

**EVALUATIVE REPORT
ARKANSAS YES TEAM AND
TOBACCO CONTROL YOUTH BOARD ACTIVITIES
2005-2006**

by

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INTRODUCTION

Between September 2005 and June 2006, a coalition of young people and youth workers acted together to educate their peers and adults about the dangers of tobacco consumption. Teens from all over the state formed local teams and utilized funding from the Arkansas Department of Health to carry out tobacco education and prevention efforts. The teams directed their efforts toward five major goals:

- Educating young people about the dangers of tobacco before they start smoking, to encourage prevention
- Promoting cessation amongst their peer group and adults
- Orchestrating a counter-marketing campaign to combat the influence of the tobacco industry in the media
- Reducing the accessibility of tobacco to young people
- Encouraging members of their communities to become anti-tobacco lobbyists

A total of 684 young Arkansans have joined YES of Arkansas, a statewide youth-led tobacco movement, through its website www.yesteam.org. YES of Arkansas operates through local chapters, or YES Teams. This report summarizes activities of nine local YES Teams with approximately 130 active members. These teams filled out and submitted a YES Team Activity Data report for each of their activities in 2005-06.

The teams reported reaching 6,172 people directly by presentations, special exhibits and activities, or handing out brochures. They reached many more through advertisements and booths at large events. In addition to this, they received extensive media coverage from local TV, radio stations and newspapers. (See Appendix A: Direct and Potential Engagement Figures.)

The teams used a mixture of education, entertainment and advocacy to spread their message across their own communities, throughout the state and beyond. They have addressed a variety of venues, including schools, community centers, county and state fairs and youth groups. They have petitioned their peers, their parents, business owners and local government.

TOBACCO CONTROL YOUTH BOARD ACTIVITIES

YES Teams are sponsored by the Arkansas Tobacco Control Youth Board (TCYB,) which works to prevent the use of tobacco by young people. The TCYB is the tobacco prevention arm of Arkansans for Drug-Free Youth (ADFY), a nonprofit organization with the goal of preventing substance abuse among youth.

TCYB was formed in spring 2002 with 16 members. In the 2005-06 school year the membership of the board reached a new high of 55 members. The size of the board increased by 20 percent, from 46 to 55 members, due to recruitment efforts by the ADFY Coordinator and the TCYB members.

TCYB holds an annual Say YES Conference each June, in partnership with YES of Arkansas. The two-day 2006 conference was attended by approximately 100 youth and adults. Based on evaluation forms, the conference succeeded in its goals of informing and inspiring the participants. Participants were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement "The YES Conference encouraged me to take action in my school and community," with 1 being "Disagree" and 4 being "Agree." The average rating was "4." Ratings for the overall conference, speakers, and workshops were between 3.5 and 4.0 on a scale of one to four, with four being the highest rating.

TCBY has formed Team YES Speaks, a speakers' bureau of 20 teens who are available to speak to groups and at conferences about the dangers of tobacco use.

YES TEAM ACTIVITIES

WAYS & MEANS

The variety of methods used by the teams to promote their message ensured that a large number of people heard about their mission and understood its goals.

The teams made sure that the hard facts regarding tobacco use were well known, by distributing thousands of brochures and pamphlets wherever they went – literature that advocated prevention and cessation and furnished people with the facts about tobacco consumption in all its forms.

**"We handed out suckers dressed up as ghosts.
The message was say 'Say BOO to tobacco'."**
*Sydney Steely of Pike County YES, at Halloween,
describing one of the many imaginative ways the teams
got people's attention*

However, they also recognized that the best way to transmit their message was to combine statistics and hard-hitting facts with entertainment and incentives. The teams distributed candy with anti-tobacco facts attached. They held fairs with dunking booths and bounce-arounds. They sponsored games and quizzes where correct answers to questions about tobacco related issues were rewarded with prizes of YES team hats, wristbands and t-shirts.

The use of this kind of promotional material served several purposes. It helped to add an element of fun to the educational process, as well as acting as an advertisement for the program. In addition, it allowed the creation of a highly visible group identity that utilized a kind of positive peer-pressure; the sense of belonging to a movement and gaining strength in numbers can lend kids and teens the courage to withstand localized, negative peer-pressure. It also acted as a counterpoint to the more wide-scale promotional devices and images used by the tobacco industry.

The use of counter-media strategies was an important weapon in the YES teams' artillery. Oppositional measures included placing ads in school and local newspapers. For example, the Hazen team printed an advertisement in their school newspaper that ran: "14 Arkansans die everyday: Tobacco Kills. Get the facts." In Little Rock, team members distributed approximately 300 sticky notes on car windscreens that drew attention to the ways in which tobacco producers regularly attempt to influence people through the medium of the motion picture industry.

A documentary made by the Mena team about their activities was submitted to several film festivals and won second prize in one. The documentary now airs on Mena local television.

Some of the methods used were provocative and designed to shock. The teams created "Death Day" cards and baked a Death Day cake to mark Marlboro's 50th birthday. During their presentations they passed out replicas of lungs blackened and damaged by smoke.

Perhaps one of the most shocking exhibits set up by the teams was also the most poignant. The "Who will fill your shoes?" campaign was practiced by various teams across various venues. Pairs of shoes were arranged in groups of significant numbers; for example, 14 pairs to illustrate the 14 Arkansans who die every day from tobacco-related illnesses.

"One boy cried when he saw a pair of baby shoes on the field. Many remembered the tobacco facts read ... to them, and they quoted them to us on their way out."

Elizabeth Lindly, Mena YES team, on the impact of the "Who will fill your shoes?" campaign

The teams created "tombstones" that were displayed alongside each pair of shoes, featuring either tobacco facts or epitaphs for individuals who had died. The most large-scale of these exhibits was held at Mena, where 1200 pairs of shoes were displayed on the Mena High School track field, to represent the 1200 daily tobacco deaths in America.

The efficacy of their message was further enhanced as the teams tailored their presentations and activities to suit their audience. For example, they engaged the attention of younger children by putting on informative puppet presentations. The North Little Rock team held an “ugly face contest”, where kids were asked to make faces at the tobacco industry and prizes were given for the best ones.

The teams captured the attention of older kids and teens by appealing to their interest in celebrities, holding competitions where people had to guess which famous people had died from tobacco related illnesses.

“Ever since your presentation, [the children] have been talking non-stop about you and remaining smoke free ... I really believe that the presentation made an impact on the lives of the students.”

Extract from a letter sent to Kyrah Brown of the NLR

YES team from a local schoolteacher

The teams traded fully on the fact that their peer group was perhaps more likely to listen to its own members than to the exhortations or admonishments of adults and other well meaning, but perhaps less effective, community voices. With this in mind they spoke in classrooms, on basketball courts, and at state youth events such as ADFY's Red Ribbon Celebration and Teen Summit on Alcohol and Tobacco.

IF YOU SMOKE, I SMOKE

However, the teams felt that encouraging kids to say no to tobacco was only half the battle. Kids and young adults were suffering the effects of second hand smoke from other sources. Consequently, they felt it was important to address the other places where kids were at risk owing to other people's tobacco consumption.

The teams recognized that one of the greatest dangers of second hand smoke came from their immediate environment. Kids were facing resistance and health dangers in their own homes because their parents smoked. In light of this, the teams tried to support kids in their efforts to protect themselves from second hand smoke and to encourage their parents to give up.

The teams addressed parents directly at workshops. Kids throughout the state were given “Smoke Free Home pledges” to give to parents to encourage them to either consider quitting or to promise to keep their tobacco consumption outside their homes and cars.

“If I know someone who smokes, I ask ‘do you know how bad smoking is and what it can do to you? ... I tell them, you’re not going to smoke around me’.”

Darlene Khatthachanh, Fort Smith FAST team

One Hazen student said the actions of the teams gave him the confidence to confront his parents about their smoking. An elementary school student said that her grandmother, who had been a smoker for 40 years, had been encouraged to give up as a result of the teams’ efforts.

Public spaces were also a target. The Sebastian County FAST team staged a sit-in at a local restaurant. The management of the restaurant handed out cards to the team that said “Thank you for being smoke free.”

To address the issue of accessibility of tobacco products the teams orchestrated “Operation Storefront”. Team members visited local stores and gathered data about whether storeowners kept their tobacco products within easy reach of young people and whether they practiced a “We card” policy to prevent the sale of tobacco to underage customers.

SMALL STEPS, GIANT LEAPS

The teens involved are not only interested in prevention and cessation but also hope to effect fundamental social changes through legislature. The teams petitioned a number of government officials and encouraged their peer group and others to send a clear anti-tobacco message to the lawmakers. At the Teen Summit participants were encouraged to write letters to legislators letting them know about young people’s opinions on the dangers of secondhand smoke. In Little Rock, members of various YES teams held a statewide workshop where teens were asked to write letters to Congress on the subject of tobacco use; some 250 letters were submitted, in English and in Spanish.

The teams added political weight to their campaign by encouraging various government officials to become actively involved. The Marion County team got local County Judge Charles Trammel to sign a proclamation declaring April 5th 2006 as an official “Kick Butts” day. In Pike County, team members worked closely with United States Representative Mike Ross, who helped them to understand the value of lobbying and advised them on strategy.

“I was proud to be part of Pine Bluff history”

Imran Adamu of Jefferson Co. YAC on the passing of the city’s smoke free ordinance

Demonstrating a good deal of political acumen, the teams chose their moments wisely. The Jefferson Team arranged their Kick Butts day to coincide with their local Quorum Court’s discussion of the smoke free ordinance proposal. Teams from all over the state took to the steps of the Capitol building during a rally in support of the Clean Indoor Air Act. Their hard work and determination paid off when on June 6th 2005 Pine Bluff passed a citywide smoke free ordinance, and on July 21st 2006 when the Arkansas Clean Indoor Air Act became law.

REACHING IN, REACHING OUT

Although they were conscious of the statewide agenda, the work of the individual teams was deeply entrenched in their local communities. Teams reached out to diverse community groups. For example, the Fort Smith FAST team gave a PowerPoint presentation to the local Asia-Pacific Coalition; a Jefferson County team member distributed promotional material at his local Masjid; and members of Pike County team performed a skit at the 2006 Midsouth Summit Black Expo. Teams also worked in conjunction with community organizations such as the Backpack Program, a service that provides underfed kids with backpacks of food.

“I felt great that I had a chance to give something back to my community.”

Kyrah Brown, Little Rock Mayor’s Youth Council

The effectiveness of this community work can be demonstrated by the responses of community members. Following a presentation at a Fort Smith police station, the FAST team were contacted by day care providers and asked to return to give a second presentation. When the team distributed candy with tobacco facts on them at St. Edward's Mercy Hospital, the hospital's cessation line received ten phone calls during the course of the week. FAST team members noted that many of the people who came to the Riverfest booth were smokers who were interested in quitting and were encouraged to do so by the teams' presence.

Not all of the responses were positive, however. Many of the teams faced hostility, not just from their peers, but also from adults. To cite but a few examples, during a sit-in at a local restaurant, a patron sat next to one of the FAST team protestors and ostentatiously lit a cigarette. There was also the storeowner who refused the Mena team entry during their "Operation Storefront" initiative. Undeterred, the team observed from outside the store. This kind of response bears testimony to the determination of the youth involved, where even deliberately antagonistic behavior didn't dissuade them from their mission.

Over all, the work of the teams was well-received by their communities, and the teens involved derived a real sense of civic pride by participating in these programs.

THE FUTURE

The teams have achieved much so far, on the micro and macro level – from the teen who stubbed out his cigarette to visit their booth at Little Rock's Riverfest to the passing of the Arkansas Clean Indoor Air Act. They have successfully heightened the profile of the Stamp Out Smoking campaign by attracting a great deal of media coverage from local newspapers, TV and radio.

These successes have not led to complacency, however. One of the most encouraging outcomes of this program is that the teams involved perceive their activities as long-term strategies, not just one-time events. Several of the team members have reached their senior year at school, but have committed themselves to recruiting new team leaders and members so that their work can continue. At the statewide Teen

Summit, Jefferson County team members encouraged local teens to start their own YES teams, while the Fort Smith team held a recruitment drive at their Back to School Bash.

The enthusiasm of the teens involved has proved infectious – one member of the Jefferson County YAC noted, “The youth were amped and excited to start their own projects in their parts of Arkansas”. This, coupled with the positive effect the teams have had on younger children, should help to encourage other young people to take up the challenge of bringing about a smoke free society, so that the good work of the YES teams project can continue into the future, for as long as tobacco is a presence in their communities.

“Tobacco prevention will continue ... and we are all so excited to see where it leads.”

Elizabeth Lindly, Mena YES team

Appendix A Direct and Potential Engagement Figures

The following table gives an estimate of the number of people reached by the YES Teams' activities, to indicate the extent of their success.

Direct engagement refers to activities where people were addressed directly by the teams or where specific numbers were given on the team Activity Data sheets. Examples are school classes addressed, workshops held, or surveys distributed.

Beneath, there is a list of **potential engagement** figures. These refer to large-scale events – as in events where the teams attended and conducted activities, but which were not devoted entirely to team activities. For example, Riverfest, where the teams had a booth but other unrelated activities were also taking place. Total numbers of attendees are given where available. Numbers are approximate.

N.B.

In some cases, we were unable to obtain definitive data for the number of people present at various events and activities, so the totals listed below are conservative estimates.

ACTIVITY / EVENT / PLACE	NUMBERS
Direct engagement total	6,172
Riverfest	245,000
Turkey Trot festival	1,200
EAST Conference	1,000+
North West Arkansas Summit	75-100
Pike County Fair	1,800
Pike County Health Fair	129
Mufreesboro Elementary School Carnival	500
Mena Health Expo	150
Holy Souls Fall Festival	200
Advocacy at UALR	1,000
Pike local newspaper advertisements	5,000

Appendix B The Teams that Completed YES Team Activity Data Reports

Teams Coordinator: Genine Perez

Fort Smith, Sebastian

Team name: FAST team

Team leaders: Darlene Khatthachanh, Jovi Champaphanith, Taylor Phoumivong

North Little Rock, Pulaski

Team name: North Little Rock Mayor's Youth Council

Teams leaders: Kyrah Brown

Mena, Polk

Team name: Mena YES

Team leaders: Elizabeth Lindly

Hazen, Prairie

Team name: YEAH (Youth Extinguishing at Hazen)

Team leaders: Jordan Chlapecka

Blytheville, Mississippi Co.

Team name: Mississippi Co. YES team

Team leaders: Gerald Howard

Pine Bluff, Jefferson

Team name: Jefferson Co. YAC (Youth Advisory Council) / YES team

Team leaders: Imran Adamu, Nana-Aisha Adamu, Maryam Adamu

Rison, Cleveland

Team name: Fordyce

Team leaders: Lizette Castillo

Bruno-Pyatt / Yelville, Marion

Team name: YES team Marion Co. / Bruno-Pyatt YES team

Team leaders: Shelley Hadley

Murfreesboro, Pike

Team name: Pike Co. YES

Team leader: Sydney Steely

Appendix C Organization/Events Glossary & Links

ADFY (Arkansans for Drug Free Youth)

<http://www.adfy.org/main.htm>

The ADFY is the parent organization of the YES teams and the TCYB. It also organizes the **Teen Summit on Alcohol and Tobacco** and the **Red Ribbon Celebration**. The team mission is to educate young people, families and communities about drug use and its impact, so that they can make informed decisions to stay drug-free and encourage others to do likewise.

TCYB (Tobacco Control Youth Board)

<http://www.adfy.org/tcyb.htm>

A statewide team of approximately 50 members dedicated to educating their peers and their communities about the dangers of tobacco use.

Y.E.S. (Youth Extinguishing Smoking)

<http://www.adfy.org/yes.htm>

A subdivision of the TCYB, YES of Arkansas is comprised of teams of teens in various parts of the state who educate people about the risks of tobacco consumption and provide a counterpoint to tobacco advertising and other tobacco promotion that occurs in the media. Team members engage in a wide range of activities to promote their message, including giving talks, hosting quizzes and games, and monitoring the accessibility of tobacco to young people in their local communities.

YES team website

www.yesteam.org

The website of the YES team, which describes how to get involved, as well as providing tobacco facts and information on the activities of the various teams. It also hosts a message board that provides team members with a forum to discuss relevant issues:

<http://www.yesteam.org/messageboard.htm>

Youth Advisory Council (YAC)

<http://www.arcf.org/page16561.cfm>

The YAC is a statewide division of the **Arkansas Community Foundation (ARCF)**, an organization which encourages teens to participate in grant making and endowment building activities in their local communities.

North Little Rock Mayor's Youth Council

<http://www.northlr.org/programs-resources/MYC/default.asp>

A council comprised of 85 North Little Rock secondary students, from grades 8-12, who are nominated by teachers, counselors and other adults in their community. The organization provides opportunities for young people to participate in community building activities by serving various local non-profit agencies.

Teen Summit on Alcohol & Tobacco

<http://www.adfy.org/teensummit.htm>

The ADFY, in conjunction with the **Coalition for a Tobacco Free Arkansas**, holds a one-day conference with keynote speakers, projects and workshops. Around 500 teens and their teachers from around the state usually attend the summit.

Red Ribbon Celebration

<http://www.adfy.org/redribbon.htm>

The Red Ribbon Celebration is an annual program held throughout October of each year. The Celebration is designed to heighten public awareness about drug use and prevention strategies. Around 6,000 teens participate in a series of activities including conferences, training sessions and projects.

Kick Butts Day

<http://kickbuttsday.org/>

An annual event promoted and supported by the national **Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids**, an organization that aims to heighten public awareness about the dangers of tobacco consumption and attempts to influence public policy.

Appendix D YES Team Activity Data Form

Arkansas Youth Tobacco Control Board YES Team Activity Data

(Please fill out for each activity. Attach extra pages if you need more room.)

Name of YTCB member who did the activity
or led the team for this activity:

If it was a team activity, what is the name of the YES team?

How many team members were involved? (Include preparation and implementation.) ____

Date(s) of activity: _____

Place--city and county: _____

Place—location(s) such as fairground, downtown, or school (give name of school):

Describe the YES team activity: _____

Please give an idea of how many people were reached by the activity. Use as many different things as you can think of to show the impact of the activity. Examples:

- ∞ Estimated number of people who saw a presentation, exhibit, or demonstration
- ∞ Number of handouts/giveaways that were passed out
- ∞ Number of comments (both negative and positive) that people made to team members in response to the activity

Other comments:

E-mail address and phone number for YTCB member who led this activity:
