



Yolo County Anti-Tobacco Youth Coalition

West Sacramento Chapter

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For Immediate Release

Date: April 18, 2008

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River City High School Students “Kick Butts”

New Poll: Teens Still Feel Targeted By Tobacco Advertising & Find It Easy to Buy Cigarettes

West Sacramento (April 17, 2008) – Kids across California rallied against tobacco on April 2, as they joined thousands of young people nationwide for the 13th annual Kick Butts Day, sponsored by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. Hundreds of events took place across the nation, including a lunchtime tobacco education carnival put on by a group of River City High School students, who are members of the Yolo County Anti-tobacco Youth Coalition. This year, Kick Butts Day raised awareness about continued tobacco marketing and sales to kids and the need for local officials to crack down on these harmful practices.

The Yolo County Anti-Tobacco Youth Coalition, also known as YUFA STAR, celebrated Kick Butts Day with a carnival where students learned about the dangers of tobacco use through games, educational displays and free giveaways. Students at River City saw a simulated smoker’s lung “breathe” demonstration, handled a rat preserved in formaldehyde (which is one of the many toxic chemicals found in every cigarette), and answered game show questions that taught them about youth marketing strategies used by tobacco companies.

Ten years after the 1998 state tobacco settlement, a new poll conducted for Kick Butts Day 2008 finds that kids still feel targeted by tobacco advertising and still find it easy to buy tobacco products. The national telephone survey of 507 teens (12-17 year olds) and 1,008 adults found:

- Three-fourths of teens (74 percent) think tobacco companies want them to smoke, and 70 percent think tobacco companies target them with their advertising.
- Nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of teens think it is easy for teenagers to buy tobacco products. Among 15-17 year olds, 76 percent think it is easy.

To protect kids from tobacco addiction and save lives, River City High students are urging local officials to pass a city law that makes it more difficult for kids to get tobacco and strengthen the penalties for those who do sell tobacco to kids.

“I don’t think most kids understand the powerful influence tobacco advertising has on them, but we know that if it didn’t work they would not be spending \$2 million a day in California alone to

trick people into thinking tobacco makes them look glamorous, grown up or cool,” states Youth Coalition President, Justin Kortuem, a junior at River City High School..

Since the 1998 tobacco settlement, tobacco companies have nearly doubled their annual marketing expenditures, from \$6.9 billion in 1998 to \$13.4 billion in 2005 – more than \$36 million per day, according to the Federal Trade Commission. In California, tobacco companies spend \$843.8 million a year to market their products.

Nationwide, tobacco use kills more than 400,000 people and costs the nation nearly \$100 billion in health care bills each year, and 23 percent of high school students smoke. In California, tobacco use claims 37,800 lives and costs the state \$9.14 billion in health care bills a year, and 15.4 percent of high school students smoke.

For more information about tobacco or the Yolo County Anti-Tobacco Youth Coalition, visit the Yolo County Health Department’s website at www.yolohealth.org.

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