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NEWSROOM

PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST

MEETINGS AND AGENDAS

E-NEWSLETTER

EVENT CALENDAR

March 18, 2012

MEDIA NOTE: Media representatives who wish to cover performances of the play, "Tobacco Tales," should contact Scott Ferguson of the Sarasota County School District Communications Office as noted below.

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Sarasota County kids fight back against Big Tobacco; Kick Butts Day is March 20

Kids in Sarasota County want you to know that tobacco kills no matter how the Big Tobacco industry sugarcoats it

Sarasota County Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) are speaking up and taking action against flavored tobacco as part of the local observance of the 16th annual Kick Butts Day. Organized by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids and sponsored by the United Health Foundation, this is a national day of activism that empowers youth to fight back against Big Tobacco.

In observance of Kick Butts Day, the SOURCE Theatre, a group of young people who present plays about real life -- true stories based on real people who go through the struggle, the joy and the pain of growing up in the 21st century -- will perform the play "Tobacco Tales" at four Sarasota County middle schools. Performances will be held at Pine View School and Heron Creek Middle School on Wednesday, March 20, and at Venice Middle School and Sarasota Middle School on Tuesday, March 26.

"These performances of 'Tobacco Tales' will raise awareness to hundreds of students throughout Sarasota County regarding dangers of tobacco use," said Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County Tobacco Prevention Specialist Hilary Woodcum. "Many of our local SWAT clubs have additional Kick Butts Day activities planned to reach their peers and the community."

With cigarette smoking rates on the decline in the United States, the tobacco industry helps ensure its livelihood by marketing products like candy-flavored tobacco to attract a new generation of tobacco users.

According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration ([FDA Parental Advisory on Flavored Tobacco Products](#)), children and teens mistakenly believe flavored tobacco products are less harmful than their non-flavored counterparts. Once youth start using one tobacco product, they are more likely to experiment with others.

The earlier that youth begin using tobacco, the more likely they will be addicted. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Surgeon General Report on "[Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults](#)" states that nicotine addiction prolongs tobacco use and can lead to severe health consequences.

"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."

Cities and counties across Florida have taken on flavored tobacco. On June 28, 2011, Sarasota County passed a resolution urging tobacco retailers to restrict the sale and marketing of flavored tobacco products. As of Nov. 5, 2012, the cities of North Port, Sarasota and Venice have followed suit, passing similar resolutions.

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

Tobacco Free Florida offers a number of free and convenient resources to help smokers quit.

- **Telephone:** Call the Florida Quitline at 1-877-U-CAN-NOW to speak with a Quit Coach who will help you assess your addiction and help you create a personalized quit plan.
- **Online:** Enroll in the Web Coach®, which will help you create your own Web-based quit plan that's right for you. Visit <https://www.quitnow.net/florida>.
- **In person:** Visit the Gulfcoast Area Health Education Center (AHEC) website, www.gsahec.org, to locate additional Quit Smoking Now group classes. The organization's local toll-free tobacco referral line is 866-534-7909. The Florida Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) Network's website is www.ahectobacco.com

You can also follow the campaign on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TobaccoFreeFlorida or Twitter at www.twitter.com/tobaccofreefla.

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