

**The Tobacco Free Partnership of Martin County Honors Community  
Leaders for Their Work on Local Tobacco Prevention Issues**  
*By Dr. Barry Hummel, Jr., Quit Doc Research and Education Foundation*

On May 29, 2014, the Tobacco Free Partnership of Martin County presented their annual Tobacco Prevention Awards to local community leaders at the organization's quarterly meeting.

The Tobacco Prevention Awards are presented each year to groups or individuals who have made an exceptional contribution towards the goals of the Tobacco Free Partnership.

***Community Champion Awards*** are given each year to individuals who spearhead the effort on a particular tobacco prevention initiative. This year, three individuals were recognized as Community Champions for a number of diverse and important tobacco prevention projects.

Kevin Abbate, the Director of [Martin County Parks and Recreation](#), was named a Community Champion for his ongoing efforts to create smoke-free parks and beaches. Mr. Abbate called for a workshop with the Martin County Board of County Commissioners in February 2014, during which they discussed possible options for reducing tobacco use and tobacco litter in local parks and beaches. The County Commissioners agreed to establish a regional working group with Indian River, St. Lucie, Palm Beach, and Broward Counties to work on the issue collectively. Mr. Abbate is now working on a framework for the working group.

Stuart Mayor Troy McDonald was also named a Community Champion. Mayor McDonald was instrumental in passing the first Martin County ordinance to restrict the sale of electronic cigarettes to minors, require that the devices be placed behind the counter to reduce youth access, and restrict their use in places where traditional tobacco products are currently banned. These rules are important because there are currently no such rules at the state or federal level (though a new law to establish a statewide age restriction is awaiting Florida Governor Scott's signature). Mayor McDonald also supported the recent efforts by the City of Stuart to create completely smoke-free properties. Lastly, Mayor McDonald has been an outspoken proponent of tobacco prevention efforts at the state level.

Finally, Justin Beard of [The United Way of Martin County](#) received a 2014 Community Champion Award. Mr. Beard has been a tireless advocate for tobacco prevention initiatives through his work with The United Way. This year, he took a particular interest in the environmental impact of tobacco use, which gained more traction as a result of the local efforts improve the water quality of the Indian River Lagoon.

Each year, The Tobacco Free Partnership recognizes key leaders from the Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) Program. Ally Diaz, a student from Martin County High School, was named ***2014 SWAT Youth of the Year***. Ms Diaz has become one of

Florida's youth experts on electronic cigarettes, even training SWAT youth from Southeast Florida on the subject. Locally, she worked with the City of Stuart on their new ordinance to reduce youth access and exposure to electronic cigarettes. She was also actively involved in local advocacy, presenting at numerous school board meetings, commission meetings, and our annual Legislative Delegation Meeting with state lawmakers. Ms. Diaz will be attending college in Savannah, Georgia in the fall.

Michelle Martland, the SWAT Advisor from David L. Anderson Middle School, was named **2014 SWAT Advisor of the Year**. Mr. Martland restarted the SWAT Club at Anderson this year, and created the most active Middle School club in Martin County. Her students participated in a number of local events, and several of her students created an anti-tobacco public service announcement that took Second Place in a local [Radio PSA Contest](#).

Four **2014 Community Partner of the Year** Awards were presented.

The [City of Stuart](#) was recognized as a **Community Partner** for creating a comprehensive tobacco-free workplace policy. The new policy establishes completely tobacco-free properties and the city will no longer employ tobacco users. In addition, the city will provide tobacco cessation classes to employees to help them prior to start date of the new policy.

The [Hobe Sound Chamber of Commerce](#) was recognized as a **Community Partner** for working on the issue of tobacco-free businesses and employer-based tobacco cessation programs. The Hobe Sound Chamber of Commerce has shared important information on these projects, creating links on their web page to a [Tobacco Free Business Toolkit](#).

The Town of Sewall's Point received a 2014 Community Partner Award for its work on youth tobacco issues. Most notably, the town passed a Resolution encouraging local retailers to stop the sale of flavored tobacco products that target youth, adding its name to a growing list of counties and municipalities throughout Florida. Their award was presented at a recent meeting of the Town Council.

Finally, The Martin County Board of County Commissioners was recognized as a **Community Partner** for their work to create a smoke-free parks and beaches by establishing a multi-county coalition to address the issue and look for a common solution to the problem.

The work of the Tobacco Free Partnership would not be possible without the support and the effort of all of its members. This year's award winners once again demonstrated a special commitment to tobacco prevention that is continuing to make a positive difference in Martin County.

For more information on the work of the Tobacco Free Partnership, or to become a member, contact Kim Waser at [kwaser@quitdoc.com](mailto:kwaser@quitdoc.com), or visit [www.tfp-martin.org](http://www.tfp-martin.org).