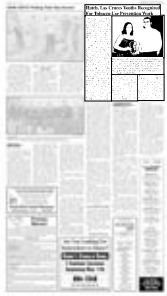


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Hatch, Las Cruces Youths Recognized For Tobacco-Use Prevention Work

By Sharon Kayne

Maria Gonzales of Hatch received Second Place in the middle school division of the Youth Advocate of the Year Award. The award honored tobacco-use prevention work she has done as a member of SHOUT (Students Helping Others Understand Tobacco). Maria has been instrumental in helping with her school's 'Through With Chew' event and in assisting with 'Kick Butts Day'.

Monique Granados of Las Cruces received third place in the middle school division of the Youth Advocate of the Year Award. Monique is a member of SHOUT (Students Helping Others Understand Tobacco) at Zia Middle School in Las Cruces. Her involvement with the coalition includes participating in Kick Butts Day, World No Tobacco Day, Relay for Life, and spit tobacco education at the Southern New Mexico State Fair.

The Award was presented at the 6th Annual Fame & Shame Awards ceremony on Saturday, May 8, in Albuquerque. The Fame and Shame Awards ceremony is a youth-planned, Oscar-style event that highlights the impact Hollywood films have on youth smoking, while celebrating the youth in New Mexico who are working



(Courtesy Photo/Ray Mares)

Maria Gonzales (left) accepts second place in the middle school division of the Youth Advocate of the Year Award from Brian Urban (right), Youth Link Program Coordinator. Gonzales is a member of the Hatch SHOUT (Students Helping Others Understand Tobacco) group. Gonzales has been instrumental in helping with her school's Through With Chew event and in assisting with Kick Butts Day.

to prevent tobacco use among their peers. The "Youth Advocate of the Year Award" recognizes these teens who have distinguished themselves by working to protect their peers and communities from tobacco addiction and related illnesses.

A total of 20 youths were nominated. The teens are all part of the YEAH! Coalition

(Youth Advocacy Empowerment Heroes!) through the anti-tobacco groups in their schools or communities. The winners were selected by a diverse panel of adults from around the state. Selection is based on the work the youths have done throughout the year on tobacco-use prevention efforts in their communities.