

[As published in the Frontiersman]

Dear Editor

More than 400,000 people in the United States will die this year from a tobacco related disease. On April 2<sup>nd</sup> “Kick Butts Day” our group called Mat-Su T.A.T.U. (Teens Against Tobacco Use) took a stand to stop youth from getting hooked on deadly tobacco products. We are students from Palmer High, Valley Pathways, Mat-Su Career/Tech High and Palmer Junior Middle school and we took our message to the streets of Palmer. With hand made banners, signs, posters, a bucket of sidewalk chalk and a megaphone we spread the word that tobacco kills. “Kick Butts Day” is a national event sponsored by Tobacco Free Kids and is a chance to heighten awareness of the dangers of tobacco use and to petition for FDA regulation on tobacco use.

Our T.A.T.U. group would like to recognize and thank the following business in and around Palmer who showed their support during the event.

Big THANKS go to the following: the City of Palmer, Spenard Builders Supply, Country Cutts, Coffee & Cream, Ace Hardware, AutoQuest, Alaska Family Services, Palmer Vision Clinic, and Palmer Chiropractic. Also, big thanks to all of the people who honked to show their support and gave us thumbs up. We could not have done it with out your support!

There are many effective ways state and local officials can protect young people from tobacco. They can use funds from the states’ 1998 legal settlement with the tobacco companies to pay for tobacco prevention programs; they can increase tobacco taxes; and they can pass smoke-free laws to protect us from secondhand smoke. Consider these facts: Each day, more than 1,000 kids become new regular smokers; roughly one-third of them will die prematurely from a tobacco-related disease.

Today’s youth are not just part of the problem; they’re part of the solution. Our Mat-Su T.A.T.U. group wants tobacco companies to know that on “Kick Butts Day” and everyday throughout the year, we will fight them every step of the way!

Sincerely,

Mat-Su T.A.T.U. (Teens Against Tobacco Use)