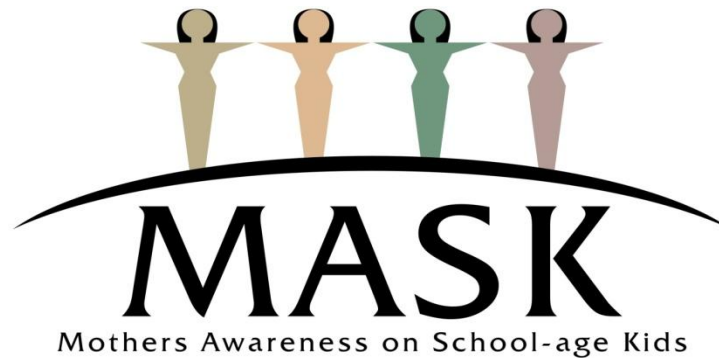


NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION NEWS RELEASE

April 29, 2009

Contact: Michelle Cardini 480-570-6809 or michelle@azmask.org



This month MASK held an interactive parent/child presentation on the “Dangers of Smoking”. A team of Scottsdale Healthcare professionals presented to nearly 100 children ages 5-14. The children participated in tactical activities to learn the long term affects and dangers associated with tobacco. A group of Kindergarten through 3rd grade children constructed paper windpipes complete with cilia (tiny hairs) inside to illustrate the damage smoking can do to the wind pipe. Furthermore, to demonstrate the numerous amounts of chemicals found in a single cigarette,

Scottsdale Healthcare and the children created what they call a “Cigarette Milkshake”.

Children added ingredients such as Clorox, vinegar, nail polish remover, butane, ammonia, batteries and mouth wash. Additionally nearly 100 children signed a pledge “Never to try Tobacco”. The American Lung Association estimates that every minute 4,800 teens will take their first drag of a cigarette and of those 4,800 about 2,000 will go on to be a chain smoker. Statistics show that nicotine is considered the number one entrance drug into other substance abuse problems. This month MASK reach out know to enlighten nearly 100 children to the dangers of smoking.

MASK (Mothers Awareness on School-age Kids), is a non-profit organization, focused on assisting parents as they navigate the broad set of challenges facing kids today. “Our mission is to educate both parents and children about the issues facing our youth today and to empower our children to make safe, healthy choices” states Kimberly Cabral, Founder/President of MASK.

MASK was created by a group of dedicated mothers who felt there was a need to constantly educate parents and children with issues that are so rapidly changing. For example, parents and children need to be aware of the implications associated with cyber bullying and texting. Today, if a child sends an inappropriate message or image via modern technology it can be considered a felony. Parents and Children need to be aware and educated on such issues.

Therefore MASK holds multiple monthly meetings where they enlist experts in the field to bring parents and children up to date on current issues. MASK addresses a wide range of topics

including but not limited to, current drug and alcohol trends, internet safety, eating disorders, depression, bullying, peer to peer relationships and the dangers of smoking. The mission of MASK is to increase awareness among parents and children – with the goal of improving communication with our children. MASK also gives parents an opportunity to network and share tools that focus on prevention and promote healthy peer relationships. Monthly meetings are generally attended by parents only. However, MASK will often design sessions where both parents and children are asked to participate.



MASK's "Dangers of Smoking" Presentation for Parents and Children

Last summer, MASK partnered with the Attorney General's Office and was trained to be part of the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force. The ICAC Task Force Program was created to help local and state law enforcement agencies enhance their investigative response to offenders who use the internet, on-line communication systems, or other computer technology to sexually exploit children. MASK is proud to communicate this information to parents and children in the Valley.

Additionally, MASK partnered with the Boys & Girls Club of Scottsdale which will allow MASK to reach out to the community. The MASK goal is to navigate awareness throughout the Valley and create positive healthy opportunities for children to get involved in. These activities will ultimately strengthen the children at their core and empower them to make safe, healthy choices.

Next year MASK will bring a new element to schools and the Boys & Girls Clubs throughout the Valley. It is a program brought exclusively by MASK;

Awareness *through the* **ARTS**

is designed to bring awareness to parents and children on issues such as drugs, internet safety, eating disorders, depression, healthy peer relationships, and bullying. Children will bring awareness through dance, music, singing, and acting. "We want to bring a positive vibe to children who have decided to make safe, healthy choices. A vibe that kids can relate to which would include music they are familiar with and kids from all aspects of life. Our goal is to create parent and child networks, to promote healthy choices and healthy outlets for kids. Our vision is to ultimately see parents and children working together to create a positive shift in our society. Together we can make a difference." states Kimberly Cabral Founder/President of MASK.

To learn more about the efforts of MASK please visit
www.azmask.org

###