

## Parents try tackling teen problems

*By Steve Schulz*

Teenagers often describe their parents as "clueless." If that's the case, a group of mothers and fathers in Battle Lake want to get a clue, and gain some understanding of what's going on in their children's lives.

Sparked by a stirring speech in Fergus Falls by commentator Ed Gerrety last fall, the group is planning meetings to talk about teen issues.

"He advocated making a difference -- parents should do something to get to know what's going on in their children's lives," recalled Emily Larson, one of the parents involved.

The first gathering will tackle methamphetamine, a drug that has caught the attention of law enforcement officers in the region, said Larson.

Larson and a handful of other organizers have scheduled a meeting on Wednesday, Jan. 14 at 7 p.m. at Battle Lake school's Royal Broberg auditorium to address the topic, "What should you know about meth?"

Larson said a TV series on the subject inspired the first meeting. Otter Tail County Sheriff Brian Schlueter will talk about how to recognize meth use and how it affects our county. Koreen Anderson, a former meth addict of 10 years will talk about the drug and her recovery from it.

For Larson, it's a chance to get up to date on issues kids face.

"It's for parents to know what's going on in their children's lives," Larson said. "There's so much out there that's different than 25 years ago."

Parents are invited. So are grandparents, or any community member, Larson said. Though the event is being held in Battle Lake, it's not exclusive to residents there. Anyone who is concerned about the welfare of teens is welcome.

Drugs, teenage pregnancy, violent video games, depression and suicide are a few of the topics Larson wants to see covered. But she said it's not about what she wants covered. She's happy to have the group take on a life of its own, and bring its own concerns to the table.

"We said, 'Let's start somewhere and start with some topics that are general,'" she said.

Larson said the Battle Lake school has been very supportive, and Larson said the group intends to operate on a "zero budget," so no fund-raising is expected.

People interested in attending can simply show up, or contact Larson at 218-864-8229 or Stacy Lundquist at 218-864-3081.