

Bright Spot Award Questions

Please explain why you think this initiative should be considered for the TDH Bright Spot Awards.

(150 words max); (10 points available)

The Breathe Easy Track Meet is a fun, cost-effective, and creative activity that not only teaches middle school students about the dangers of tobacco, but it also allows them to be active while learning – engaging their minds and bodies. This initiative incorporated T4 students across the county, community partners such as Coordinated School Health staff, and involved planning with staff within the school system. Peer-to-peer learning has been shown to enhance student learning and proves to be a more effective tool to teach students about the dangers of tobacco use.¹ By having T4 students lead and direct the activities, middle school students were positively influenced by their peers to avoid tobacco products in all forms, including ENDS products.

¹Bilgic, N. & Günay, T. (2018). Evaluation of effectiveness of peer education on smoking behavior among high school students. *Saudi Medical Journal*, 39 (1): 74-80. doi: [10.15537/smj.2018.1.21774](https://doi.org/10.15537/smj.2018.1.21774)

Why is this initiative important to your community? Is this initiative contributing to a policy, systems, and/or environmental change¹ in the community? (300 words max); (75 points available)

Many students in the community come from generational tobacco-user families. Additionally, students report that their family members have quit traditional smoking but now vape. Within the community, a common misconception among adults and youth is that ENDS products are safer alternatives to cigarette smoking. Youth fail to realize the amount of nicotine in these products and the carcinogenic properties the flavorings contain. Students in this school system are sent to alternative school or expelled for a year if caught using tobacco. Not only do students miss valuable instruction time, but they are not educated on the dangers of their choices which perpetuates the cycle of tobacco use. By working with Coordinated School Health on this Kick Butts Day project along with other anti-tobacco projects and pushing for policy changes within the school system, we are in talks of modifying this expulsion/alternative school rule in lieu of a Saturday School with mandated tobacco education for both students and parents.

What are the SMART objective goals and major purpose(s) of this initiative? (SMART objectives are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time Bound. Example: By May 2019; all soft drink machines in Lauderdale County Schools will be turned off during the school day, per school board policy.) (300 words max); (10 points available)

By National Kick Butts Day on March 20, 2019, classes granted permission by school administration at the middle schools in the county will participate in a Breathe Easy Track Meet by grade level in which T4 students will peer educate about tobacco while encouraging participation in related physical activities for the middle school students.

When each grade level came out to the field, they were numbered into 7 different groups. Each group followed their T4 student to their respective station. T4 students were given facts about smoking to relay to their groups before

¹ Policy, systems and environmental change is a way of modifying the environment to make healthy choices practical and available to all community members. By changing laws and shaping physical landscapes, a big impact can be made with little time and resources. By changing policies, systems and/or environments, communities can help tackle health issues like obesity, diabetes, cancer and other chronic diseases (<http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/files/CPW/PSE%20Change.pdf>)

beginning their particular activity. Students spent 6-8 minutes at each station and then rotated to the next activity. The stations were as follows:

Station 1: Get Rid of that Cigarette as Fast as You Can! Team Dynamics Relay

Station 2: Get Rid of that Cigarette as Fast as You Can! Track Meet

Station 3: Breathe Through a Straw Standing in Place

Station 4: Breathing Through a Straw – Comparison of Smoker’s Lungs vs. Healthy Lungs

Station 5: Crush Big Tobacco – Shotput Event

Station 6: Crush Big Tobacco – Knock Down Tobacco Ads

Station 7: Jump Away From Tobacco!

Students learned important information regarding tobacco and then were able to actively participate in competitions and other events containing negative propaganda towards tobacco products. For example, in Station 6, stand-up signs were dispersed among a section of the field. E-cigarette and dip ads that specifically target youth were taped to the signs. Students were given dodgeballs to throw at the signs in hopes of either hitting the ad directly or knocking over the sign. Students had a blast knocking down tobacco ads!

What is the annual budget and funding source for this initiative? If no funding is available, how have you implemented or sustained the initiative? (150 words max); (5 points available)

Tobacco grant funding was used to purchase straws for students to use while completing certain activities such as jumping up and down, sprinting, etc. while using the straw and then comparing how it felt without the straw using their full lung capacity. The total money spent was \$15.06. For the rest of the activities, we borrowed equipment from the regional office and the school P.E. teachers.

Have community partners helped with the initiative? What are the roles of these partners? (300 words max); (20 points available)

Coordinated School Health staff was instrumental in scheduling meetings with T4 students to plan for this event, receiving approval from school administration, and allowing us to complete an inventory of school gym equipment. T4 students from high schools across the county attended planning meetings. Their efforts resulted in: 1) Choosing this project to implement for Kick Butts Day, 2) Planning the specifics of how the events would be carried out, and 3) Running the stations. A teacher at one of the middle schools liked the event so much that she filmed students shouting, “WMS Kicks Butts!” at the end of the event and told us she planned to have her media students put together a mini video of the event.

Describe your staff’s involvement, including the interdisciplinary team approach taken with this initiative? Begin with the planning process; explain staff roles in planning and implementing the initiative. Discuss how you foster creative scheduling so that clinical staff can lend their expertise? (350 words max); (20 points available)

The health department staff has been involved in a number of initiatives benefiting the community throughout the year. Because the main focus of the Breathe Easy Track Meet was peer-to-peer education, T4 students, CSH, and the TDH health educator were the main team members for this project. In regards to creative scheduling for other community events, staff alternates on what events they attend, who does set up, and who works the actual event. The front office staff always makes sure someone is at the health department to answer phones and check patients

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in and out. Nurses are also always on site with a rotating schedule of who attends what event so that clinic is never halted. Teamwork and collaboration make planning and scheduling flow seamlessly.

In what way is this initiative especially innovative? How is this initiative different from other similar programs? Is there a specific idea tested with this approach? Is this work informed by relevant literature or research studies? (400 words max); (20 points available)

While this activity was recommended on the KickButtsDay.org website, we added to their ideas and modified to make the event the best it could be for our students. Additionally, we incorporated T4 students in the planning and execution phases of this activity so that peer-to-peer education and interaction took place. To my knowledge, this initiative has not been implemented in other counties throughout our region. Rather than set up a booth/table with information about tobacco, conducting a presentation, or educating via visual aids, this activity allows students to learn AND be physically active – the culmination of two primary prevention measures most necessary in rural communities.

Social interaction is crucial in the learning environment for students. Hurst, Wallace, & Nixon (2013) found that there were four themes regarding social interaction in the learning environment.¹ “Students believe social interaction: (a) helps students learn from others (23%), (b) makes learning fun (16%), (c) gets students interested and engaged (10%), and (d) allows students a chance to talk in the classroom (8%).”¹ We want all of these elements to be present in an effective activity, and with the Breathe Easy Track Meet, they are.

Regarding peer education, not only is it crucial in youth behavior changes but tobacco-specific youth education positively affects behavior change. Bilgic and Günay (2018) showed peer education to be effective in helping youth peers to quit smoking.² More students transitioned into the action and maintenance stages of quitting from the precontemplation stage due to peer tobacco education.² Our hope is that the Breathe Easy Track Meet had a similar effect on students.

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²Hurst, B., Wallace, R., & Nixon, S.B. (2013). The impact of social interaction on student learning. *Reading Horizons*, 52(4). Retrieved from https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading_horizons/vol52/iss4/5

How are you evaluating the effectiveness of the initiative? Is the initiative on track to achieve stated goals or has it achieved stated goals? (350 words max); (20 points available)

Debriefing with T4 students and CSH afterwards provided great insight for areas of improvement. Because the middle school students recognize this group from working in the schools on anti-tobacco initiatives, they are comfortable in talking with them. One student told the health educator he needed to stop Juuling and was promptly given the Juul textline information. In future Breathe Easy events, a survey or a quick feedback interview with participants would prove to be a useful tool to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. The initiative was completed successfully on time and achieved its goals.

What limitations or obstacles might be expected if others wished to replicate this initiative? (300 words max); (50 points available)

Coordinating this event to accommodate the T4 group’s schedule as well as coordinating a day that works well for each school and receiving approval from administration and teachers might be a common obstacle. Not all grade

levels were able to participate in our event at one school, so we had to be flexible and make sure they received the tobacco education in another form at a different event. Depending on the school system and the relationship the school system has with the party asking to implement this project, scheduling and approval could be either a fairly easy or rather difficult task.

Due to the consistent rain, flooding, and cold weather, we were worried we would not be able to have the event outside, so we made arrangements with the schools to use their indoor facilities in the event that the weather did not permit us to be outside. We also made plans for activity modifications indoors because the space would be limited.

In theory, some of the activities sounded great on paper, but when they were implemented they did not go as well as hoped. When this occurred, T4 students adapted the activities with each group rotation until the modifications were well-liked by both parties.

Being flexible for a large-scale event like this and having plans in place for potential hiccups is the best practice in order to achieve the greatest results.

Is this initiative sustainable without the resources of the local health department being involved? (250 words max); (20 points available)

This initiative is absolutely sustainable! Anyone in the community – from the PTA to teachers, administration, Coordinated School Health, local businesses or healthcare organizations, the health council, or leadership teams at the high school – could replicate this project at the middle schools (and even at the elementary schools!). Because the project is cost-effective, local donations from stores for the straws may be an option, or funding within the school budget may allow for this purchase. Every school gym has the basic equipment that is needed, and activities can always be modified for each school to accommodate lack of equipment and/or personnel working the stations. Minimal planning, minimal equipment, and affordable purchases make this a great event that anyone could do anywhere for all age groups!