



WILL COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT & COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

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WILL COUNTY STUDENTS DO THE EDUCATING ON KICK BUTTS DAY

JOLIET – Area teens from Joliet, Plainfield, New Lenox, and Peotone are preparing to deliver a strong anti-tobacco message in conjunction with National Kick Butts Day (March 24).

The Will County Health Department's Tobacco Control & Prevention program is teaming with student groups from numerous schools to help spread the word about the dangers posed by cigarettes and other tobacco products. Students affiliated with Teens Against Tobacco Use (TATU) and Reality Illinois will be doing much of the heavy lifting.

TATU is a Health Department initiative that allows students ages 14-17 to mentor youngsters about the dangers of smoking. TATU representatives from Plainfield North High School and a similar group representing Lincoln-Way West High School are taking the mentoring challenge very seriously.

Lincoln-Way West's TATU group has prepared a special presentation designed specifically for 7th and 8th-grade students that will be delivered at New Lenox Liberty Middle School March 19. Plainfield North's TATU group is ready with a similar program for 6th-graders, and will present it March 24, at Plainfield Ira Jones Middle School.

Students from Joliet Township Central High School and Peotone High School are also prepared to discuss the evils of tobacco. Events are planned for both schools as part of the Reality Illinois project.

A statewide program, Reality Illinois encourages teens to take a stand against tobacco use by educating their peers and communities about the adverse health effects and deceptive marketing practices of tobacco companies. Students committed to Reality Illinois have prepared visuals to help communicate their messages.

At Peotone, students have constructed 51 body outlines for display in the school commons. The outlines represent the 51 Illinois residents who die daily from tobacco-related disease.



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Joliet Central's Reality Illinois team will be ready with 181 cutouts of tombstones. The cutouts represent the 181 current Joliet Central students who are projected to die prematurely due to tobacco use.

Will County Tobacco Control & Prevention will also be participating in a special health fair sponsored by Provena Saint Joseph Medical Center March 24, at Lockport's Fairmont School. In addition to providing smoking prevention, cessation and secondhand smoke information for all students, a memorial wall will be available. The memorial wall will enable students, faculty, and staff to honor family members and friends who have died from tobacco-related diseases.

Why all the fuss about tobacco and kids? Published research studies confirm that kids are twice as sensitive to tobacco advertising as adults, and are more likely to be influenced to smoke. More than 149,000 Illinois teenagers currently experiment with cigarettes. Worse yet, tobacco-related diseases will prematurely kill some 317,000 Illinois residents who are currently younger than 18 years old.

For more information about Will County Kick Butts Day activities, telephone 815-774-7312. For more detailed fact sheets on tobacco and youth, visit www.tobaccofreekids.org.