

100
Youth Voices
Conference
April 4, 2006

SPONSORED BY:
THE CITY OF RIDGECREST
AND
THE YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

ACTION PLAN

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Action Plan Summary

On April 4, 2006 Dan Clark facilitated the fourth 100 Youth Voices Conference. The conference was called to specifically identify both the resources and the areas of need relating to the problem with drugs in our community. 164 youth arrived, prepared to discuss the issue and provide their thoughts and ideas to develop strategies to counter the problem.

The students were divided into groups, each with an adult facilitator. Each group had representation from the following: a middle or Charter school, Burroughs, Mesquite and Cerro Coso. Throughout the conference discussion was held in both small group, and full group sessions. Each student was given the opportunity to participate in the process and development of the Action Plan. The data and results come directly from their words, ideas and suggestions, which is based on the need as they view it in our community. This Action Plan is a comprehensive perspective of those results.

Our youth have made a sincere effort to become an active voice in countering the local drug problem in their schools and in the community. It is with maturity and seriousness that they approach this topic, to bring effective solutions to the very real problems affecting their lives. We, as adults, have been given an opportunity to examine the problem and make changes to their educational environment. These changes will bring about a positive effect for the course of their lives.

For the purposes of providing a greater understanding of the conference, on each page of this Action plan is a footnote featuring a variety of quotes overheard at the Conference. These quotes will remain anonymous, but will hopefully enhance the vision sought by the 100 Youth Voices Conference 2006.

Conference Inspiration

The 100 Voices Conference series was created by Vice-Mayor Dan Clark. Previous conferences have included the 100 Youth Voices Conference of 1996, 1997, 2000, the 100 Senior Voices Conference of 2002 and the 100 Women's Voices Conference of 2004. A respected leader and devoted teacher in our community, Dan Clark has developed this Conference series believing that community involvement equals community action. By assessing and evaluating the community concerns, only then can we, as a community, come together and plan for the future.

Thank - you Mr. Clark for your dedication to Ridgecrest. You are an inspiration.

"Most adults just don't get how bad the problem is for us."

The Conference Vision

**TO CREATE A POSITIVE CLIMATE FOR HONEST
DIALOGUE, UNIFYING OUR VOICE INTO AN
ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR CHANGE**

The Conference Purpose

**TO UNIFY YOUR VOICE, ASKING THE
QUESTION, WHAT DO WE AS COMMUNITY
LEADERS NEED TO DO TO HELP ADDRESS THE
CURRENT DRUG PROBLEM**

The 100 Youth Voices Conference Agenda

- 8:00 - 8:20 Introductions
- 8:20 – 8:30 Goals and Objectives of Conference
- Assess Kern County Statistics vs. California and Evaluate Scope of problem in Ridgecrest
 - Assess Current Community Programs
 - Re-evaluate and develop a Needs Assessment
 - Formulate Suggestions and Strategies
- 8:30 – 9:45 Assess Kern County Statistics vs. California and Evaluate Scope of problem in Ridgecrest
1. List Statistics on Overhead and discuss in small group
 2. Determine scope of problem in Ridgecrest in full group
 3. Discuss results
- 9:45 -10:00 Break
- 10:00 – 10:50 Assess Current Community Programs
1. Brainstorm present programs and services available to youth and discuss in small group
 2. List programs and services on Board in full group
 3. Discuss results
- 10:50 – 12:00 Re-evaluate and develop a Needs Assessment
1. Re-evaluate data to determine community trends and discuss in small group
 2. Brainstorm solutions in full group
 3. Prioritize results
- 12:00 – 1:00 Lunch / Open discussion
- 1:00 – 2:00 Formulate Suggestions and Strategies
1. Brainstorm suggestions and strategies in full group
 2. Prioritize strategies

"I don't have anyone to help me with problems. I handle them myself."

The 100 Youth Voices Conference

I. Assess Kern County Statistics vs. California and Evaluate Scope of problem in Ridgecrest

1. STATISTICS REVIEWED(1)

- A.** Juvenile (ages 10-17) arrest rate comparison, per 1000, for alcohol and drug offenses between County of Kern and California for year 2001 is 11.8 to 8.5.
- B.** There were just over 3800 total calls for service in 2001 and nearly 4400 calls for service in 2005 (Ridgecrest Police Dept. 2006). As quoted by Sergeants Paul Wheeler and Jessie Jones, "85% of all calls for service are drug related."
- C.** There were less than 225 crime counts of drug infractions in 2001 and it is expected to be near 700 by the end of 2006, based on 1st quarter results (RPD 2006).
- D.** In 2001 there were less than 100 counts of juvenile alcohol arrests; it is expected to reach 250 in 2006, based on current year data. (RPD 2006).(2)
- E.** In 2003-2004 School year, there were 15 expulsions. In the 2005-2006, it is expected to be at 50, based on 1st Quarter expulsions (Sierra Sands Unified School District 2006).

Questions posed to students in small group:

- 1. Do you agree with the statistics presented? (Discussion only)
- 2. Are you aware of the severity of the problem? (Discussion only)
- 3. At what age did you become aware of or observed drugs or alcohol?
- 4. The Problem with drugs in Ridgecrest is...?

¹ All statistics used in this conference are provided in the Appendix section of this document

² According to Police Chief Michael Avery, data was compiled using a different method in 2001. This accounts for the significant variance in reported statistics between years 2001 and 2002

2. FULL GROUP DISCUSSION RESULTS

Total students reporting: 164 for the age at which they became of aware or observed drugs or alcohol

Number / % of 164

<u>57 / 34.8%</u>	Reported they were under the age of 10
<u>64 / 39%</u>	Reported they were between the ages of 11 and 14
<u>25 / 15.2%</u>	Reported they were between the ages of 15 and 19
<u>18 / 11%</u>	Reported they were over the age of 19

Conclusion of results reported: By the age of 15, nearly 3/4th of our youth had been exposed to drugs or alcohol.

3. Scope of the Problem Discussion

In response to the above results, the following was reported

- a. The perception is the problem is a lot worse
- b. The statistics are too difficult to pinpoint and "box", seems to vague
- c. The County statistics seems to be too low
- d. The problem is getting worse
- e. Surprise that anyone age 19 or older has not been exposed to drugs or alcohol.
- f. Kids are exposed to it at younger age
- g. Kids can have positive exposure as well (DARE program, etc.) so that may account for higher stats at earlier age
- h. Peer pressure is a huge driver for the 11-15 bracket
- i. There's nothing else to do
- j. Easy access
- k. Each year, more youth want to try drugs/alcohol
- l. It is troubling that the statistics are as accurate as reported

"If my friends started drinking or using drugs I would anything I could to help them stop."

4. FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION TO RESULTS

The Problem with drugs in Ridgecrest is...

Reported answers, verbatim:

- a. Drugs are way too available
 - b. Drugs, alcohol, screws up your life
 - c. Peer pressure
 - d. Negative parental influences
 - e. Overpopulation
 - f. No discipline
 - g. Few consequences
 - h. Influx of growth bring new negative experiences for youth
 - i. Boredom, little else to do
 - j. Lack of acknowledgement and accountability
 - k. Limited involvement with youth,
 - l. No one does anything about it
 - m. Too socially acceptable
 - n. There is a need to escape from problems (at home, school friends, etc.)
-

II. Assess Current Community Programs

1. Brainstorm Present Programs and Services Available to Youth

Questions posed to students:

1. To whom would you turn for help if you had a problem with drugs?

2. List Programs and Services

The following is the complete list of reported answers:

- a. Alcoholics Anonymous / Narcotics Anonymous / Al-Anon, etc.
- b. Therapist
- c. Friend
- d. Parent
- e. Coach
- f. Teacher
- g. Boys & Girls Club staff
- h. Women's Shelter
- i. Clergy
- j. Significant Other (girl/boy friend)
- k. Other Trusted Adult
- l. Police
- m. Doctor
- n. Counselor, school / church
- o. Youth group
- p. Other family (siblings, grandparents, etc.)
- q. Neighbor
- r. College Community Services
- s. Homeless
- t. God, prayer, deceased relatives

There was both small and large group discussion about these results.

3. Develop Problem / needs Statement

Based on the scope of the problem and the results of the community assessment, the following is the 100 Youth Voices Conference Problem Statement:

The 100 Youth Voices Conference Problem Statement

The Problem with Drugs in Ridgecrest is that drugs are too readily available, too socially acceptable; there is a distinct lack of trust, acknowledgement and accountability within the local community; there is limited involvement, limited action and few consequences to the problem.

III. Re-evaluate and develop a Needs Assessment

1. RE-EVALUATE DATA TO DETERMINE COMMUNITY TRENDS

Questions posed to students:

1. Based on the above data and the needs statement Is the problem growing, shrinking, or remaining the same?
2. Begin to list solutions to the problem, in small group

2. BRAINSTORM SOLUTIONS

THE FOLLOWING IS A COMPLETE LIST, WITH TABULATED RESULTS, OF THE REPORTED SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEM WITH DRUGS IN RIDGECREST:

Each youth was given the opportunity to vote for three solutions.

Solution	Votes	% of Youth
A. In-home Program	5	1.5%
B. Parental-Aid Program	11	3.4%
C. Youth Rehab Center/ Youth Shelter / Youth Halfway House	43	13.5%
D. Youth Camps (Summer)	28	8.7%
E. DARE programs for Older Youth	6	1.9%
F. Support Groups for Teen	16	5%
G. More Awareness of community programs / advertisement	7	2.2%
H. Free After-school Programs (not sports)	40	12.5%
I. YMCA / Parks & Rec for Teens	16	5%
J. Business geared for teens, employment	23	7.2%
K. Older Teen night Club	36	11.3%
L. Confidential 24-Hour Hotline	56	17.7%
M. Drop-In Counseling / list of Counselors	6	1.9%
N. Transportation system for teens	7	2.2%
O. Mentor Program	8	2.5%
P. Community Speakers / Guests discussing drugs	4	1.3%
Q. Community responsiveness without criminal punishment	7	2.2%

3. PRIORITIZE SOLUTIONS

The Top 6 Reported Solutions are, in order of importance:

- 1. Confidential 24-Hour Hotline**
 - 2. Teen Rehab Center / Halfway House / Teen Shelter**
 - 3. Free After-School Programs (not sports)**
 - 4. Late night / weekends Older Teen Club (under 21 Club)**
 - 5. Youth / Teen Summer Camps**
 - 6. Businesses geared toward youth – employment**
-

IV. Formulate Suggestions and Strategies

FORMULATE STRATEGIES IN FULL-GROUP DISCUSSION TO THE TOP 6 SOLUTIONS

1. CONFIDENTIAL 24-HOUR HOTLINE

The following are the reported strategies, in order of importance. The voting was done via show of hands:

- a. Seek space in government building or existing agency partner
- b. Have certified staff qualified to provide counseling
- c. Operate using volunteer labor
- d. Offset costs and volunteer labor by having website available to educate limited volunteer pool, use message boards as “group therapy”
- e. Use website to educate public about countering drug problem
- f. Confidential
- g. Advertise hotline on radio, newspapers, flyers to schools, etc.
- h. Get sponsors to offset business costs
- i. Become 501 c 3 organization
- j. Partner with existing hotlines to include a drug component
- k. Be pager-drive, similar to on-call status
- l. Have fundraisers to offset costs

“It’s amazing how much kids will get involved when we include them.”

2. TEEN REHAB CENTER / HALFWAY HOUSE / TEEN SHELTER

The following are the reported strategies, in order of importance. The voting was done via show of hands:

- a. Write grants to raise funds for a building, staff
- b. Use Tax income (bond proposal, etc.)
- c. Certified staff and counselors
- d. Volunteer labor
- e. Seek involvement from City Council / County Gov't for building or land donation
- f. Seek guidance from medical community to create at medical facility
- g. Have fundraisers to offset costs
- h. Confidential
- i. Advertise hotline on radio, newspapers, flyers to schools, etc.
- j. Get sponsors to offset business costs
- k. Become 501 c 3 organization
- l. Involve local charities, churches to partner

3. FREE AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

The following are the reported strategies, in order of importance. The voting was done via show of hands:

- a. Write grants to raise funds for a building, staff
- b. Involve parents, teachers, all schools, to develop programs
- c. Work with Boys & Girls Club
- d. Help raise funds for existing programs
- e. Start letter-writing campaign to get a building
- f. Must be easy access for older youth without licenses
- g. Background check volunteers / staff
- h. Should be hobby, not sport, based (fine arts, crafts, etc)
- i. Donation-driven (in-kind and financial)

4. OLDER TEEN CLUB

The following are the reported strategies, in order of importance. The voting was done via show of hands:

- a. Educate public about what is needed (under 21 only Club open on weekends and later in the evening)
- b. Write grants for building / staff

-
- c. Should be run as a business, which would offset any costs, sell food, etc.
 - d. Seek assistance from Community Development Dept. to find a potential business owner
 - e. Youth-run employment
 - f. Partner with Boys & Girls Club
 - g. City run endeavor, have program at a city building, becomes self-supporting (operate under Parks & Recreation)
 - h. Staggering times for age groups (earlier curfews for younger teens)
 - i. Donation-driven
 - j. Get sponsors and have fundraisers
 - k. Involve teachers
 - l. Present needs to Council / School Board, request assistance
 - m. Model after other successful Clubs and programs
 - n. Involve Police and Youth-to Police Committee
 - o. Create personal incentive for youth action and involvement
 - p. Entrance fees / cover charges
 - q. A place for local high school bands to play
 - r. Develop this as a Sub-Committee for the Youth Advisory Council

5. YOUTH / TEEN SUMMER CAMPS / PARKS

The following are the reported strategies, in order of importance. The voting was done via show of hands:

- a. Work with Parks & Recreation to develop more parks and areas with teen interest (no jungle gyms, other things)
- b. BMX park
- c. Fee-driven
- d. Work with Boys & Girls Club

6. BUSINESSES GEARED TOWARD YOUTH AND THEIR EMPLOYMENT

The following are the reported strategies, in order of importance. The voting was done via show of hands:

- a. Work with and promote Youth employment Services (YES) located in Kerr McGee Center
 - b. Work with Community / Economic Development to find strategies to attract businesses to Ridgecrest, with teen interest.
 - c. Develop work mentor program in schools, with local businesses to develop skills
-

The 100 Youth Voices Conference Best Case Scenario

Best Case Scenario

The best case scenario for the 100 Youth Voices Conference is that the community will rally behind the vision of our youth to assist in the solutions to the local drug problem. Hopefully our community leaders, teachers, parents, citizens will realize the urgent need to act now rather than wait until the problem is out of control.

Based on this, the following is a table of action items designed to establish a framework for the future success for countering the drug problem

Plan Item:	Who can Help:	Time Frame:	Cost:
24-HOUR HOTLINE	YAC, WOMEN'S SHELTER		DEPENDS ON APPROACH
REHAB CENTER / HALFWAY HOUSE / TEEN SHELTER	HOSPITAL, CITY, COUNTY, WOMEN' SHELTER, YAC		SUBSTANTIAL
TEEN PROGRAMS AFTER-SCHOOL	BOYS & GIRLS CLUB, SSUSD, BUSINESS, TEACHERS, CITY		VARIED, DEPENDS ON APPROACH
TEEN NIGHT CLUB	COMM. DEV. DEPT. BUSINESSES, B&G CLUB, YAC, CITY		
CAMPS /PARKS	CITY PARKS DEPT., SSUSD		
BUSINESSES	COMM. DEV., BUSINESSES, CITY		

"It's not everyday we're asked our opinion on topics that directly affect us."

The 100 Youth Voices Conference Acknowledgement

The 100 Youth Voices Conference would like to thank the following individuals and organizations and businesses for their help in making this event a success:

Facilitators and Community Supporters

Dan Clark, Vice-Mayor

The Youth Advisory Council

The Pastoral Association

Chief Michael Avery, Ridgecrest Police

Aaron Miller, Ridgecrest Police Dept.

Rev. Eddie Thomas, Victory Baptist Church

May Wimbush, Kern County Sheriff's Dept.

Eric Duncan, Mesquite High School

Ernie Bell, Burroughs High School

Don Bean, Ridgecrest Charter School

Pat Slobotnik, Burroughs High School

Steve Dilley, Murray Middle School

Karen Harker, Ridgecrest Police Dept.

Kerri Graves, Monroe Middle School

Andrea Green, So. Sierra Boys & Girls Club

Christine Destry, So. Sierra Boys & Girls Club

Mr. Ron Carter, City Council

Jim Ponek, Ridgecrest Parks & Rec. Dept.

City of Ridgecrest, Quality of Life Committee

Cerro Coso Community College

Ridgecrest Police Dept.

Ridgecrest Parks & Recreation Dept.

Mr. Don Rosenberg, Cerro Coso

Sierra Sands Unified School District:

Jodi Rummer, Superintendent

Mike Scott, President, SSUSD School Board

Ingrid Larson, Mesquite High School

Dave Ostash, Monroe Middle School

Kristi Smith, Murray Middle School

Peggy Spraker, ROP Foods Instructor,

Mesquite High School

"Thank-you for listening to us. I am excited to see where this conference leads us"

The 100 Youth Voices
Conference Action Plan
Appendices

Facilitator's guide and responsibilities:

1. Sit a table with 6 -8 students, one college, at least one high school, middle school, and private school student.
Conduct introductions; appoint a person to write on butcher-block paper.
2. Select a spokesman from your table (positive one) who shares with the mic.
3. Lead discussions, asking pre-arranged questions, writing down suggestions on provided materials.
4. Reframing issues as blessings.
5. Keeping everyone as positive as possible.
6. Solicit input from everyone, every discussion.
7. Don't let anyone dominate the table.
8. Please remember to see the loving essence in each person.

AGENDA

8:00 – 8:20

Dan will conduct introductions.

Dan will share his conference intention, confidentially, purpose

8:20 – 8:30

Goals and Objectives

Displayed on overhead

- *Assess Kern County Statistics vs. California and Evaluate Scope of the Problem*
- *Assess Current Community Programs*
- *Re-Evaluate Data and Develop a Needs Assessment*
- *Formulate Suggestions and Strategies*

8:30 – 9:45 Assess Kern County Statistics vs. California and Evaluate Scope of the Problem

- 1) Students will review drug and alcohol statistics from California, Kern County, and Ridgecrest from overhead.
- 2) Students will explore "introduction/exposure timeframes"
- 3) List and discuss findings

1. Ask students if they agree with the statistics presented? Ask students if they knew the severity of the problem? 10 minutes

1. In pop-corn fashion, ask each student to share when he/she became aware of or observed drugs and or alcohol, and at what age. Please write down each and every observation on the butcher-block paper. 15 minutes

2. Have spokesman share list with Dan while Christine writes list on overhead. 15 minutes

3. Discuss list at each table. 5 minutes, and as a whole for 5 minutes defining the scope of the problem

9:45 – 10:00

Break

10:00 – 10:50 Assess Current Community Programs

- 1) **Brainstorm Present Programs and Services Available to Youth**
 - 2) **List Programs and Services on Board**
 - 3) **Discuss List**
- 1) **Ask students to brainstorm programs and services they could go to if they had a problem with drugs. Please write down each and every observation on the butcher-block paper. 15 minutes**
 - 2) **Have spokesman share list with Dan while Christine writes list on overhead. 20 minutes**
 - 3) **Discuss list at each table. 5 minutes, and as a whole for 10 minutes.**

10:50 – 12:00 Re-Evaluate Data and Develop a Needs Assessment

- 1) **Ask students to re-evaluate data to determine community trends**
 - 2) **Brainstorm Solutions**
 - 3) **Prioritize Solutions**
1. **Ask participants at each table to re-evaluate data and brainstorm whether or not the problem of drugs is growing, shrinking, or remaining the same. Write down all answers on the Butcher Block paper at each table. 10 minutes. Share as a whole. Christine will tabulate data. 10 minutes**
 2. **Review list generated at each table as a starting point, and discuss and brainstorm solutions 15 minutes. Write down each solution. Prioritize top 6 at each table. Three votes per participant. 10 min.**
 3. **Share each table's findings by having spokesman share information with the whole. Christine will list all solutions on butcher-block paper at front of room, and each student will vote, table by table for their top three by placing a dot next to top three. 25 minutes**

12:00 – 1:00 Lunch

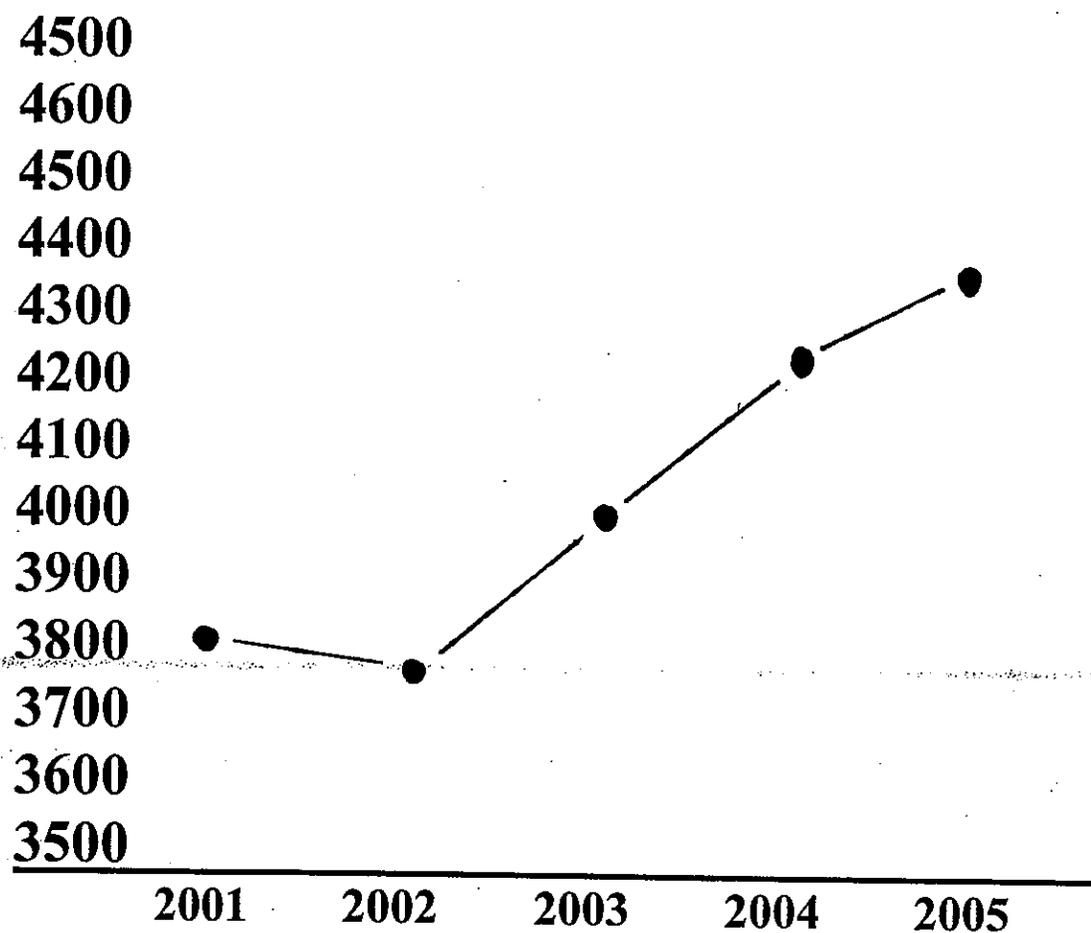
1:00 – 2:00 Formulate Suggestions and Strategies

1. **Re-examine findings focusing on top six**
 2. **Brainstorm solutions at table**
 3. **Post solutions as a group**
 4. **Prioritize solutions**
1. **Have Christine write to six prioritize needs on overhead and re-examine all needs. 5 minutes**
 2. **Have each table brainstorm solutions to identified needs. 20 minutes**
 3. **Share from each table the solutions and post on overhead. 20 minutes**
 4. **Prioritize solutions by a hand vote, two votes per participant. 10 minutes**
 - 5 **Discuss at each table their future vision for Ridgecrest. 5 minutes**

100 Voices

CALLS FOR SERVICE 2001 to 2005

Service Calls

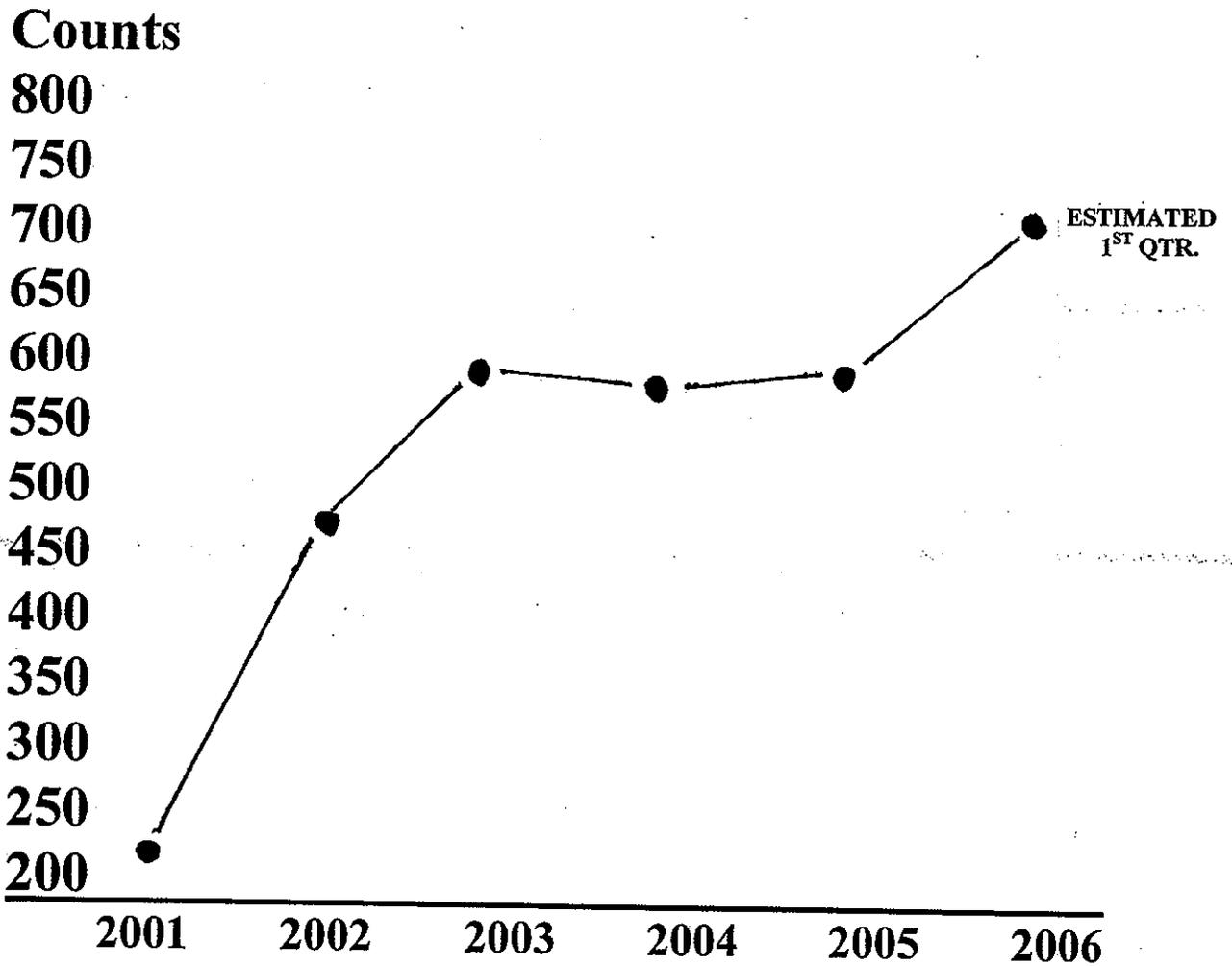


**Sergeant Paul Wheeler and Sergeant Jessie Jones
– “85% of all calls for service are drug related.”**

100 Voices

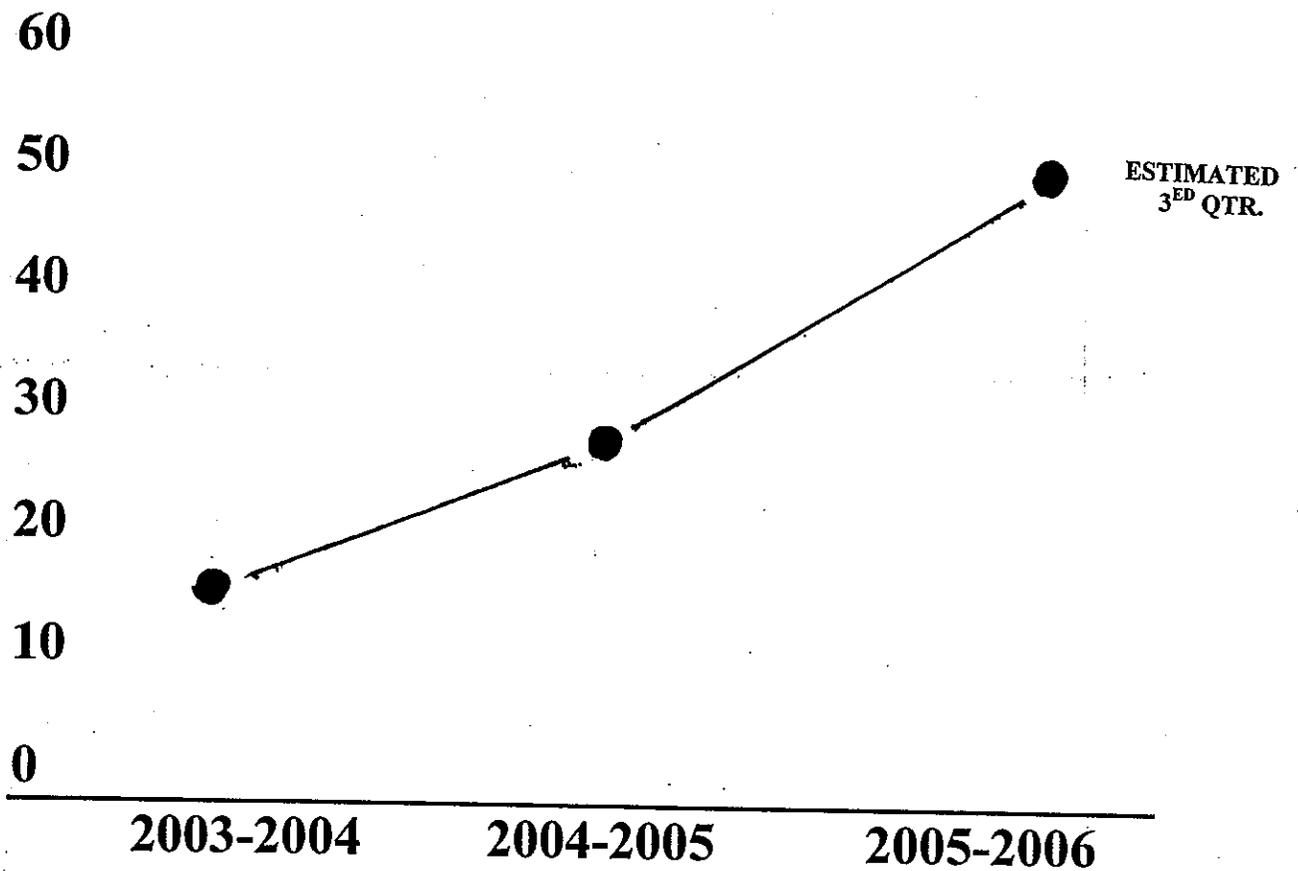
Crime Counts by Offense Code Drug Infractions

2001 to 2006



100 Voices Youth Conference

Expulsions



100 Voices

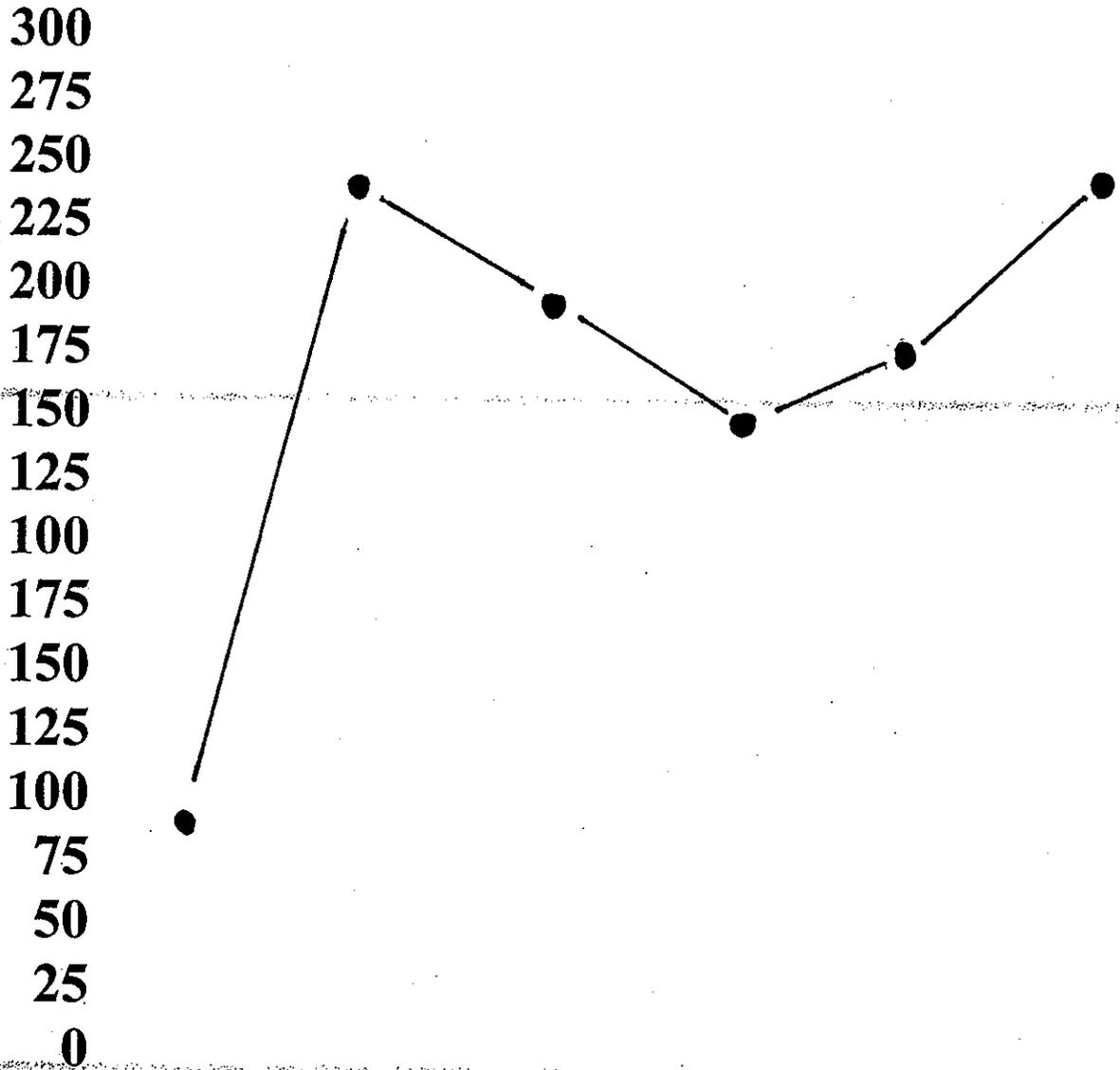
Juvenile – Alcohol

2001 to 2005

Offenses

300
275
250
225
200
175
150
125
100
75
50
25
0

2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006



Ask students when they first observed drugs or alcohol?

Under 10

11 to 14

15 to 18

19 Older

Share numbers with Christine