

# Morning News

## Blackfoot, Idaho

### Idaho Meth Project Visits Blackfoot High School

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By: Leslie Mielke

BLACKFOOT — Blackfoot High School student Brittany Haddon didn't need to hear the information at an Idaho Meth Project assembly on Friday afternoon.

"My brother was a meth addict," said Haddon, "so it is a touchy, touchy subject."

"I could never ever use meth," she said. "My brother was on meth for 4 1/2 to 5 years; he was in and out of jail for six years," Haddon said. "Every two months or so he would go back to meth.

"He quit when he saw how much it was hurting our family," she said.

"He was in drug rehab for three years, then had to move out of state to be rid of it," Haddon said. "He's doing a lot better now."

Kristin Seamons has a friend who has battled alcohol and meth use.

"She's doing better now," Seamons said.

About 600 other students got plenty of information about one of the most addictive drugs available.

Laura Godfrey, Tia Bloom and Cassidy Wasden, a second-year pharmacy student at Idaho State University, used a video presentation to explain meth, its make-up and effects. Their presentation also featured the testimonies of former meth users

Meth is a manmade stimulant that is extremely addictive. Slang names used for methamphetamine include meth, speed, chalk, white cross, fire, tweak, crank, crystal, croak, crypto, glass and ice.

Meth effects the brain, causing addiction. In an addiction, the brain compels a person to do something despite harmful consequences. After using meth, the areas of decision-making, memory and motor function are impaired.

If a person is addicted to meth, the decision to continue taking it becomes involuntary.

Addicts will continue to experience the long-term effects of the drug unless they are cured of the addiction.

Addiction also increases the risk of getting diseases associated with drug use: HIV, hepatitis C and sexually transmitted diseases.

It all comes down to the changes in the judgment, decision-making and behavior control parts of the brain.

"Three years after quitting meth, a person's brain cells are still damaged," said one of the presenters.

Statistically speaking:

- Idaho ranks fourth in the nation per capita for meth use.
- Idaho ranks seventh in the nation for high school students to become lifetime meth users.
- For Idaho inmates, 52 percent attribute their sentence to meth use.
- 77 percent of teens started using meth at 15 or younger.
- Nearly 1/4 of teens believe that meth will make them happy, lose weight and give them increased energy.
- Idaho spends about \$500,000 per month to treat patients on meth.

The meth project is affecting the numbers.

- 80 percent of students say the meth ads have made them less likely to try or use meth.
- 78 percent understand why they can't just "try it once."
- 76 percent are more aware of the risk of meth use.

One former meth addict said, "Meth destroys life every way"

The aim is to get popular students using meth because they're are seen as cool; people will follow them.

"Meth smells like cat piss," one person said.

To get out of meth addiction, take to someone, like friends, a parent, teacher, counselor and/or check the Internet.

Kiegan Brewer said of what he learned, "I didn't realize how addictive it is; Drano is in it."

"Meth is really bad and that you should not even try it once," said Hannah Elkins.