

Substance-abuse hot line spurs privacy concerns

A teen at a youth summit says a new program for York and W-JCC students is like a "snitch line."

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YORK — The anonymous tip line that the Historic Triangle Substance Abuse Coalition hopes to soon launch provoked heated discussion at a youth summit the coalition sponsored Friday.

"That's more like a snitch line," Rashawn Simmons, 15, said to the other 60 youth and adults gathered during a group discussion. "It's not going to work, snitching on people. If we had more to do in Williamsburg that would take away the drug and alcohol parties."

The coalition created the 24-hour phone line for students and adults to call with possible leads about local, underage drinking parties. The service will focus on middle and high school students in Williamsburg, James City and York.

"We're constantly campaigning to get students to

inform adults of unsafe situations," Stephen Chantry, director of student services for Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools, said at the summit. "But kids don't want to tell on other kids. We'll see how this experiment goes."

Parents and youth also voiced a need for a teen community center where high schoolers could congregate on weekends without spending a lot of money.

"When they get out of school on the weekends, there's nothing for them to do," said Sandy Penny, whose daughter attends Jamestown High School.

The summit also emphasized stress management, job interview skills and the college process.

"All youth are interested in making healthy decisions and having a voice in the community," Karen Goins, the coalition's project coordinator. ■