

Ira High School to host SAVE summit Friday

Ira High School will host the West Texas SAVE (Students Against Violence Everywhere) summit Friday.

One Day will be playing as students begin arriving and checking in at 8 a.m.

Supt. Jay Waller and Dale Jones, principal, will give the introduction at 9 a.m. Speakers include Katrina Reynolds, sponsor of Ira's SAVE chapter, and Carleen Wray of the national SAVE organization.

Activities will include ice breakers that will give attending students the opportunity to get to know each other. They will learn what SAVE is, how they can make a difference and how to form their own chapter. More activities and speakers will follow the lunch break.

During group sessions, Ira SAVE members will break into six groups and discuss leadership, awareness, communication, empowerment and engagement.

James Phagan (J.P.) Wilson, Ira senior and national SAVE

youth advisory board secretary, traveled to Washington, D.C., last week to participate in a two-day meeting on youth violence prevention with U.S. government agencies and national organizations.

The meeting, convened by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and its partners, gave local youth leaders an opportunity to share their insights for effectively engaging other youth around this issue.

Youth violence is a public health crisis, according to CDC officials. Recent CDC statistics show 20 percent of high school students report being bullied at school and more than 30 percent report having been in a physical fight.

Almost 620,000 young people between the ages of 10 and 24 were treated in emergency departments for injuries sustained from violence in 2009.

Homicide is the second leading cause of death among young people, with an average of 16 youth murdered every day.

"Youth violence is a problem

that can negatively affect kids at any age in any community," Wilson said. "Everyone has a responsibility to help prevent youth violence and the factors that contribute to it and youth can play a key role in effectively reaching out to and educating our peers. We are very excited to have been invited to this important meeting to share our experiences and ideas."

The gathering in Washington was the first meeting of the CDC's Striving to Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere partnership network.

U.S. Surgeon General Regina Benjamin addressed attendees with videotaped remarks, and the Commissioner of the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Bryan Samuels, also spoke.

More than 40 national and regional organizations, as well as representatives of the U.S. Departments of Justice, Education, and Housing and Urban Development, participated in the meeting.

"Preventing youth violence

before it starts requires a unified effort among organizations from multiple disciplines. Each of us has a unique role to play in our communities to keep children safe so that they can live to their full potential," Wray said.

"The direct involvement of youth who can promote and participate in evidence-based programs that work is especially critical. Youth leaders can be

very effective ambassadors for violence prevention in their communities."

Youth leaders attending the meeting, including those from SAVE, led the session "Learning and Gaining from Youth Involvement" and work-group discussions on engaging youth and providing leadership opportunities to young people to support the health and safety of commu-

nities.

SAVE started at West Charlotte High School in Charlotte, N.C. in 1989 following the death of a student who was trying to break up a fight at an off-campus party.

Students met first to console each other, then as an organization to promote violence prevention and to work together to prevent future incidents from occurring.

SAVE provides education about the effects and consequences of violence and helps provide safe activities for students, parents and communities.

For more information on SAVE or starting a chapter, visit www.nationalsave.org, or call (866) 343-SAVE to receive free start-up materials and guidance.