



PRESS RELEASE

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New Mexico Youth Recognized for Tobacco-Use Prevention Work

Six New Mexico youths from across the state were recognized with the "Youth Kicking Tobacco's Butt Youth Advocate of the Year Award." The honors went to three high school students and three middle school students.

The high school winners are: Arthur Armijo of Raton (First Place), Jennifer Campos of Clovis (Second Place), and Hannah Neann Folk of Farmington (Third Place). The middle school winners are: Karina Dominguez of Moriarty (First Place), Maria Gonzales of Hatch (Second Place) and Monique Granados of Las Cruces (Third Place). Short biographies of the youths are attached separately.

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 honors were presented on Saturday, May 8, 2010, at the **6th Annual Fame and Shame Awards**. 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 to prevent tobacco use among their peers. The "Youth Kicking Tobacco's Butt 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.

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.

"These youth are instrumental in educating our communities about the harms of tobacco use," said Rasa Herzog, Youth Link/YEAH! Program Manager. "With more than 90 percent of smokers starting before age 19, we need even more leaders like our Advocates of the Year."

This event is sponsored by the New Mexico Department of Health Tobacco Use Prevention and Control Program, YEAH!, New Mexico Media Literacy Project, and Youth Link, a program of New Mexico Voices for Children. Additional sponsors and in-kind donors include: Park it Place, Crystal Springs, American Tent Rental, Lucky Boyz Limo, and Warehouse 508.

Event photos will be available upon request.

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New Mexico Voices for Children is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization advocating for policies to improve the health and well-being of New Mexico's children, families and communities.

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2010 Youth Advocates of the Year Award Winners

High School Winners:

1st Place: Arthur Armijo/Raton Arthur is a member of the Raton SWAT Team (Students Working Against Tobacco), where he worked on getting the school to implement an educational alternative to the suspension program that was in effect for students caught using tobacco on campus.

2nd Place: Jennifer Campos/Clovis Jennifer is a member of SCAT (Students Concerned About Tobacco) and has used her bilingual skill to educate the area Spanish-speaking community about the harmful effects of tobacco use.

3rd Place: Hannah Neann Folk/Farmington Neann is a member of the Farmington PIRATEs (Peers In Rage Against Tobacco Everywhere), through which she presents media literacy programs about how tobacco products are marketed to young people. "I love seeing the 'Ah ha' moment on my peers' faces," she said.

Middle School Winners:

1st Place: Karina Dominguez/Moriarty Karina is a delegate of the Talking Talons YEAH! Action Team at Moriarty Middle School. Karina has focused her advocacy efforts on wildlife and the harmful effects tobacco has on them.

2nd Place: Maria Gonzalez/Hatch Maria is a member of SHOUT (Students Helping Others Understand Tobacco.) She enjoys teaching young children about tobacco risks and being an example to others. Maria has been instrumental in helping with her school's Through With Chew event and in assisting with Kick Butts Day.

3rd Place: Monique Granados/Las Cruces 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.