

EVALUATIVE REPORT
ARKANSAS TOBACCO CONTROL YOUTH BOARD
AND YES TEAM ACTIVITIES
2007-2008

by

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INTRODUCTION

The Youth Leadership Initiative, a program of the Family Service Agency funded by the Arkansas Department of Health, seeks to prevent or reduce the use of tobacco products among youth in Arkansas. The initiative trains and motivates seventh through twelfth grade students from across the state to engage in a counter-marketing campaign against the use of tobacco products. Youth learn leadership skills and utilize these skills to plan and carry out activities and events to publicize the health dangers of tobacco use.

The Youth Leadership Initiative staff recruit youth to become members of the statewide Tobacco Control Youth Board (TCYB). In turn, TCYB members recruit youth from their counties for the local grassroots Youth Extinguishing Smoking (YES) Teams. In addition to developing YES teams in their local communities, TCYB members are required to attend leadership training, board meetings, and regional and statewide conferences. Their responsibilities also include planning, implementing, and reporting on local team activities.

The Family Service Agency awards a total of \$4,000 per grant year in scholarships to outstanding youth tobacco control advocates. Each TCYB or YES team member is eligible for \$200 to \$400 based on the level of their tobacco control activities as documented by activity reports and posters (Poster Project Awards.) Other special Youth Advocate of the Year (YAYA) awards are presented at the annual Say YES Leadership conference in June.

The goals of the Youth Leadership Initiative for FY2007-2008 were as follows:

1. Recruit and coordinate the 75 seat-position of the TCYB.
2. Educate and train TCYB members in order to develop peer-to-peer presentations that target youth in rural areas and TCYB local communities as well as continue to develop the existing speakers' bureau, TEAM YES SPEAKS.
3. Collaborate with partners to develop clever new ways of extending the anti-tobacco message throughout the state of Arkansas.
4. Partner with state agency to work more in the area of enforcement and compliance.
5. Continue to distribute a broad-base media campaign to address second-hand smoke and spit-tobacco/smokeless targeting youth throughout the state.
6. Facilitate Say YES Leadership Conferences.

RECRUITMENT

A long-term goal is to have at least one TCYB member from each of the 75 counties in Arkansas. In 2007-2008 the TCYB had 63 members from 17 counties, or 23 percent of the state's counties.

Recruitment is an ongoing process as a varying number of the students on the TCYB graduate from high school each year and must be replaced. The number of TCYB members increased by 13 percent (7 members) between 2006-07 and 2007-08, as shown in the table below. In the previous school year the number of TCYB members increased by 22 percent (10 members.)

Fiscal Year	# TCYB Members	% Change	# Counties with TCYB Membs	% Change	# YES Team Members	% Change	# Counties with YES Team Membs
2005-06	46				684		
2006-07	56	22%			982	44%	
2007-08	63	13%	17		1,320	34%	51

Another recruitment goal is to increase the number of local YES team members each year. A teen who wishes to join a YES Team contacts the Youth Leadership Initiative staff by e-mail, mail, or in person and agrees not to use tobacco products. The teen's name and contact information are added to the database and an initial packet of information is mailed to them. All the YES Team members in the database receive periodic newsletters and announcements, by e-mail if possible or by mail if they don't have e-mail access. If mail is returned with a bad address, or if e-mail is bounced back five times, the teen is removed from the YES Team database.

In 2007-2008 there were 1,320 YES team members, a substantial increase of 34 percent over the 982 members in 2006-2007. The number of YES team members increased by a remarkable 44 percent between 2005-2006 and 2006-2007.

Fifty-one (51) counties were represented by YES Team members in 2007-08, or 68 percent of the counties in the state. Each county shaded with gray in the map below had a least one YES Team member.

Arkansas Counties with YES Team Members in 2007-08



Each shaded county has at least one YES Team member.

Youth Leadership Education and Training

Training youth to be effective leaders is an important part of the Youth Leadership Initiative. The program provided youth with a number of training opportunities in 2007-2008, such as attending regional and national conferences and taking part in training workshops in Arkansas and beyond conducted by nationally known trainers.

Monthly meetings were held in Little Rock for the TCYB and any YES Team members who wished to attend, every month in the school year except January. In addition, a number of youth advocates attended other conferences and workshops as detailed below.

Texas Teen Tobacco Summit and Comprehensive Tobacco Prevention Conference

In July 2007 12 youth advocates from the TCYB attended the Texas Teen Tobacco Summit and Comprehensive Tobacco Prevention Conference. The summit is hosted annually by the Center for Safe Communities and Schools and the Texas Department of State Health Services.

The Teen Tobacco Summit provides information, skills training, and networking opportunities. It has a youth track with training on such topics as Making your Ideas Become Real, Advocacy in Action, and So You Think You Can Speak? Youth attendees were given advice on giving effective presentations, and were taught facts and statistics about the dangers of tobacco consumption to assist them in doing so.

As well as providing education and training for the youth advocates, the summit afforded the TYCB the opportunity to educate and train others. Approximately 250 middle school students attended the summit, and the TCYB gave presentations on four occasions over the course of the conference. Two of the presentations focused on the importance of keeping the TCYB and YES teams youth led, an founding principle of all TCYB activities. One team member gave a presentation called "Keeping it youth-led"; another used PowerPoint slides to advocate the idea of "Information for youth by youth". Other team members presented information about the dangers of smoking.

The program also offers many opportunities for teens to network with youth from other states and learn from the experiences of others who are working to prevent tobacco use. The relationship between the TCYB and Texas youth advocates is particularly strong, and has developed over several years, as a result of the TCYB attending and participating in the conference. One "Texas Teen Ambassador" wrote a heartfelt letter to the TCYB, praising their energy, enthusiasm and commitment. This relationship also extends throughout the rest of the year, with TYCB members reporting that they maintain contact with their Texan counterparts, to plan further collaborations and trade ideas in the fight against big tobacco.

TCYB members were asked to write reviews of the conference, and their responses indicate that they derived many benefits by attending. One team member said, "The conference all in all has given me more ideas on leadership, community service, and activities to promote statewide."

Another felt that what they had learned in Texas was only the beginning:

“During our action plan sessions we came up with some great ideas that we will put into action once we get back home; after all, that is the important thing, not leaving things unfinished”

Striking Out Tobacco Conference

In August 2007 eight (8) TCYB-YES Team members attended the Striking Out Tobacco Conference in Little Rock. The conference is held annually by the Coalition for Tobacco-Free Arkansas to identify tobacco related issues in the state and to provide education and training for attendees.

National Conference on Tobacco or Health

In October 2007 two youth advocates and Genine Perez traveled to Minneapolis for the National Conference on Tobacco or Health, a biennial conference sponsored by the American Public Health Association to promote collaboration on tobacco control. The youth advocates set up a booth at a networking function to share Arkansas YES team activities and also participated in several youth workshops and conference sessions.

International Society for the Prevention of Tobacco Induced Diseases Conference

The 6th annual conference of the International Society for the Prevention of Tobacco Induced Diseases took place in Arkansas in November of 2007. The event was televised, and attended by physicians, scientists, public health officials and policy makers from all over the world.

The TCYB and YES teams were an integral part of the proceedings; they were invited to participate in the opening ceremony, led anti-tobacco company chants, and distributed tobacco information and facts. The teams further raised their profile and drew attention to their message by dressing in “army” uniforms, to signify that they were at war with big tobacco.

National Youth Advocacy Training

In May of 2008, members of Team YES Speaks traveled to North Carolina, to attend and participate in the 6th Annual Youth Advocacy Training conference. The conference culminated in a protest on the steps of the Reynolds America building (a large tobacco company) on the day of their shareholders’ meeting.

Eleven groups of youth advocates from all over the country participated in 1½ days of training which included topics such as: History of Reynolds American, Human Rights of Tobacco Farm Workers, Working with the Media, Global Perspectives, Shareholder Meeting First Accounts, Making Visuals, and Developing Chants, and the ways in which the industry uses media and brand manipulation to recruit more smokers.

Attendees were taught how to protest against big tobacco in effective yet peaceful ways, using techniques such as visual aids and chants. Youth and **Leading the Pack, which was organized by YES TEAM-AR**. Team YES Speaks gave a presentation on “Leading the Pack”, teaching their peers how to coordinate protesters, stay within legal limits and ensure the safety of the crowd during protests. Their presentation included a role-play session, which aimed to prepare their fellow protesters for possible hostility from shareholders and Reynolds’ employees.

The protest was designed to reach “the company, shareholders, media and the public” (from the conference program). Following the protest, conference attendees held a press conference to

spread their message to as many media outlets as possible. The protest was also covered in local Arkansas newspapers and online.

May 2008 Leadership Training

A Youth Leadership Training Summit for TCYB members was held on May 24, 2008 at Northeastern College in Blytheville, Arkansas. Thirty-two (32) new TCYB members attended the training along with 10 adults.

The agenda of the one-day training included a welcome, orientation to the Tobacco Control Youth Board and YES Teams, training on activism with a purpose, an action planning session, and the award of Certificates of Membership to new TCYB members.

The activism training was conducted by Justin Lookadoo, an author, trainer, and former probation officer who specializes in crime prevention and healthy relationships for teens. Youth Leadership Initiative Program staffers Genine Perez and Edwina Williams assisted with the training and led the orientation to The TCYB and YES Teams in Arkansas.

Community Collaboration

Grass roots community collaboration is integral to the success of the YES teams, and this fiscal year the teams reached further than ever before, working with neighborhood associations, church groups, charities and school districts. They were active in counties all over the state, from Pulaski to Marion to Dallas and more.

An estimated 9,099 Arkansans of all ages were reached by tobacco control materials and activities from the youth advocates of the TCYB and YES Teams and their staff.

Schools

As peer-to-peer advocacy is such an important facet of the TCYB and YES teams work, group members spent a good deal of time reaching out to other children and youth at schools, using a variety of imaginative techniques to educate and inform. The teams worked at their own schools, and at other schools throughout the state to spread their message.

At Horace Mann Middle School, for example, student members of the YES teams created a banner students could sign and pledge to be tobacco and drug free. All in all, around 200 hundred signatures were collected. The project was so successful that one team member was asked to give a school-wide presentation on the dangers of tobacco consumption at the start of Red Ribbon Week. The presentation was broadcasted live using the school's television system, so approximately 300 hundred young people were reached.

As well as visiting schools in person, team members sent anti-tobacco materials to schools. In one instance, packets containing a personal covering letter, a DVD, postcards and other YES team information were distributed to multiple schools in Pulaski and Sebastian counties. Potentially, around 13,000 students were made aware of the message and activities of the YES teams. Team members also networked with adults, contacting PE teachers and counselors and asking them to distribute YES team materials to their students.

Some team members showed a great deal of initiative and seized whatever opportunities they could to promote their message and recruit members in to the YES teams in their schools. One team member took the opportunity to give a presentation on the dangers of second hand smoke as part of her oral communication class. Another member wore a Project 1200 shirt on a number of occasions throughout the school year; the shirt became a talking point, and as a result more

students were informed about tobacco usage and were recruited into the YES teams. A team member from Fordyce wrote an editorial for her school newspaper about the history of tobacco and its effects; the newspaper is read by everyone from elementary to high school students, teachers to administrators, and parents to the community at large.

School Festivals

The YES teams have always strived to combine education and hard-hitting facts with entertainment and incentives to engage other young people and hold their interest. They continued with this strategy this year by holding and participating in a number of parties and festivals. For example, team members held a back to school carnival in September 2007 in the Family Services Agency parking lot. The teams set up games and competitions including sack races and bowling to get the crowd's attention. They distributed prizes and school supplies, and gave out "YES bucks" to kids who correctly answered questions about the harmful effects of tobacco.

Here, and at similar events, the teams specifically targeted younger students, creating games, activities and presentations that would be particularly appealing to them. At a community fair held at Martin Luther King elementary school, YES team members targeted incoming elementary students, grabbing their attention with graphic models and displays. This is part of a strategic pre-emptive strike, to get the youngest students to say no to tobacco before tobacco company marketing campaigns or negative peer pressure can influence them.

Community

As well as working directly with schools and their peers, the teams also sought to engage their local communities as a whole. Acting individually, in small groups and as larger YES / TCYB units, team members spread the YES message.

Team members did everything from picking up cigarette butts in their local parks to setting up booths to raise awareness of the harmful effects of tobacco outside a county courthouse. Other team members taped a "Stop Tobacco" sign beneath a traffic stop sign to create an eye-catching display for motorists driving past. Parents were enlisted to help, and several YES members went to their parents' work places to talk about being smoke-free. Employees responded well to these visits, and said they would encourage their own children and grandchildren to sign up and participate themselves.

Festivals and Events

As in previous years, the YES teams were a highly visible presence at many of Arkansas's community events and festivals throughout the year.

In a major step forward in controlling tobacco use among Arkansas youth Governor Mike Beebe proclaimed April 2, 2008 as the First Annual Tobacco Free Kids Day in Arkansas. This event corresponded with the National Kick Butts Day organized by the Campaign for Tobacco Free Youth. Around 75 youth and adults attended the inaugural ceremony held at the state capitol. A picture from the event was on page one of the Arkansas section of the April 3, 2008 edition of the Arkansas Democrat Gazette.

The YES teams participated in Riverfest, an annual festival in Little Rock which was attended by approximately 250,000 people in 2008. They set up a booth to inform festival goers about the health risks of tobacco and smokeless tobacco consumption, and engage the younger audience with prizes and fake tattoos if they could answer questions in tobacco-related quizzes.

At the Arkansas State Pride conference 2008, YES teams members hosted and gave a presentation, along with Lil' A Genine Perez. They also promoted their smoke-free movies campaign. The teams had two booths at the Kids Fair at the State Fairgrounds this year. Once again they spoke directly to their peers and younger kids grabbing their attention with chants and dances.

The teams also participated in a number of smaller, local community activities. To give but a few examples, they attended health fairs in Fordyce and the Little Rock Air force base, and a community tobacco event in Marianna, where they received a generous check for their efforts in combating big tobacco. They attended the UALR Back to School jamboree and Big Brothers and Sisters event, where they successfully recruited a number of new members.

Enforcement and Compliance

One of the goals the TCYB and the YES teams set themselves for 2007-08 was to collaborate with the Arkansas Tobacco Control Board (ATCB). The ATCB are responsible for enforcing the Unfair Cigarette Sales act and for Sales to Minors compliance checks. These pieces of legislation aim to regulate the sale of cigarettes and prevent the sale of tobacco products to children under the age of 18.

In fiscal year 2007-08 staff turnover at the ATCB meant that that the teams didn't have the opportunity to join them on official compliance checks as they had done in the past. However, TCYB and YES did work with the Prevention Resource Center. During the summer of 2007, three team members conducted checks on around 10-15 stores per person.

The teams also conducted compliance checks as part of their "Operation Storefront" initiative. The teams were asked to record the details of where a tobacco retailer was in relation to schools and other areas where they might be a lot of children, if stores were advertising tobacco products where young people would be exposed to them, and if tobacco products were within easy reach.

The teams hope to work more with the ATCB this coming year (2008-09). In the mean time, TCYB members were encouraged to act on their own initiative by monitoring their local convenience and recording any breaches of the law related to tobacco sales.

Media and Publicity Campaign

The YES team media campaign is vital to realizing their goals of education, prevention and cessation. Their main strategy is to create a counter-marketing campaign to combat the pressure put on young people by the tobacco industry and those around them who may smoke.

Branding

The establishment of a "YES brand" is an important part of this strategy, and the merchandise they distribute help to bring this about. As well as promoting the campaign, YES t-shirts, bag tags, calculators, lanyards and so on all serve to create a highly visible group identity. This allows young people to feel that they are part of a solid network of their peers who share the same goals as they do.

Online promotion

The YES teams have been quick to realize that one of the most popular ways for young people to communicate with each other is by using the internet. Many young people have internet access at home or at school, and the teams realized that this was one of the quickest ways of disseminating information about YES team activities and events.

Over the past few years, there has been an explosion in the numbers of people using social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook, so members made sure that YES was a presence on both of these sites. Team member Lizette Castillo set up a YES Facebook page in 2007. The number of young people who signed up quickly reached the teams' original target of 120, and by the end of the 2007-08 fiscal year membership had exceeded expectations, rising to 167. The MySpace page was active, although there were fewer members, at 41. This number didn't change over the course of the year. However, this may be due in part to that fact that Facebook is a newer site, and has become increasingly popular over the last year, while MySpace usage has declined in general (<http://siteanalytics.compete.com/>).

The YES team also has its own website, www.yesteam.org. The site has been undergoing a makeover during the 2007-08 fiscal year, and this coming year it will undergo further development. The official site provides information about the TCYB and the YES campaign, and is the only site youth can sign up to join YES. [Do we need to mention that this is a means of keeping track on the number of members etc?]

Advertizing and promotion

The TCYB utilized a number of different media outlets to get their message across in 2007-08. In September of '07 Lamar advertising was commissioned to display an outdoor advertisement-hoarding saying, "When you say NO to tobacco you say YES to life". They produced another advertisement in February of '08, as part of the smoke free movies campaign, "Tell the MPA no smoking in G, PG and PG-13 movies".

The teams also used print media. Advertisements were run throughout 2007-08 in the *Little Rock Family* magazine, a publication which has a print run of 25,000 per month. Advertisements were also placed in the *Kids Directory*, which is distributed to 700 locations in nine cities, with 21,000 copies produced per month. The Family Service Newsletter ran features on the work of the YES teams on two occasions, in fall of '07 and summer of '08.

To maximize the effectiveness of their media campaigns, the teams worked with Little Rock based advertising agency CJRW. They collaborated on two major projects, Smoke Free Movies and the first Arkansas Tobacco Free Kids Day. CJRW sent press releases to radio and TV stations and newspapers throughout the state to drum up interest and support for these two activities.

Smoke Free Movies Campaign

This year the teams continued their efforts to fight the promotion of tobacco in films rated G, PG and PG-13, i.e., those with younger, potentially more susceptible audiences.

The teams traveled to a number of schools about the state, raising awareness about the ways in which tobacco product placement in movies targeted young people by giving them the illusion that smoking was cool. In some schools they got the kids to write letters to lawmakers demanding that smoking be banned in films with less than an R-rating. The teams themselves wrote letters to teachers and principals, drawing their attention to the issue and asking them to distribute pamphlets and flyers. The teams received a good deal of positive feedback from their

presentations, with a number of parents saying they would take a closer look to see if smoking was promoted in the movies their kids were exposed to.

As well as their efforts in schools, the teams distributed Smoke Free Movies information whenever and wherever they could; pamphlets were handed out to family, friends and neighbors and their relatives' employers. One team worked with their local Girl Scout troop, attaching Smoke Free Movies information to boxes of cookies, which were then sold all over the community.

YES Calendar

The Youth Leadership Initiative designed and published an attractive YES calendar for May 2008 – June 2009 displaying photos of YES team members and activities. The calendar was presented to participants in the Say YES Leadership and Advocacy Conference and will be distributed throughout the state to further the anti-smoking message.

Say YES Leadership and Advocacy Conference

A major event for the TCYB is the annual Say YES Conference in June. Sixty-five (65) teens from around the state attended the 6th annual Say YES Leadership and Advocacy Conference on Tobacco Control, which was held on June 13-14, 2008 at the Doubletree Hotel and the Robinson Auditorium in Little Rock.

The conference utilized a variety of approaches for engaging and educating youth in leadership and advocacy, including workshops, an awards banquet, a talent show, and a rally.

The conference featured guest trainers from the Dover Youth 2 Youth Program, a New Hampshire after-school drug-prevention program coordinated by the Dover Police Department Community Outreach Bureau. On Friday afternoon Youth 2 Youth trainers conducted intensive training for new TCYB members. The training included information about tactics used by tobacco companies to encourage tobacco use and skills and methods to conduct effective presentations about tobacco.

Youth to Youth also presented workshops on Saturday for all conference participants on youth advocacy and how to get the message out.

The Arkansas YAYA Awards (Youth Advocate of the Year Awards) Banquet showcased and rewarded achievements by youth advocates. The following awards were presented:

- Arkansas Outstanding Individual Youth Advocate of the Year (1st and 2nd place)
- Arkansas Outstanding Group Youth Advocates of the Year
- TCYB Youth Advocate of the Year (1st and 2nd place)
- TCYB Poster Projects Awards

YES Team and TCYB members nominated candidates for the Arkansas Outstanding Individual and Arkansas Outstanding Group awards. Any Arkansas teen or group of teens who promoted tobacco free lifestyles through peer-to-peer messaging in the 2007-2008 school year was eligible for nomination. Staff and guest judges selected the winners.

The Tobacco Control Youth Board Youth Advocate of the Year Award is given to outstanding TCYB members. The member must have served one full fiscal year (FY), completed activity data sheets in a timely manner, worked with team members for various projects outside the scope of their required two projects per FY, and registered to attend the end year conference. The member must also complete the assigned poster project. This award is voted upon by staff.

The YES Idol, an American Idol type talent show featuring anti-tobacco messages, demonstrated that teens can have fun without alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs. Twelve youth advocate acts took the stage and prizes were given for first, second, and third place.

Perhaps the most memorable part of the conference for the teens who attended was the anti-tobacco-use rally held in front of Robinson Auditorium from 3:30 – 4:30 on the second day of the conference. Before the rally the youth were trained in the purpose and logistics of this type of publicity event, including how to work with the media. The rally was a participatory learning activity as well as a publicity success for the YES Teams and TCYB. Youth were interviewed by television news teams from Channel 4 and Channel 11.

Thirty-five (35) of the TCYB and YES team members who attended the June conference completed conference evaluation forms. The forms included a series of statements about the value of the training, such as whether the conference had encouraged them to take action in their schools and communities, if they felt that the training provided prepared them to be youth advocates, and if they would recommend the conference to their friends. They were asked to rate how much they disagreed / agreed with these statements using a scale of 1-4 where 1 was "disagree" and 4 was "agree".

The vast majority of attendees who filled in evaluation forms strongly agreed that the conference training had been of benefit to them. See the Table I below for a full breakdown of the results.

Table I
Questions 1-7 & 9

Q#	Question	Average rating
1	Encouraged to take action in school / community	3.57
2	Helped to understand position as TCYB member / YES team leader	3.54
3	Prepared me to be youth advocate	3.69
4	Dover youth to youth interesting / thought provoking	3.63
5	Would recommend Dover group again	3.60
6	Youth-led workshops successful	3.37
7	Would recommend conference	3.62
9	Over all conference rating	3.41

Attendees were also asked to rate various components of the conference on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 being the highest. Again, the TCYB / YES members who filled in evaluation forms gave extremely positive feedback. Taken over all, their average rating for the various workshops and sessions listed was 4.13. See Table II below for a full breakdown of the results.

Table II
Question 8: Please rate your YES Leadership Training Conference experience

Conference section	Average rating
Youth Advocate Awards check-in process	3.91
YES team idol contest	4.31
Lil "a" involvement / participation	4.23
Saturday am: session / workshops	4.09
Saturday pm: session / workshops	4.43
Saturday: Take it to the streets	4.06
Saturday wrap-up session	3.91
Over all session / workshop rating	4.13

Methodology

This report was prepared by the UALR Institute of Government in fall 2007 using materials provided by the YES / TCYB team coordinator, Genine Perez. Materials included activity data sheets, poster-board collages, staff reports, examples of promotional materials and personal written accounts from team members. The Institute of Government reviewed and analyzed all materials.