

Young women taught balance

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SAN BERNARDINO - Kamysa Sykes learned a lot of things about healthy living on Saturday.

"This workshop was a really good experience," said Sykes, 19, a student at San Bernardino Valley College.

"I learned about balance in my life," she said.

Sykes was among a dozen or so young women, ages 17 to 24, attending the daylong Healthy Lifestyles workshop at Community Hospital of San Bernardino.

The workshop, presented by the Arrowhead United Way Women's Leadership Council, addressed self-image; nutrition; effects of drugs and alcohol on health and safety; pregnancy prevention; and sexually transmitted diseases.

The workshops are part of an ongoing program to reach out to the lower income population in the community.

Officer Marci Atkins, the San Bernardino Police Department homeless advocate and co-chairwoman of the council's Healthy Lifestyle Committee, also served as a workshop presenter.

Atkins led a PowerPoint presentation on "Empowering your Mind, Body and Soul," which focused on substance abuse and its effects.

"I tell these young women that every decision they make today is going to affect their tomorrow," Atkins said.

"Working with these young ladies means a lot to me, but it's more of a connection I have with them," said Atkins, a San Bernardino police officer for nearly 16 years.

"What I want to be able to relay to them is that they can be anyone they want to be - if they want to be

it, they can be it - and they shouldn't let anyone tell them any different."

In January, Atkins conducted an "Interview for Success" workshop in which the participants learned how to be successful in a job interview, write a resume and dress for a job.

Sykes, who attended the Success workshop, said it worked for her.

"It was beneficial for me because I got an internship with San Bernardino School Employees Federal Credit Union and since then have gotten a job. I came back for this workshop because the program is really good."

The Healthy Lifestyles Workshop was held in collaboration with the YMCA.