



## LPOHS students marching against meth

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**SANDPOINT – Like many Rocky Mountain states, Idaho’s methamphetamine statistics are staggering, but students at one local school are hoping to fight back against meth by shining a light on the scourge.**

Now in its fourth year, the March Against Meth is a project organized and championed by students at Lake Pend Oreille High school. Today’s events, which include a 10:30 a.m. gathering at Community Hall and a 12:30 p.m. march across the Long Bridge, are meant to focus community attention on the abhorrent affects of meth use.

Despite the best efforts of community activists and concerned students, Idaho is still among the worst in the nation in terms of meth use. According to the Idaho Meth Project, the state ranks fourth in the country for meth use by 12-17 year olds and 18-25 year olds.

With those statistics in mind, LPO students have spent months raising money and awareness in preparation for the march.

Jeremiah Adams, a sophomore at LPO, raised more than \$1,100 to support the march and the Idaho Meth Project. Over the course of a month, Adams devoted himself to his fundraising campaign, doggedly riding his bike from one business to the next, asking anyone he could find for whatever money they could spare.

“Some people slammed the door in my face and said, ‘No, we can’t help you,’” Adams said.

Despite the reluctance of some in the community, business owners were more often than not willing to pitch in to help make meth use a thing of the past.

Adams said he was compelled to help with the project after hearing about the severity of Bonner County’s meth problem.

“It’s a problem with a lot of people in this town and it’s not getting around enough that there’s a problem with meth,” he said.

During his three years at LPO’s helm, principal Rick Dalessio has seen a positive change in the way his students view meth, but he said more needs to be done to truly erase the problem.

“The whole community has a lot of work to do. It’s still a huge problem,” he said. “The court still has a drug court on Tuesday nights, and it’s almost exclusively for meth abuse, so it’s still there.”

Dalessio said many LPO students have seen the horrors of meth up close – through friends, family members or personal addiction –which gives them unique insight into the problem.

“They’ve lived that nightmare – some of them have – and they know what it’s like,” he said. “And anything they can do to help people get passed that is their biggest motivator.”