

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



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Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

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STUDENTS ACROSS ESCAMBIA COUNTY FIGHT BACK AGAINST TOBACCO

~Kick Butts Day is Wednesday, March 20, 2013~

PENSACOLA, FL — Students in Escambia County, Florida want you to know that tobacco kills no matter how tobacco companies sugarcoat it.

Escambia County Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) and Tobacco Free Escambia are speaking up and taking action against tobacco for Kick Butts Day, the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids national day of activism that empowers youth to fight back against Big Tobacco.

Escambia County SWAT youth began the Kick Butts Day Celebration with a cigarette butt cleanup and litter collection on March 16, 2013. On Saturday morning, Escambia County students combed the beaches from the Fort Pickens entrance to Casino Beach collecting cigarette butts, along with other litter and debris.

On Wednesday, March 20, 2013 SWAT youth will lead Escambia County students in a Kick Butts Day scavenger hunt. The scavenger hunt is designed to educate the students about how tobacco companies target young people as potential consumers. "Youth have always been a target for the tobacco industry," said State Surgeon General Dr. John Armstrong. "Numerous internal tobacco industry documents reveal that the tobacco companies perceive youth as an important target. In light of big tobacco tactics, we are redoubling tobacco-free collaboration across Florida." Escambia County SWAT member Nikki Kemp agrees. "Tobacco companies are always studying teens, trying to figure out how to trick and trap them," said Ms. Kemp. "We are their research subjects. It's like we are lab rats, but worse, because we don't even know it's happening." While participating in the scavenger hunt, students will wear 'Tobacco Industry Research Subject' stickers as a reminder that 'Big Tobacco' is always watching.

While SWAT youth are currently engaging in fun ways to educate their peers about tobacco use, they are also working hard in the community to take a stand against tobacco use. Escambia County SWAT youth have made presentations to the Escambia County Board of County Commissioners and the Pensacola City Council. Both entities have since adopted resolutions urging tobacco retailers to restrict the sale and marketing of flavored tobacco products. Escambia County SWAT is planning a presentation for the Century Town Council, hoping to encourage them to take similar action.

Learn more about the dangers of flavored tobacco at www.tobaccofreeflorida.com/flavoredtobacco.

ABOUT KICK BUTTS DAY

Kick Butts Day is a national day of activism that empowers youth to stand out, speak up and seize control against Big Tobacco. Kick Butts Day is organized by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids and sponsored by the United Health Foundation. The first Kick Butts Day was held in 1996.

ABOUT TOBACCO-FREE FLORIDA

The Florida Department of Health's Tobacco Free Florida campaign is a statewide cessation and prevention campaign funded by Florida's tobacco settlement funds.

Tobacco Free Florida recommends three methods of quitting as the most successful, and encourages tobacco-users to take advantage of them. Persons wanting help to quit using tobacco may 'log in' to an on-line quit coach, 'call in' to the quitline (1-877-822-6669) or 'come in' to a cessation class. To learn more about Tobacco Free Florida and the state's free "quit" resources, visit www.tobaccofreeflorida.com or follow the campaign on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TobaccoFreeFlorida or Twitter at www.twitter.com/tobaccofreefla.

The Florida Department of Health works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts. — END