

Published: March 13, 2009

Crystal Darkness Phase II begins  
Justin Lofton Staff Writer

Ada —

Pontotoc County, the third largest methamphetamine treatment county in the state of Oklahoma, began Phase II of Crystal Darkness Thursday at Pontotoc Technology Center. From 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. community leaders and other interested parties worked together to come up with an action plan specific to Pontotoc County to curb meth abuse.

“Phase II is concerned citizens coming together and forming an action plan about how to address the problem,” Phase II facilitator Heather Ariyeh said.

“The goal is to educate the community that we do have a problem,” said Latricia Bryant, executive director of Ada’s United Way. “We have kids who are as young as 13 trying it and they can try it one time and they’re hooked.”

Of Pontotoc County’s meth users, 0.9 percent began when they were under the age of 11 and 10.8 percent began between the ages of 11 and 13, according to an Oklahoma Methamphetamine Prevention Initiative handbook.

“How do we change what’s happening?” Bryant said. Thursday, many of Ada’s residents addressed this question, along with Ariyeh, through the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.

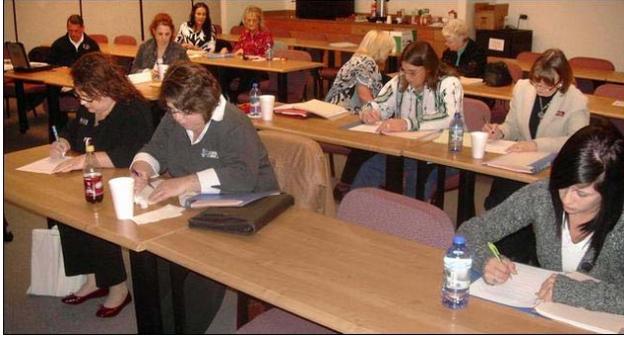
“My hopes are that everyone in this community will become aware that this is a problem,” Bryant said.

Another showing of the documentary “Crystal Darkness” will take place at Ada Cougar Activity Center March 25 at 6 p.m. Following the second showing of the documentary, a community forum will take place where the Phase II action plan will be presented. The first showing of Crystal Darkness drew around 850 people, Bryant said.

At the first meeting of Phase II in Pontotoc County, the group determined the needs of the proposed action plan. The plan’s structure includes keeping momentum going, collaborating, coming up with a “Pontotoc-specific” plan, connecting the situation with the proper strategy, and forming a plan that includes all ages. Sustainability is an issue at the center of the group’s concerns. The plan will include a problem statement and will identify risk factors.

The next meeting will be held at 10:30 a.m. April 7 at the Department of Human Services conference room, which is directly across from the DHS office, on Beverly Street near the St. Joseph Church. For more information, call Latricia Bryant at (580) 332-2313 (ext. 223).

Those who attended the meeting included Ada Mayor Barbara Young and District Judge Tom Landrith as well as representatives for Ada Regional United Way, Vision Bank, Area Prevention Resource Center, Turning Point, Ada Area Community Emergency Services, Ada Area Chemical Dependency Center, Oklahoma Department of Mental Health Services, Chickasaw White Bison Recovery Group, Eagle’s Nest Sober Living, Ada City Schools, Oklahoma Families First, the Pontotoc County Health Department, Girl Scouts of Eastern Oklahoma, and the Pontotoc Technology Center.



Community leaders from Pontotoc County met Thursday to create an action plan specific to Pontotoc County to curb meth abuse. Justin Lofton/The Ada Evening News

