

Students stand for a drug-free lifestyle

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By Erik Martin, Daily Advocate



Photo courtesy of Erik Martin, The Daily

Advocate

On April 17, 2017, Darke County student members of We Are The Majority walk down South Broadway in Greenville as part of the Majority Awareness Walk. The group's message is that the majority of school-age children in the community do not abuse drugs or alcohol. The Coalition for a Healthy Darke County was a sponsor of the event.

GREENVILLE — Students from across Darke County gathered Monday in Greenville to share a simple message to the community — “We are drug free!”

The “We Are The Majority” group, composed of seventh grade students to high school seniors, marched down South Broadway, from the Annie Oakley statue to the city municipal building, carrying signs and chanting their anti-drug message. An estimated 200 students, teachers and parents participated.

The event was organized by student leaders of the We Are The Majority group.

“We’re so very proud of our youth,” said Sharon Deschambeau, president of The Coalition for a Healthy Darke County and the Darke County Chamber of Commerce. “We want to make sure the county knows how important their voices are. They’re our future leaders, our future employees, and we want to emphasize the majority of kids do not abuse substances.”

Molly Hunt, 17, and a senior at Greenville High School, was one of the student coordinators of the event.

“We go to a state rally every year, and I see the impact it makes on those teens, and I wanted to see something happen in Darke County,” she said. “Because it has a reputation for being a place full of

drugs, But it's not, because if you look around and see all these people here supporting us, it's really warms my heart to see so many people who are against drugs and alcohol use in our county."

Greenville Mayor Steve Willman, who read a proclamation declaring the week of April 16 to 22 We Are The Majority Awareness Week in Greenville, was pleased by the enthusiasm of the participants.

"It's such a neat thing and hopefully this will set the stage for a continued event here," he said.

Arcanum Superintendent John Stephens said his school bused in 15 students to participate and was very excited about the turnout.

"We felt like this was important," he said.

"Schools are a vital piece to drug problem in our state and our county. It needs to start with us, as it does with the homes as well. We need to make our students aware before it becomes a problem, before they get older and have to make tough choices."

Kelly Harrison, from Recovery and Wellness of Midwest Ohio, said she was "elated" by the turnout.

"It's very inspiring to see the youth of our community come together to make a difference and support our kids who are drug and alcohol free," she said. "I can't wait to see what's in store for our community and what the kids will be up to next."

The march was sponsored and aided by a number of organizations, including the City of Greenville, Wayne HealthCare Foundation, the Coalition for a Healthy

Darke County, the Tri-County Board of Recovery and Wellness of Midwest Ohio, Continental Carbonic, and Whirlpool.



Both students and adults participated in Monday's We Are The Majority march. Shown are student leaders with Greenville Mayor Steve Willman (back row, right), Recovery's Jerri Lynn Stanley (back row, center), Chamber President Sharon Deschambeau (second row, second from right), and Recovery's Kelly Harrison (second row, center).