ProAction hosts screening at CPPHS

Documentary details Adverse Childhood Experiences

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CORNING - ProAction of Steuben and Yates hosted hundreds of people at Corning-Painted Post High School auditorium Wednesday evening to learn and discuss how traumatic experiences in the home can have significant effects on a child’s mental and physical health.

The evening centered around a screening of the documentary “Resilience: The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope.”

The documentary details how doctors and researchers discovered that Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), such as a hostile home environment, sexual assault, domestic abuse,

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Corning-Painted Post Superintendent Mike Ginalski speaks during the ProAction meeting Wednesday at the high school.
serious illness and neglect etc., can lead to prolonged or perpetual states of stress in young children.

This chronic state of stress is known as toxic stress. The documentary states the younger a person is, the more damage toxic stress can have on the body and mind.

Researchers have identified a link in children between toxic stress and likelihood of disease, homelessness, prison time, or early death.

The documentary also explores a movement to treat and prevent toxic stress. ProAction of Steuben and Yates hoped to bring the audience on board and help spread the word about an underreported problem.

"Right now research is showing us that almost half (of U.S. children) are experiencing some type of adverse health experience or trauma in their lifetime by the time they're 18," said Kaitlyn McWilliams of the Finger Lakes Resiliency Network.

C-PP Superintendent Mike Ginalski said the information in the documentary left an impression on him, and he is hopeful more awareness could have an impact.

"For me, it felt overwhelming as a leader. But I feel hope that with a coordinated effort community-wide, we can begin to attack some of these things," he said. "It's tremendous when you think about it because it's really been right under our nose. The whole time."

To minimize children's stress in the household, parents and educators are encouraged to follow a set of guidelines from Prevent Child Abuse New York called The Protective Factors Framework:

- Parental Resilience - Finding ways to solve problems, building and sustaining trusting relationships including relationships with the child, and knowing how to seek help when necessary.
- Social Connections - Networks of support are essential to parents and also offer opportunities for people to "give back," an important part of self-esteem as well as a benefit for the community.
- Concrete Support in Times of Need - Meeting basic economic needs like food, shelter, clothing and healthcare is essential for families to thrive. Likewise, when families encounter a crisis such as domestic violence, mental illness or substance abuse, adequate services and support need to be in place to provide stability, treatment and help for family members to get through the crisis.
- Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development - Accurate information about child development and appropriate expectations for children's behavior at every age help parents see children and youth in a positive light and promote their healthy development.
- Social and Emotional Competence of Children - A child or youth's ability to interact positively with others, self-regulate their behavior and effectively communicate their feelings has a positive impact on their relationships with their family, other adults, and peers.

For more information, call ProAction of Steuben and Yates at (607) 776-2125.