several years. Sixteen percent of all toddlers are obese in the United States. Weight Management help is available at dietary clinics, with doctors and trainers.

Drug addiction is the habit of becoming dependent on drugs. Two point seven million people in the United States are addicted to drugs. Maintaining a supply, regularly taking, going to risky extents to obtain it and not being able to stop taking a drug are signs that a person is addicted to a drug. All of these can get a person arrested. Some selective drugs can kill a person the first time they use them. Drugs can be taken by swallowing a pill, sucking on it, injecting the drug, or smoking it. The most popular types of drugs are Marijuana/Weed (which is a gateway drug\*) and Cocaine. Some symptoms of regular drug users are heightened senses, poor memory, blood-shot eyes, and difficulty coordinating and concentrating.

\*A gateway drug is a drug that leads you to more powerful drugs

**Organizations to deal with theses issues:**

* ASA (AIDS Services of Austin)
* ALG (Austin Life Guard)
* Texas Weight Austin
* AA (Alcoholics Anonymous)

**Austin Humane Society-Our Experience**

 Our D-term group was doing Physical Health and one thing that is very important in that topic is the physical health of animals. We went to volunteer at the Austin Humane Society, we got a tour of the facility, where they house dogs and cats and have a clinic. After the tour, we were asked to make dog treats with treats in bone form, kibble, and lots of peanut butter. Next, we made pretend holiday cards from the dogs that pleaded to their holiday patrons about how they wanted a home for the holidays. Afterwards, we socialized with the dogs and cats and learned about their schedules and their needs. After an afternoon of volunteering, we unfortunately had to head out.