At left, Justin Yost, a director on the board for the Ionia/Montcalm Families Against Narcotics (IFM FAN), shares his story with drug addiction Monday at Stop the Madness, an anti-drug symposium at Greenville High School. Top right, Michigan State Police Lakeview Post Commander Lt. Kevin Sweeney speaks at the event. Bottom right, Kate Behrnsmeid of the Montcalm Care Network performs a naloxone training session.

Anti-drug symposium brings reality of heroin, opioid addiction to the forefront

By Cory Smith

GREENVILLE — On a road to recov-
eration for nearly six years, recovering
addict Justin Yost is one of the strongest
voices of the community in the fight
against drug use.

Having spoken at five different
schools, reaching out to almost 1,000
students, Yost, 33, of Greenville, took
every opportunity to tell his story
grounded around prevention.

A recovering addict speaking at the
Stop the Madness event at Greenville
High School, YostNeo with 20 minutes
spoke that was honest and real. He did
not shy away from the harsh truth of his
trace, which is full of alcohol and drug-
related decisions that led him on a path
to crime, and subsequently jail.

But on this evening, Yost closed with
his most personal story to date and left
the audience with a mixture of inspira-
tion and shock.

“I’ve been in recovery for almost six
years. But I’ve had a couple struggles,”
Yost said.

Yost admitted that despite his efforts
— the thousands of meetings he’s
attended, the attendance at an addiction
recovery center and his position as a
director on the board for the Ionia/
Montcalm, Families Against Narcotics
(EM FAN) chapter — the urge to use
again still meet completely disappear.

Last October, he hit rock bottom
again.

“I had been using for about a month.
I was at a point where I had an
physical withdrawal. I was kind of
withdrawn, I said, “I could not think about
my head was, how do I get back to
recovery?” It felt so good when I was
speaking to people and helping those in
need.”

Yost traveled to Grand Rapids and,
to quell the pain he was feeling,
withdrawn “just a little bit” of heroin.

“The only reason I bought it was so I
wouldn’t react as I had previously
when consuming the drug.

“I could feel it hit me on two hands,”
he said.

Yost opened the door and exited his
room. The paramedic leaned in closer to
him, and just laying there,” he said.

The paramedic leaned in closer to
Yost… Justin… Justin… he
heard family as he began to wake up.
“I opened my eyes and there was a
paramedic. He had my wallet out, he
had an IV out, and he was just standing
over me,” Yost said.

As he looked around, he spotted a
directly, three police cruisers with the
Kent County Sheriff’s Office, and an
ambulance.

“The whole parking lot was lit up
with sirens, and I’m just laying there,”
he said.

Members of the community attending a Nucran (naloxone) nasal spray
training session ask questions Monday at the Stop the Madness event.

“At first, Justin, Justin… Justin… he
heard a family as he began to wake up.
“I opened my eyes and there was a
paramedic. He had my wallet out, he
had an IV out, and he was just standing
over me,” Yost said.

As he looked around, he spotted a
fire truck, three police cruisers with the
Kent County Sheriff’s Office, and an
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