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Somerset

# Somerset students taught to avoid drugs, tobacco and alcohol

By VICKI ROCK vickir@dailyamerican.com Sep 14, 2016 0



Staff photo by Vicki Rock: Craig Zettle, vice president of Botvin LifeSkills Training of White Plains, New York, talks to sixth-graders at Somerset Area Junior High School on Wednesday.

Craig Zettle, vice president of Botvin LifeSkills Training of White Plains, New York, told sixth-graders at Somerset Area Junior High School Wednesday that decision-making, peer pressure and advertising all work together.

"My challenge to you is to pay attention to everything around you," he said to a class taught by Ashley Oglevee and Bill Correll. "When you go home tonight, pick an ad and find one thing that they are trying to convince you. Advertising for alcohol and tobacco will try to convince you that it is a good idea to try that. Find the techniques that they use and become smarter when people try to convince you of something."

Botvin LifeSkills Training is a substance abuse prevention program designed to reduce the risks of alcohol, tobacco, drugs and violence by targeting social and psychological factors that promote the initiation of substance use and other risky behaviors. It was developed by Dr. Gilbert J. Botvin.

Oglevee asked students if any of them had ever seen cigarette advertising. Students have watched anti-smoking advertising, but not cigarette advertising, which was banned in 1971.

"Will any of the adults here fall for peer pressure?" he asked his students. "No. Advertisers are targeting you."

He explained different types of advertising, such as that done by celebrities, and asked students for examples of each kind.

Ronna Yablonski, the new executive director of the Cambria County Drug Coalition and former prevention coordinator at Twin Lakes Center in Somerset, said Botvin is the nation's leading drug and alcohol prevention program. Twin Lakes assists in implementing the program into the school's curriculum, with funding from the United Way, the University of Colorado and Somerset County Drug-Free Communities.

"These organizations provide funding for the program because they are concerned about your future and your well-being," she said. "These organizations are investing money to bring this nationwide program to you."

