

Cibola County
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Padilla honored for anti-smoking campaign

CIBOLA COUNTY - Amie Lee Padilla of Grants and 19 other middle- and high-school students from across the state were nominated for their outstanding work to prevent tobacco use by their peers and in their communities. Three students each from the high school group and the middle school group will be selected to receive the Youth Advocate of the Year Award. The honors will be bestowed at the sixth annual Fame and Shame Awards ceremony, which takes place on May 8 in Albuquerque.

Each student works with a school-based tobacco-pre-

vention group. Youth Link, a program of New Mexico Voices for Children, coordinates the coalition's activities, which include various trainings, planning sessions and the awards.

Padilla has participated in tobacco prevention efforts for four years through the Cibola County Youth Council. She has made presentations at local schools and the family center, and created and distributed flyers with facts about tobacco-related health problems.

"When it comes to influencing teens, particularly around behavior issues like smoking, other teens can be

the most effective messengers," said Rasa Herzog, Youth Link Program Manager. "Teens want to be accepted by their peers, and the decision to smoke - or not smoke - is often a matter of doing what your friends are doing. So these kids are really making a difference. At the same time, they're learning skills like leadership and team-building that will help them as they make their way in the world as young adults," she added.

The award show is Saturday, May 8, from 4:30-7:30 p.m. at the KiMo Theatre. Admission is free and open to the public.

