

Issues that Teens are Face Today

Presented to the Iredell County Board of Commissioners

On August 2, 2016

Introduction: Let me begin by saying, "Thank You" for the opportunity to stand before you to speak this evening. It is certainly an honor and I am truly thankful and blessed to have the opportunity to serve as your Iredell County Youth Delegate to attend the upcoming Youth Voice 2016 Summit of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners' Conference. Again, my name is Emily Holland and I am a rising sophomore at North Iredell High. My parents are Doug and Renee Holland and we live in Olin. My family owns and operates a dairy in northern Iredell County. I am very active in my church, community, school, and 4-H. I would also like to comment that I am what I consider to be, just your average teenager. So, with that said, let me begin with informing you all about some of the issues that I see teens are facing today. But first, let me ask you, "What do you think the most common problem among teens is today? Is it stress, bullying, peer-pressure, child abuse? Well, take your pick because each of these issues are all linked to one of most common problems that you hear about almost on a daily basis. That being street drug, prescription drug or substance abuse. It happens in schools everywhere, and yes even right here in Iredell County. I've seen first-hand, tobacco being passed around to teenagers in a classroom. I've witnessed students giving pills to other students. In addition, I've also witnessed teens being caught and placed in handcuffs or be sent to alternative schools. Statistics show that 28.1% of teens first use drugs before they reach the age of 15. So, the question is,

where do they get these drugs? Most teens report from friends or relatives. Teens tend to turn to drugs at an early age as they feel they are being neglected or have a fear of rejection. They are easily persuaded by peers along with media outlets saying, "it's okay" ; "it's cool" ; "it's popular" ; and lastly- the most commonly used term "everyone's doing it". Teens die every day from overdose of drugs. So, the big question is, "What can County Commissioners and our community do to help my generation of teens who are facing these issues? Right now, we have health programs to educate and teach teens about drug abuse and the effects, but for the most part, teens view this as just another boring class that they are being required to take or perhaps they view it as a teacher just telling them what they can and can't do. If this is indeed the perception of the student, as a teen, we see this as a challenge and may actually go against what we are being told(a bit rebellious) because we at this age think we know it all. But the truth is, we don't! Of course, there are some that would never admit this.

So, I have been in much thought trying to develop a solution to this ever-growing problem in our community. Since it appears that most teens start taking drugs due to neglect from family, fear of rejection from friends or some other issue, I think it would be a good idea to get involved or interact with this group of young teens to show them that someone cares, not just anyone, but our elected officials such as yourself- our Board of County Commissioners. I would like to propose that perhaps you take some time out of your busy schedules and coordinate a time with the middle and high

schools to come and speak to students. Perhaps you could serve as a mentor, engage by participating in an educational activity or simply just listen to the needs of these students. Also, if we could perhaps work together to get this group of teens involved in community or school sponsored events such as 4-H or FFA (as I am a huge advocate of agriculture) they could work with other adults and learn skills that not only teach technical aspects but also, life lessons. For example, statistics show that if teens have an animal or something in their life to place focus on, then they are more likely to stay out of trouble. They will also perform better in school and begin to see an overall improvement in their grades.

So, in closing I would first like to ask if anyone has any questions. I would also like to take this time to thank each of you for your service to the citizens of Iredell County and for all that you do. I sincerely hope that you will take into consideration the message that I have spoken to you about this evening and ponder on ways that we can make a difference in the lives of these teens who are struggling with some of these issues I have addressed. Lastly, if we work together, we can make a difference in this community and especially in the lives of these teenagers who so desperately are in need of help. Thank you again for your time and I look forward to attending the upcoming 2016 NCACC Youth Voice Summit as your Iredell County Youth Delegate.

Respectfully,

Emily Holland

Iredell County 4-H Youth Delegate 2016

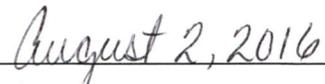


On behalf of Iredell County 4-H, Emily Holland will be serving as the county's Youth Delegate at the NCACC Annual Conference on August 12-13, 2016. As a requirement for her attendance and participation of being selected, she has been asked to develop a presentation to present to the Board of Commissioners which is scheduled during the August 2, 2016 Iredell County Board of Commissioners Meeting. In addition to completion of this requirement, the youth delegate must submit a photo, video, or written report of comments to include the signature of the Chair of the Board of Commissioners as proof that this requirement has been fulfilled.

This letter acknowledges that Emily Holland has completed this presentation before the Iredell County Board of Commissioners on this the 2nd day of August, 2016.



Chair, Iredell County Board of Commissioners



Date

Instructions for Youth:

Electronic submissions are preferred; you may submit these reports via NCSU Google file sharing:

<https://drive.google.com/a/ncsu.edu/folderview?id=0BwDI018BvEEencUIxR09NODA4a1E&usp=sharing>.

Create a county folder and upload your video, report file, digital scrapbook, PowerPoint presentation, etc. You can also submit a hard copy via U.S. mail to: Sarah Kotzian, NCSU Box 7655, Raleigh, NC 27695.

