

The Tobacco Free Partnership of Martin County Honors Community Leaders for Their Work on Tobacco Prevention *By Dr. Barry Hummel, Jr., Quit Doc Research and Education Foundation (Photos by Pat Graham)*

On May 30, 2012, 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 one of the goals of the Tobacco Free Partnership. Five *Community Partners of the Year* Awards were presented. The 2012 ***Community Partner Award for Promoting Tobacco-Free Social Norms*** was given to Kevin Abbate, Director of the Martin County Department of Parks and Recreation. Mr. Abbate was instrumental in supporting the creation of Tobacco Free Zones on County Properties to reduce the amount of tobacco-related litter. He helped to bring the issue before the Martin County Board of County Commissioners for their support of the project.

The 2012 ***Community Partner Award for Promoting Tobacco-Free Lifestyles*** was presented to Justin Beard of the United Way Martin County. Mr. Beard has partnered with the Tobacco Free Partnership and SWAT for three years during the annual Single Fin Showdown Surf Contest to highlight the issue of tobacco trash and secondhand smoke on our local beaches. Data collected by SWAT youth at Stuart Beach during the event has convinced county leaders to explore stronger rules regarding tobacco use on our local beaches.

The 2012 ***Community Partner Award for Promoting Advocacy and Policy Change*** was presented to Darcy Flierl of Tykes and Teens. Ms. Flierl is also the Co-Chair of the Shared Services Network Steering Committee, a community coalition working on youth prevention issues in Martin County. She has been working to incorporate tobacco prevention issues into the strategic plan of the Shared Services Network, which has led to the coalition's support of several local policy changes in the use and marketing of tobacco products.

The 2012 ***Community Partner Award for Promoting Community Collaboration*** was given to Maureen Ryan of the Martin County Health Department. Ms. Ryan has worked with the Tobacco Free Partnership for several years to bring tobacco education and prevention programs and materials to the staff and clients of the Martin County Health

Department. As one of the original members of the Tobacco Free Partnership, she has also worked to integrate the work of the Partnership into several other community collaborations, including the School Health Advisory Council, The Shared Services Network, and the InterAgency Coalition.

The 2012 ***Community Partner Award for Promoting Youth Leadership and Advocacy*** was given to Mike Sancho, Director of the Martin County Department of Parks and Recreation. Mr. Sancho helped to expand the SWAT program into the teen programs at the Boys and Girls Clubs by incorporating SWAT into two leadership programs: the TORCH and Keystone Clubs. The students in these programs developed new tobacco prevention programs for their peers.

Dana Ford, the Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) Advisor from Hobe Sound Boys and Girls Club, was presented with the ***SWAT Advisor of the Year Award***. Members of Mr. Ford's SWAT Club presented at a number of public hearings to work on the issue of smoke-free parks and beaches. His SWAT youth also helped create and attended this year's regional SWAT event, *Snow'd White's Toxic Café*, held at SunFest in May.

Several Community Star Awards were presented. Community Stars are individuals who have taken a leadership role in one of the Partnership's goal areas. ***Community Star Awards for SWAT Leadership and Public Speaking*** were presented to Megan Koenig (Martin County High School), Giovanni Sancho (Hobe Sound Boys and Girls Club / Clark Advanced Learning Center), Aaliyah Darville (Hobe Sound Boys and Girls Club / Martin County High School), and Kashia Darville (Hobe Sound Boys and Girls Club / Murray Middle School). During the past year, these four youth presented at every major public meeting or public hearing on issues of flavored tobacco marketing and smoke-free parks and beaches.

***Community Star Awards for Youth Tobacco Prevention Education*** were presented to Charlie Nail and Russ Buhl, cancer survivors who donate their time speaking in front of school groups on the dangers of tobacco use. This is particularly difficult for Mr. Nail, who had a Laryngectomy for treatment of throat cancer over 20 years ago. Both Mr. Nail and Mr. Buhl are also active volunteers for the local unit of the American Cancer Society.

Several other certificates were awarded for Excellent Youth Leadership. Barbara Anderson, the new South Fork High School SWAT Advisor, was recognized for

restarting the SWAT program at SFHS after a two-year absence. Priya Shah and Lauren Thomas, both of South Fork High School, were recognized for their leadership roles on the *Snow'd White's Toxic Café* at SunFest. Their hard work has set the stage for a very dynamic 2012-1013 school year.

Rebeca De La Espriella and Sarah Ciampi, both of Martin County High School, were recognized for their work on the County Resolution encouraging local retailers to voluntarily halt the sale of flavored tobacco products targeting underage youth. The work of the Tobacco Free Partnership would not be possible without the support and the effort of all of its members, but this year's award winners went well beyond the call of duty 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 Valerie Graham at [vgraham@quitdoc.com](mailto:vgraham@quitdoc.com), or visit [www.tfp-martin.org](http://www.tfp-martin.org).