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ESCAMBIA COUNTY YOUTH WORK TOWARD A TOBACCO FREE FUTURE

SWAT Members Are Fighting Back During Kick Butts Day



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Pensacola, Fla. – Escambia County, Florida’s Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) are speaking up and taking action against the tobacco industry for the 21st annual Kick Butts Day on March 16, 2016. This national day of activism, sponsored by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, empowers youth to fight back against Big Tobacco.

This year’s activity is called “Project 1300.” During this event, several schools throughout the County will display the number “1,300” in the schools’ fences using red cups. This number represents the number of people in the United States that die every day from smoking.

“When people drive by or when students and faculty pull into school, they will see the number 1,300 and their minds will begin to wonder” said Tyler Bradley, member of Escambia County, Florida SWAT. “Utilizing cups in a fence is a creative way to draw the attention of others. People will start to ask questions and want to know what 1,300 is all about. This is our opportunity to educate them on the deadly consequences of tobacco use and the different tactics that tobacco companies are trying to use to market their products.”

Youth and young adults rarely consider the long-term health consequences of smoking when they start. Because nicotine is a highly addictive drug, three out of four youth smokers continue smoking well into adulthood, often with serious and even deadly consequences. In fact, about half of long-term smokers die prematurely from smoking-related causes.

According to the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), if current smoking rates continue, 5.6 million U.S. children who are currently younger than 18 years of age will eventually die prematurely as a result of smoking. HHS notes that almost all initiation of daily tobacco use begins by the age of 18.

SWAT aims to empower, educate, and equip Florida youth to revolt against Big Tobacco. SWAT is a movement of empowered youth working together to de-glamorize tobacco use. Their efforts aim to shape tobacco-free norms, make tobacco less desirable, less acceptable, and less accessible.

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. The first Kick Butts Day was held in 1996.

About Tobacco Free Florida

The department's Tobacco Free Florida campaign is a statewide cessation and prevention campaign funded by Florida's tobacco settlement fund. Tobacco users interested in quitting are encouraged to use one of the state's three ways to quit. Since 2007, more than 137,000 Floridians have successfully quit using one of these free services. 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 on Twitter at www.twitter.com/tobaccofreefla.

The department works to protect, promote, and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts. Follow us on Twitter at @HealthyFla and on Facebook. For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit www.floridahealth.gov.

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