

# Metro Omaha Tobacco Action Coalition



Volume 2, Issue 4, June 2011

## My Place, My Space - Playing Tobacco Free

Girl Scout Troops from Wakonda Elementary and Conestoga Elementary received *Certificates of Achievement* for their participation in “My Place, My Space-Playing Tobacco Free”

**Community Project**, presented by Prevention Specialist Vickie Young. Approximately 60 Brownies and Juniors explored the dangers of secondhand smoke and the benefits of smoke-free environments at playgrounds and parks.

The girls learned several tobacco facts during the project and discussed how to reduce secondhand smoke in their community. Both troops agreed that Fontenelle Park, located near Fontenelle Boulevard & Ames, would be the focus of their smoke-free park campaign.

During their brainstorming session, the Wakonda Troop created the campaign tagline “**Take the ‘OK’ out of smoking in the park!**” which was an exciting first step. T-shirts and posters were created to promote the innovative message throughout both schools.

Using tobacco facts, the girls wrote letters to their respective policymakers; Senator Brenda Council and Senator

Tanya Cook, who was a former Girl Scout. The letters explained the purpose of their community project and requested support in helping protect children through smoke-free playgrounds and parks.

A part of their advocacy efforts included a tree planting ceremony with Mayor Jim Suttle in honor of Arbor Day. They also toured the Mayor’s office, Keep Omaha Beautiful, and the Department of Parks & Recreation. They shared their project with the Mayor and the City Parks Director. The City Parks Director expressed positive feedback to the idea of making all city parks smoke-free and offered next steps in getting the task done.

The Metro Omaha Tobacco Action Coalition congratulates the Girl Scouts Troops from Wakonda and Conestoga Elementary schools for fighting tobacco through community action and recognizing the importance of smoke-free environments. Job well done, Girl Scouts!

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**Save the Date:**  
**Annual MOTAC Luncheon**  
**August 9, 2011,**  
**11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**  
**Creighton University’s**  
**Mike & Josie Harper Center**

# Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Awareness Week

The Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) student organization held a week long panel discussion on LGBT health and wellness during the week of April 11. Throughout the week, several local agencies presented to GSA event attendees. Representatives from the Nebraska Aids Project and the Omaha Branch of the FBI spoke about hate crimes and a Youth Emergency Services representative presented on LGBT homelessness. A MOTAC member spoke about the Coalition's work and how the tobacco industry markets their deadly product to the LGBT community.



## Tobacco Compliance Checks:

For **January - March 2011**, law enforcement conducted **475** Tobacco Compliance Checks in Douglas County with 22 locations failing to comply, resulting in a **4.6% failure rate**.

## Smoke-Free/Tobacco-Free Business Recognitions

On April 13, MOTAC members presented recognition plaques to three outstanding organizations including **Bethesda Worship & Deliverance Center**, **Avis Rent-A-Car**, and **Clair Memorial United Methodist Church** in recognition of their exemplary smoke-free policies.



**Bethesda Worship & Deliverance Center**



**Clair Memorial United Methodist Church**



**Avis Rent-A-Car**

## Hope Center for Kids

On February 28, a MOTAC representative spoke to 35 students ages seven to ten years old at the Hope Center located at 2200 North 20<sup>th</sup> Street in Omaha. A tobacco 101 presentation was given that included information about the harmful effects of tobacco use.



## Cinco de Mayo Parade

Latinas, Tabaco Y Cáncer (LTC), a MOTAC affiliated group, participated in the Cinco de Mayo parade held on Saturday, May 7. LTC ladies walked along with family and friends from B to O Street in South Omaha. The LTC members gave out more than 500 MOTAC incentives which included fact cards about tobacco.

LTC is an educational group for Latina women with a focus on tobacco and cancer related issues. Founded in 2006, the group meets every other month to learn about tobacco health related issues and to plan educational and advocacy projects within families, schools, and communities.

For more information about LTC, contact Antonia Correa at 402-559-3670.



## N.I.C.E. (Native Indigenous Centered Education) Program

The Pre-K program is a part of the OPS (Omaha Public Schools) Native American Indian Education Initiatives. The program serves students and families who identify as Native American and desire an appropriate cultural integration into their children's education.

Hanneka Brown, a member of MOTAC and a Tobacco Prevention Specialist, spoke to nearly 75 parents and students about MOTAC's initiatives and the harmful effects of secondhand smoke.



***THIS NEWSLETTER IS SUPPORTED BY Region 6 Behavioral Healthcare through funding provided by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services/Tobacco Free Nebraska Program as a result of the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement.***



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**Fighting Tobacco Through  
Community Action!**

**Partners/Members:**

- Alegent Health System
- American Cancer Society
- American Lung Association
- Christ Cathedral
- Creighton Cardiac Center
- Douglas County Health Department
- Douglas County Housing
- Girl Scouts Spirit Nebraska
- Gray Group, Inc.
- Group to Alleviate Smoking Pollution of Nebraska (GASP-NE)
- Hidden Hills Health & Rehab
- Iowa Western Community College
- LiveWise Coalition
- New Creations, Inc.
- No Limits
- Omaha Police Department
- Omaha Public Schools
- Pfizer, Inc.
- PRIDE-Omaha, Inc.
- Region 6 Behavioral Healthcare
- Setting the Captives Free
- Tobacco Free Cass County (TFCC)
- Tobacco Free Nebraska
- Tobacco Free Sarpy (TFS)
- University of Nebraska Medical Center - College of Nursing
- University of Nebraska Medical Center - Center for Reducing Health Disparities
- University of Nebraska Medical Center -Evaluation
- ...and many individuals.

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The **Metro Omaha Tobacco Action Coalition (MOTAC)** is a dynamic coalition comprised of over 50 health related individuals, organizations, and educational groups. MOTAC was formed in 1992 in order to strengthen tobacco control and prevention efforts in the metro Omaha area. Since its inception, MOTAC has taken the lead within Douglas County to address tobacco related issues through public education and community action.

**Mission:** To prevent and reduce tobacco use and the accompanying health and economic consequences in the Omaha area via prevention through public policy and education.

**Goals:** Reduce tobacco use, reduce exposure to secondhand smoke, and increase capacity from diverse groups.

**Newly Elected MOTAC Officers:**

<b>Toni Hernández, President</b>	<b>Lisa Fuchs, Vice President</b>
<b>Paul Carter, Treasurer</b>	<b>Rita Rodriguez, Secretary</b>

**MOTAC meets the first Tuesday of each month at 10:00 am at the American Cancer Society, 9850 Nicholas Street in Omaha.**