



DUST OFF September 2005

This email article came to the SCIP office several times this summer from many different sources. We thought it would be great for awareness for school staff and parents. The original email came from Jeff Williams, a police officer in East Cleveland. I have been assured that it checks out in every respect as to it being the truth. The article has been excerpted to fit in this space.

Jeff Williams, the father of Kyle, the 14 year old boy in this tragedy, has a police dog named Thor that was certified in drugs and general duty. Jeff always liked the fact that there was no way to bring drugs into his house because Thor wouldn't allow it. Jeff goes on to write: "I like building computers occasionally and started building a new one in February 2005. I also was working on some of my older computers. They were full of dust so I bought a 3 pack of DUST OFF. It is a can of compressed air used to blow dust off a computer. A few weeks later when I went to use them they were all used. I talked to my kids and my two sons; both said they had used them on their computer and messing around with them. I yelled at them for wasting the \$10 I'd paid for them. On February 28th, I went back to the store and bought a single, jumbo size can of Dust Off."

"On March 1st I left for work at 10 p.m. At 11:00 p.m. my wife went down and kissed Kyle goodnight. At 5:30 the next morning my wife went downstairs to wake Kyle up for school before she left for work. He was sitting up in bed with his legs crossed and his head leaning over. She called to him a few times to get up. He didn't move. He would sometimes tease her like this and pretend he fell back asleep. She went in and shook his arm. He fell over. He was pale white and had the straw from the Dust Off can coming out of his mouth. He had the new can of Dust Off in his hands. Kyle was dead."

"I found that Dust Off is being done mostly by kids ages 9-15. They even have a name for it. It's called 'dusting.' It gives them a slight high for about 10 seconds. It makes them dizzy. A neighborhood boy had shown Kyle how to do this.'

"This product is not just compressed air. It contains a propellant which is a heavy gas and it is a refrigerant. When you inhale it, it fills your lungs and keeps the good air with oxygen out, which causes you to feel buzzed and dizzy. There is no cumulative effect or an overdose."

There are many legal substances that people "huff" to get high. This is another product that can be used in huffing. However, apparently kids don't believe it is huffing. There is no chemical reaction, no strong odor, and it doesn't follow the huffing signals. Kyle complained a few days before he died of his tongue hurting. The propellant causes frostbite.

Jeff Williams, his wife, and two children are understandably devastated by Kyle's death. They wonder what they could have done differently; if they'd know about Dust Off, maybe they wouldn't have had it in their house. Maybe they would have connected Kyle's tongue hurting with the Dust Off. Maybe they would not have felt so secure about drugs not entering their home with the police dog presence.

It is an unfortunate tragedy of which parents need to be aware. Dust Off, like many other inhalants, can kill. Visit the National Inhalant Prevention Coalition at www.inhalants.org or Parents The Anti-Drug at www.theantidrug.com for more information. The SCIP website, www.lmep.com (click on SCIP, click on publications), will also post a list of common, household products than can be huffed.