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## Through the Students Speaking Out Program, San Diego County Crime Stoppers Has Partnered with Hollandia Dairy and the San Diego County District Attorney's Office to Communicate the Ongoing Fentanyl Crisis to K-12 Students

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San Diego County Crime Stoppers and Student Speaking Out, along with the San Diego District Attorney's Office and community leaders have partnered with Hollandia Dairy, a San Diego County California-based dairy processor and direct-to-store supplier to help communicate the dangers of fentanyl to students K-12. Placed on Hollandia Dairy nonfat chocolate, half pint carton side panels, a "One Pill Can Kill" education campaign displays information to contact [studentspeakingout.org](http://studentspeakingout.org), with hopes to provide talking points to students and families, and action to scan a QR code to learn about the dangers of fentanyl.

From James A. Fontaine, Chief, Major Narcotics Division of the San Diego District Attorney's Office: "Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid (pain reliever) 100 times more powerful than morphine and 50 times more powerful than heroin. Fentanyl is often prescribed to patients following major surgery or to those in chronic pain, such as cancer patients. Legitimately prescribed fentanyl is highly regulated, and the dosage amounts are strictly controlled by medical professionals and pharmaceutical companies that create the drug. As little as 2mg of fentanyl can cause an overdose and death. That's equivalent to two grains of salt." In recent years, illicit fentanyl has flooded our communities and is resulting in an unprecedented number of overdose deaths. Unlike the highly regulated and controlled fentanyl prescribed by doctors, this illicit fentanyl is being created in unregulated labs in Mexico with chemicals received from China, then crossed into the United States. Most of the fentanyl coming into the U.S. crosses over the southwest border with Mexico and comes in both pill form and as a powder. The pills are made to resemble legitimate medication such as OxyContin, Percocet, Xanax, and others. The manufacturers of these pills have gotten to the point where they are indistinguishable from the real thing. However, because production is unregulated, the pills often have what are referred to as "hot spots" where the fentanyl is concentrated. A recent DEA laboratory analysis found that 4 out of 10 pills analyzed that contained fentanyl had 2 or more milligrams of fentanyl; a potentially lethal dose. One pill can certainly kill. In fact, even a portion of one pill can prove deadly if the fentanyl is concentrated into a hotspot and that is the portion of the pill consumed. Powdered fentanyl is no less dangerous and locally, there has been a recent increase in fentanyl overdoses from powdered fentanyl.

For the first time in a twelve-month period ending in April of 2021, overdose deaths in the United States exceeded 100,000. That's more than all vehicle and gun-related deaths combined. The majority of those overdose deaths, over 75,000, were caused by opioids with fentanyl being the primary cause of death. The White House has declared the trafficking of opioids, including fentanyl, along with their associated addiction and resulting loss of life, a National Health Emergency in 2017 and again in 2021. No community is safe from the dangers of this epidemic. San Diego County is uniquely situated as having the busiest international port of entry in the world. Large quantities of fentanyl and fentanyl analogs in both pill and powder form cross our border every single day. Much of it goes north to Los Angeles then to different parts of the country. But a large quantity of fentanyl remains in San Diego where it is often sold and described as something other than what it actually is. Drug dealers have taken to social media sites such as TikTok, SnapChat, Instagram and others, offering "real" or "legitimate" medication which in fact turn out to be counterfeit pills containing dangerous and often times deadly amounts of fentanyl. More and more, powder fentanyl is being found mixed with other controlled substances such as cocaine and methamphetamine. This mixing of drugs is contributing to the ever-growing number of drug overdoses our community is experiencing. The projection of fentanyl-related overdose deaths in San Diego is alarming. In 2016, there were 33 fentanyl-related overdose deaths. By 2020, that number increased to 462; a 1300 percent increase. While the number of fentanyl-related overdose deaths in San Diego for 2021 are not final, projections indicate our community will have experienced close to 800 fentanyl-related overdose deaths in 2021.

# STUDENTS SPEAKING OUT

888-580-8477  
StudentsSpeakingOut.org



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That amounts to, on average, more than two people dying from fentanyl in our community alone, every single day. We have been fortunate in San Diego in that we have yet to experience the loss of life due to fentanyl of children under the age of 14. That does not mean young children are free from danger and need not be aware of the risk from fentanyl. There have been a number of reported cases, some resulting in the prosecution of parents, for child endangerment when children as young as 18-months of age have gotten into their parents illegally obtained and negligently maintained fentanyl and overdosed. The quick intervention by first responders and medical professionals who recognized the signs of overdose saved the lives of those younger children. Sadly, the same cannot be said for our children over 14 years of age. In a recent 22-month period, 53 kids in San Diego County between the ages of 14 and 20 lost their life to a fentanyl-related overdose. That's 53 kids too many. So, while reading that "One Pill Can Kill" on a milk carton may seem dramatic, it is a sad truth that we need to talk about, that we need our kids to know about, so we can prevent more senseless loss of life due to this real and present danger.

San Diego County Crime Stoppers, Students Speaking Out, the DA's office and Hollandia Dairy, worked together with Blue Crow Creative to create an education campaign that continues with the organization's thirty-seven year history of supporting the community, law enforcement, and working to build safer schools for students. The organization is a charitable 501(c)(3) and has helped to solve over 6,400 felony crimes, 160 homicides, assisted in recovery of over \$12 million in stolen property, and led to the confiscation of over \$8 million dollars of illegal narcotics. In addition to helping law enforcement solve felony campus crimes, Students Speaking Out has helped remove weapons from our campuses and helped school officials respond with suicide interventions.

"None of us take lightly the words we use to communicate our message and how important it is to get the knowledge about this epidemic out there." said Tom Brandon, Board President, San Diego County Crime Stoppers. "Children are surrounded with video games depicting killing, messages in songs etc. and we do not feel as though we should shy away from or be scared to use this word because yes it may be "harsh" but it's the reality. If we as a community stray away from the "harsh" we are not doing the best for our kids and informing them of the true dangers."

Each year, San Diego County Crime Stoppers and Students Speaking Out Board of Directors seek to help families and protect the community by providing several mechanisms to report criminal activity and information to law enforcement, by providing a confidential method to report dangerous activities or crime on school campuses.

"We are showing the community a collaborative supporting effort to help the children in our schools." said Rick Struble, General Sales Manager, Hollandia Dairy. "As a board member we are excited and honored to partner with these agencies and local leaders to inform and use our medium to educate. It is ultimately our responsibility to talk to our kids and if this campaign creates talking points within our local community, then it has done its job."

Hollandia Dairy is a North San Diego County based, 3rd generation, family owned and operated, full-service dairy that delivers quality, farm-to-table freshness. With a focus on real dairy, they prioritize the health of their community from the care of their cows to the delivery of their naturally produced dairy products.

The campaign is scheduled to run for a short period on Hollandia Dairy cartons and will be rotated with other messages to help students confidentially speak out against violence, drugs, cyber-bullying, guns, and other dangerous activities.

To learn more about San Diego Crime Stoppers and Students Speaking Out, visit the website- [www.studentspeakingout.org](http://www.studentspeakingout.org).

•Media inquiries about Students Speaking Out can be directed to San Diego County Crime Stoppers Board President, Tom Brandon at (619) 275-8240 or email at Program.Manager@sdcrimestoppers.org

•Inquiries for Hollandia Dairy can be directed to Rick Struble, General Sales Manager, for Hollandia Dairy at naturally@hollandiadairy.com