

Weed-and-Seed program taking message to Oil City students

Oil City's new Weed-and-Seed program is taking its message to Oil City students in the next few weeks as part of an initiative to revitalize neighborhoods by reducing crime and blight.

Leading the effort is the program's prevention-intervention-treatment (PIT) committee comprised of health professionals and others.

"The PIT members are focused on prevention strategies that address the 'weeding' out of violence and drugs and the 'seeding' in of programs to create a safe environment and enrich the 'quality of life,'" said Brenda Carll, public health nurse and a committee member.

The first of several initiatives will be

held at 2:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 27, at Oil City High School. It is open to all faculty members and will center on the subjects of cyber-bullying, Internet use and 'sexting.'

Elaine Surma, senior supervisory special agent for the Pennsylvania Attorney General's office, will present the program.

Those same topics will be on the agenda for a May 25 presentation by Surma to Oil City High School students. Middle School students will attend an 8:30 a.m. assembly and high school students will attend a 12:45 p.m. assembly.

In addition, a community-based program will be presented May 25 at the Free

Methodist Church on Wilson Avenue. The doors will open at 5 p.m. and Surma's program will begin at 6 p.m. Parents may attend either of the school sessions and are encouraged to join the evening session, Carll said.

A primary goal for the programs is "to eliminate harmful behaviors before they are entrenched in our neighborhoods," Carll said.

In addition to the Weed-and-Seed program and the Attorney General's office, other sponsors include the Together We Can Prevention Council, the Venango County Substance Abuse Program and the Siverly, North Side and South Side Neighborhood Associations.