

scgovHEALTHadvisory

Sarasota County Health Department | Florida Department of Health | scgov.net | 941.861.5000 | TV

March 22, 2010

Media contact: Dianne Shipley, 941-861-2852; cell 941-302-1058;
Dianne_Shipley@doh.state.fl.us

Project contact: Marielle Kantzler, 941-861-2997; cell 941-894-8272;
Marielle_Kantzler@doh.state.fl.us

MEDIA NOTE: Photo opportunities and interviews will be available at the events listed in this advisory.

SWAT events highlighted for ‘Kick Butts Day’

Sarasota County students are joining thousands of youths across the United States on Kick Butts Day, Wednesday, March 24, an effort that empowers youths as leaders to stop tobacco use by young people. As part of the Kick Butts Day celebration, Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) teams from several area schools are organizing events to send two important messages: they want the tobacco industry to stop targeting them with advertising and they want elected leaders at all levels to do more to protect youths from tobacco use.

SWAT is Florida's statewide youth organization working to mobilize, educate and equip Florida youths to advocate against and deglamorize the tobacco industry.

Local events planned on Wednesday, March 24, are:

9-10 a.m. at Heron Creek Middle School, 6501 West Price Blvd., North Port

The Heron Creek Middle School SWAT is partnering with the North Port High School SWAT members on a poster display. Parents and students will see this display as they enter the middle school from 9-10 a.m. Additional displays will be prominent throughout the school throughout the week.

7:30 a.m.-2:15 p.m. at North Port High School, 6400 West Price Blvd., North Port

As the county's most active SWAT, North Port High School has a number of projects planned. They will create 88 sidewalk body outlines to represent the 88 people who die in Florida each day due to tobacco-related diseases. The SWAT group is randomly handing out 88 black paper flowers to symbolize this statistic as well. There will be a fully decorated courtyard with posters, murals and other graphics emphasizing awareness about smoking in the movies. The youths will engage the students in a tobacco-related jeopardy game during the lunch periods and will display a "commitment wall." This commitment wall includes those youths and faculty who commit to remaining tobacco-free.

9:15 a.m.–4 p.m. at Sarasota Middle School, 4826 Ashton Road, Sarasota

The SWAT club is creating an elaborate graveyard scene on the cafeteria stage. The production will include the display of a large banner stating "88 Floridians die a day from tobacco-related illnesses." The "grim reaper" will be present to welcome those who smoke to

become a part of this graveyard. This display includes tombstones, additional banners and signs.

7:30 a.m.–2 p.m. at Suncoast Polytechnical High School, 4650 Beneva Road, Sarasota

The SWAT group at this school will have a graffiti wall in the cafeteria. They will line up 88 pairs of shoes and chalk outlines along Beneva Road. Additionally, students will be holding signs with anti-tobacco messages during their physical education classes.

For more information about Sarasota County's SWAT teams, call Marielle Kantzler at 941-861-2997 or visit <http://www.swatasc.net/>.

-end-