



STAND student ambassadors preview their presentation.

Linn Together celebrates 2024 successes; future plans

ALBANY — Linn Together volunteers held 25 community outreach events in 2024 and made more than 4,400 contacts, Dani Crabtree of Linn County Public Health said on January 15, during the organization’s annual meeting/celebration at the Old Armory.



Scan to learn more about Linn Together.

Linn Together is a coalition of public and private organizations that promote positive choices among young people concerned about alcohol, tobacco and other drug use.

It supports: community education and training; school-based activities; parent education; media campaigns; youth council.

Linn Together members include: educators; parents; business leaders; health professionals; retirees; youth; local government; law enforcement; civic groups; faith community; youth-serving organizations; and media outlets.

Long-time volunteer Dar Merrill talked about the history of the organization and said its purpose is “provide information to keep kids away from harmful issues” ranging from drugs and alcohol to the Internet.

Merrill said Linn Together volunteers reach out in a variety of ways — from school programs to hosting information programs at community events, such as the Linn County Fair.

Michael Mattingly, public information officer with the Linn County Sheriff’s Office, said there is an emphasis on marijuana awareness messages — because marijuana is a known “gateway” to other drugs.

The LCSO has also hosted lock down drills at local schools and plans to reach out with information to local doctor’s offices.

“Our materials are printed in both English and Spanish,” Mattingly said.

Mattingly said he has enjoyed participating in Linn Together’s “bottle tagging” program that includes 61 local stores. Volunteers placed warning labels on alcohol bottles.

Members of the STAND (Students Taking Action Not Drinking) talked about their activities. They volunteered more than 400 hours last year and are in the process of producing three short educational videos. So far, group members are from West Albany and Harrisburg high schools.

The group’s next meeting will be at Lebanon High School. A goal is to expand membership to as many high schools in the county as possible.

Julie Mercer of Linn County Alcohol and Drug Department, said Linn Together posted 114 Instagram messages and had 528 new newsletter subscribers. Linn Together has more than 8,500 email newsletter subscribers and added more than 528 new newsletter subscribers.

Mercer presented an engraved plaque to Linn County Reporter editor Alex Paul for “advancing the mission of Linn Together through excellence in media outreach.”

She said Paul publicizes Linn Together activities on the county website, social media pages and month newsletter, the Linn County Reporter.

XXXXXXX said upcoming Linn Together goals include: developing a three-year awareness plan, getting messages on more billboards, gathering data from local focus groups, obtaining prevent program grant funds and adding new volunteers from throughout the county.



Above: Dar Merrill talks about the history of Linn Together.



Right: Michael Mattingly talks about Linn County Sheriff's Office programs.



Dani Crabtree tells about outreach efforts in 2024.

