

OCEANSIDE

# Clinic to teach about dangers on the Internet

## Oceanside High School students to help their peers stay safe online

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The Vista Community Clinic is working with local students to open teens' eyes to some of the dangers they may encounter in cyberspace.

The clinic is recruiting Oceanside High School students to help teach their peers and younger students about staying safe online, including lessons on cyber-bullying and online dating abuse.

The goal is to change people's perceptions of what constitutes violence, said Jenny Jones, spokeswoman for the clinic.

When people think of violence, they think of black eyes and guns, but it can also include hurting people by posting inappropriate pictures or information, she said.

Though the new program is just starting, there is already plenty of demand, Jones said.

"There hasn't been a single principal in North County that hasn't wanted this program," she said.

Employees with the clinic will be training students to be not only educators but advocates as well, said Jon Moffat, who coordinates the program.

This will include a marketing campaign to reinforce the lessons from the classes and to better inform students who haven't attended the program.

"We're going to empower them to create different types of social marketing," Jones said. "That's the part that's really exciting."

The new program is an offshoot of a similar one the clinic ran for about two years. The funding for the original program ran out this summer. The clinic found

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out earlier this month that it qualified for grant money through The California Endowment.

The original program included 20 high school students from Vista and Oceanside and was a general overview of online safety.

This time, organizers are focusing in on Oceanside High School and issues of online violence and cyber-bullying.

"What we're doing at Oceanside High School is,

we're taking it a little deeper," Jones said.

Though the new program is similar to the previous one, organizers are starting from scratch with new students.

This time, they hope to recruit five to 10 students and some parents to go through training and present lessons at schools libraries and other public locations.

"We're really going to be focusing on finding those kids who are real passionate about the subject," Moffat said.

For their time, the students are credited with community service hours, which can help them get into col-

lege or obtain jobs.

Having teens teach the lessons helps, because the audiences are able to relate to people closer to their own age, Moffat said. Plus, the teens are up on the newest trends and are able to frequently update the lessons, he said.

The classes are expected to start next month.

Call staff writer Stacy Brandt at 760-901-4009.