

BREATHE FREE

A Quarterly Newsletter of **Tobacco Free ALLEN COUNTY**



Participants in FWCS' March 5 parent education night on vaping view the PBS documentary "Nic-Sick," in which teens share their often heartbreaking struggles with nicotine addiction (See p. 2 for the link to view this excellent and poignant film).

Moving the Needle on Youth Vaping

By Nancy Cripe, Executive Director/Coalition Coordinator



As we approach the end of the first year of the current grant period (June 30), I am heartened to reflect on new steps our community has taken these past 11 months to address youth vaping. Most notably, the Allen Co. Department of Health is spearheading a collaboration between the Health Department, the four

Allen Co. public school systems, TFAC, and McMillen Health to provide vaping prevention education in all of their middle and high schools. Through Health First Indiana funding, McMillen's 5th and 7th grade vaping prevention education programs will be offered free of charge to all four school systems. In addition, TFAC has been assisting both FWCS and EACS administrators to revise student conduct policies to move away from punishment and suspension towards education and treatment support to address the root causes of youth vaping and repeated tobacco policy violations.

Finally, in just the past two months, we have collaborated with FWCS to provide vaping education to parents. TFAC presented at both a parents' night held at the FACE center in March (p. 2) and at a PTSA-organized parents' event at Shawnee Middle School in May. We are coming together to end this epidemic!

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TFAC PARTICIPATES IN FWCS' PARENT EDUCATION EVENT ON VAPING

The popularity of youth vaping continues to challenge schools. Student vaping negatively impacts all students, not just those using vapes--extending to many reports of students not feeling safe to go to the restroom. Over the past several months, FWCS has been taking action to address this issue, and in March, partnered with TFAC to host an educational event for parents focused on vaping held at the FACE Center. Open to parents of all school systems, it aimed to provide support, guidance, and resources to concerned parents and guardians.

Attendees viewed "Nic-Sick: The Dangers of Youth Vaping," a documentary starring real teenagers and their parents sharing the teens' struggles with nicotine addiction. One mom shared her anguish over her son's vaping leading to seizures and now needing ongoing treatment with seizure medications.

The event attracted 29 participants, including parents, grandparents, school nurses, and community members, and featured two speakers with vaping expertise: Parkview Pediatrician, Dr. Tony GiaQuinta and TFAC's

Director, Nancy Cripe. Dr. GiaQuinta responded to participant questions about vaping's impact on adolescent health. Nancy spoke on the risks of vaping, how they are designed to appeal to youth, and showed samples of vaping devices and paraphernalia, including a vape disguised as a smartwatch, and a "Vape Hoodie" that allows the wearer to vape through the hood's drawstring. Lastly, there was an information table that provided various resources on vaping.

Miss the Event?

Check this out

Watch "Nic-Sick: The Dangers of Youth Vaping" [HERE](#)

21 Alive News coverage of the event can be viewed [HERE](#)

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS:

Parents Against Vaping: [PAVe](#)

[Live Vape Free](#)

(Learn more about this resource on p. 4)



Dr. Tony GiaQuinta answers questions from the audience during the educational event on vaping.

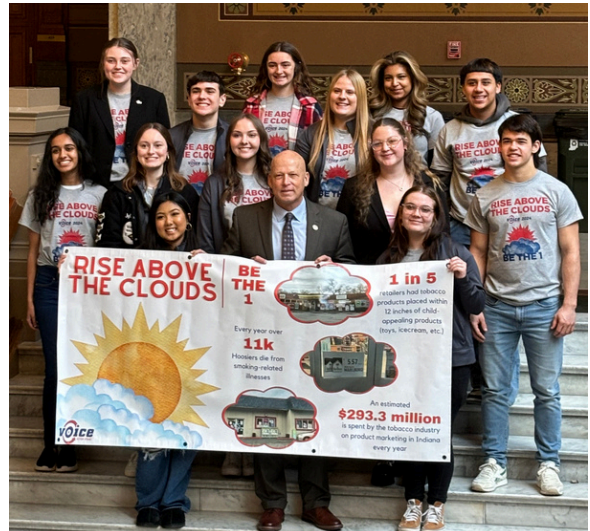
VOICE MEMBERS MEET STATE LEGISLATORS

On January 11, Indiana's statewide VOICE Youth Ambassadors team visited the Indiana Statehouse to speak with legislators about the need to do more to address tobacco use in our state. They had the opportunity to present to Senator Crider and Representative Schaibley on youth vaping, commercial tobacco marketing, and the need to do more to prevent tobacco use among Indiana youth.

Allen County VOICE Youth Ambassador, Mi Htaw and her fellow VOICE Allen County Core Team Leader, Iker Aguilar participated in this event. Mi helped plan and execute the presentations that showcased to the legislators how tobacco use has affected youth.

Mi and Iker, like the other VOICE youth in attendance, got to meet the two legislators, get their photos taken with them, and tour the Statehouse.

Congratulations Mi on doing a great job with your first legislative advocacy experience as a Statewide VOICE Youth Ambassador! We are proud of you!



2024 VOICE Indiana Statewide Youth Ambassadors with Senator Crider of Hancock County (above) and with Representative Schaibley of Hamilton County at the Indiana Statehouse (below).



VOICE is Recruiting!

We are looking for driven Core Leaders to join our team. As a Core Leader, youth are responsible for working with their team to plan and execute quarterly events, as well as recruit their own Action Squad team to participate in those events.

Benefits of Joining:

- Get free training and travel
- Make new friends across state
- Develop leaderships skills
- Gain advocacy skills

Please email Lynda: dnguyen@tobaccofree02.org



LIVE VAPE FREE EXTENDS SERVICES TO YOUNG ADULTS

Live Vape Free (LVF) is a text message-based program that previously served only teens and their parents, but in response to data revealing that 18% of potential enrollees fell within the 18-26 age range, LVF has extended its programming to also serve young adults. This expansion addresses an area of need as there is a lack of vaping treatment programs for adults.

Other notable updates to Live Vape Free include the introduction of a new landing page on the LVF website and a promotional starter kit of free Nicotine Replacement Therapy for individuals aged 18-26 who enroll in the program by the end of June 2024 (subject to eligibility and availability).

The Live Vape Free cessation program runs 30-45 days and guides participants in creating a quit plan and setting a quit date. Key features include round-the-clock text messaging support and interactive content, such as videos and podcasts.



How to enroll:

www.livevapefree.com

Text **INDIANA** to **873373**

Live Vape Free continues to provide assistance and support to parents and guardians, as well. Often, parents are at a loss when they suspect their child is vaping. LVF provides guidance on identifying signs of teen vaping and initiating constructive dialogue about it, and ways to support a teen to get treatment and recover. It also provides online education about vaping and opportunities to engage with a professional coach to get their questions answered.

Parents can sign up by visiting www.rallyhealth.com/live-vape-free.

COALITION SPOTLIGHT



Carla Harrison, MBA, CCHW, is a Health Equity Community Health Worker for the IDOH Office of Minority Health and joined TFAC 7 years ago. This work is deeply personal to her because she has lost many loved ones from tobacco, and she's determined to prevent more deaths through education. When Carla turned 18, she informed her parents that she was going to start smoking like they did. This statement motivated them to quit because Carla said, "They didn't want to pass their bad habit on to me, and inspiring them to quit is a great testimony to have." Thank you, Carla, for being a dedicated member of the Coalition and for being committed to building a healthier community for all.

Congratulations!



Indiana State Health Commissioner Dr. Lindsay Weaver; Allen Co. Dept of Health Administrator, Mindy Waldron; and Deputy State Health Commissioner of Local Health Services, Pam Pontone

TFAC extends its congratulations to Mindy Waldron, Allen County Department of Health Administrator for her Indiana Department of Health Public Health Hero Award, presented at Public Health Day 2024 at the Statehouse in February. This award recognizes "Exceptional Spirit and Practice of Public Health" and honors Mindy's exceptional dedication and expertise to public health in Allen County. TFAC adds our appreciation to Mindy for initiating a partnership between the Health Department, TFAC, Allen County Schools, and McMillen Health to address student vaping.

ALA's 2024 "State of Tobacco Control" Indiana Report Card

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Tobacco Prevention & Cessation Funding:



Smoke Free Air:



Tobacco Tax:



Access to Cessation Services:



Flavored Tobacco Products:



View the full [report](#)

INDIANA'S TOBACCO CONTROL REPORT CARD

The American Lung Association published its 22nd Annual "State of Tobacco Control" report, which assesses and ranks each state's initiatives to reduce tobacco-related deaths and illnesses through the implementation of evidence-based policies and laws. Indiana was given 'F-grades' in three areas: Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Funding, Tobacco Tax, and Flavored Tobacco Products, and a 'C-grade' in Smoke-Free Air and Access to Cessation Services.

Compared to the previous year's report, Indiana made improvement in one area, Access to Cessation Services, where it previously received a 'D-grade.' Locally, we have seen progress in this area as a number of recovery organizations are now supporting those who want to quit by connecting them with cessation services. There has been an increase in the number of Tobacco Treatment Specialists, enhancing cessation services for underserved groups such as the uninsured, and efforts to improve access to cessation services for youth and schools have been underway through community education events, partnerships with schools, and outreach at pediatric offices.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Freedom from Smoking® 7-week Virtual Group Classes:

June 18 - July 30
Meets weekly on Tuesdays from
4:30pm-6:30pm. Cost: Free

For more info or to register for a
class, please call 260-266-6500.

Instructors can walk participants
through the process of getting into
virtual meetings.

Upcoming TTS Training:

Nov 15, 18, 19
Click [HERE](#) for more info

SAVE THE DATE

Indiana Tobacco Prevention & Cessation 2024 Partner Information X-Change

Oct 22-24
The Seasons Lodge
Nashville, IN (Brown County)

TFAC Coalition members are
encouraged to attend!
Registration info will be shared
in the coming days.

REMINDER

Our next coalition meeting will be
in person at The Tall Rabbit Cafe
on June 12 @ 12:00. We hope to
see you there!

THANK YOU!

To our volunteers who
helped with the 2024
Tobacco Retailer
Assessments. We
appreciate you!

- Carla Harrison
- Denise Robinson
- Shirley Dubois
- IU Fort Wayne Nursing
Students
- Manchester University
Pharmacy Students
- VOICE youth

Join! us!

Want to get involved in our
work? [Join](#) our Coalition!
We currently meet the 2nd
Wednesday of every month
at noon. If you are already
a member, please spread
the word about us!

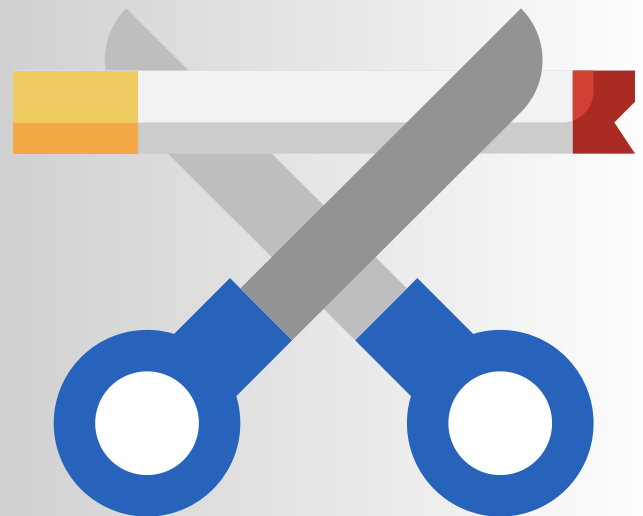
QUIT STORIES WANTED!



***Have you quit using tobacco?
If so, we'd love to hear your story!***

We are looking for community members who are open to sharing their personal quit stories to be featured in our newsletter. To participate, please scan the QR code or contact Taylor.

SCAN HERE



Taylor's Contact Info:

Phone: 260-705-8560

Email: tbowser@tobaccofree02.org

Tobacco Free
ALLEN COUNTY 