

# Digging for answers

## Poisons confined deep beneath Southside High School



People looking for work line up outside the Morrow Manufacturing Co. in 1935. Southside High now stands on a portion of that property.

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Oil and industrial solvents have contaminated the soil and groundwater beneath Southside High School, but the wastes are so deep and in such small amounts that they don't pose a public health threat, officials say.

The contamination became an issue last week when three sets of parents and two City Council members asked the Elmira school district in a letter to provide information about environmental tests on the school property.

They want to know

### Inside

- Recalling era when Southside was built/BA
- History of property at Southside High/BA

whether there is any link between the contaminants and a high number of reported cancer cases — 13 — since 1987 among Southside students.

The 1,100-student school at 777 S. Main St. is on land that has been host to a succession of factories since 1887 and is next to a long-time manufacturing complex, once home to compa-

See SOUTHIDE/BA



## Young adults find somebody to lean on

### Support group gives comfort as members in Tiers fight cancer.

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The same week Southside High School parents were voting their concerns to the Elmira school board about high occurrences of cancer, six area students and young adults were having a very personal conversation about the disease.

In a small Southside High conference room on Tuesday, a group of 16 to 20-year-olds talked about all aspects of cancer, a subject they know well because they each have the disease in some form.

The group — including Watkins Glen High School senior Joel Segar, Notre Dame High School senior Trisha Tamara, Southside students Mike Tobin and Stephanie Schreck, and Southside alumna Josh Palmer and Joe Wood — met for an hour as part of a young adult cancer support group.

Southside High School hosted the meeting because of its central location and four of the members' connections with

### Inside

- Young adults talk about cancer battles/2C

the school.

Their conversation ran the gamut from how to endure a CAT scan to how their friends have supported them by shaving their heads as though they had undergone chemotherapy. The shared stories took on a special meaning when the group members discussed how they found the strength to support their families during these trying times. Some said their parents struggled to go to work. Others watched as loved ones threw themselves into their jobs.

"I feel like I helped my parents get through it," said 17-year-old Tamara. After suffering knee pain, Tamara found out in January that she has lymphoma. It is in remission.

Tamara wasn't alone. She soon found that some of the other group members could relate to how she felt.

That's the purpose of the support group, Palmer said.

"There's really nothing like this in the area," said Palmer, whose cancer is in remission. "It's important to know that there are other people out there going through similar situations."



Southside High School drew attention last week after parents and Elmira city officials questioned the school district about environmental tests done to the land.

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Sun, Mar 24, 2019