

For Immediate Release

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Manhasset Middle School SADD Club Takes Action Against Big Tobacco!

Manhasset, NY – Excitement was in the air at the Manhasset Middle School, as SADD Club students provided building wide educational awareness activities on National Kick Butts Day, Wednesday, March 23, 2011. Coordination of the event was on all levels and included participation from the Manhasset Middle School Guidance and Science Departments, Manhasset CASA, Healthy Schools NY: Student Support Services Center at Western Suffolk BOCES as well as the Tobacco Action Coalition of Long Island.

Kick Butts Day is a national day of activism that empowers youth to speak up and take action against Big Tobacco . The SADD Club, ready and eager to advocate to their peers, distributed educational materials to students regarding the manipulative tactics used by the tobacco industry to market tobacco products to kids as well as the health and safety risks of tobacco addiction.

“Kick Butts Day is a great opportunity to promote the dangers of tobacco use through hands-on activities which also communicate our district’s commitment to our Tobacco Free Schools Policy,” said Principal Dean Schlanger. “Our district is proud of our SADD club’s student effort to educate their peers and encourage a tobacco free environment.”

Prior to Kick Butt’s Day, Mr. Robert Klang’s 7th grade science classes designed creative anti-smoking ads depicting the health consequences of smoking tobacco. Student posters were displayed in the science wing as part of the educational events leading up to Kick Butts Day and were also displayed during the SADD educational event. SADD Club Advisor, Caitlin Finley was very proud of the hard work done by the students. Ms. Finley said, "It is truly inspiring to see the students get energized and eager to do things for their school community. The students did a terrific job planning, organizing and implementing Kick Butts Day 2011. The response by their Middle School peers was excellent, and the club is looking forward to more fun activities!" One student added, "I thought that it was a big success. I feel that not smoking is very important to me because my grandfather passed away to a smoking-related disease and I never had the chance to meet him."

According to Carol Meschkow, Nassau Project Coordinator of the Tobacco Action Coalition of Long Island, “Research shows that exposure to tobacco marketing in stores is a primary cause of youth smoking. Young people are almost twice as likely as adults to recall tobacco advertising.” Meschkow continued, “As most adult smokers become addicted before they graduate from high school; 90% of them start before the age of 18. We were so delighted to partner to help prevent the next generation of smokers and change the perception that Big Tobacco Marketing is harmless.”

This year, Kick Butts Day coincided with a statewide campaign addressing point of sales marketing and advertising of tobacco products. Tobacco companies currently spend more than \$12 billion annually to market their lethal products to current and potential customers. In New York State alone, \$429 million is spent each year. Kick Butts Day affords students and schools the opportunity to ‘stand out, speak up, and seize control against big tobacco.’

For more information about Kick Butts Day go to www.kickbuttsday.org or Manhasset CASA’s website at www.manhassetcasa.org .



Early morning excitement at the Manhasset Middle School SADD Club’s Kick Butts Day Educational Awareness Event. Robert Klang, 7th Grade Science Teacher and Principal Dean Schlanger display 7th Grade Science Students’ anti-smoking ads.



All hands on deck to educate about the dangers of tobacco!



The end of the day was filled with more outreach as students boarded buses.



SADD Students display the “Expose Big Tobacco” brochure which outlines the 5 most common ways the tobacco industry targets youth.



Everyone joined in on Kick Butts Day!