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Great American Smokeout Update

As the BU programmatic season kicked off in November 2020, we began by participating in one of our awareness days - the Great American Smokeout Campaign. This year's Great American Smokeout Campaign was challenging due to COVID-19. Last year, our Youth Leaders were creative on how to educate their peers on general tobacco issues and the laws relating to them and local retailers. Our Youth Leaders held school rallies, orchestrated balloon releases, and gathered over 2,000 pledge cards from their peers stating that they will not use tobacco.



This year, most of our schools were virtual which means they held classes online via Google Meet and Zoom. Some schools were on a hybrid schedule which means the students were divided into alternated, traditional and virtual learning environments. Only a few of our schools were traditional. The Youth Leaders recorded the Great American Smokeout Campaign sessions to accommodate each school's schedule. Students signed pledge cards in person or virtually. As of

December 15, 2020, there were over 2,000 signatures pledging to be tobacco-free. Our Youth Leaders led this effort and were excited about the outcome. To view the videos, please visit our YouTube Channel: BU Youth Tobacco & Vaping Prevention.

BU Highlight Where Are They Now?

Jena Bradshaw is a former Youth Leader for the BU Tobacco and Vaping Prevention Program. She attended Simmons High School and was a member of the Honor Society and the National Society of High School Scholars. She is currently enrolled at Mississippi Delta Community College and majoring in Biology (Pre-Med). Jena was chosen to be a Youth Ambassador for The Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids.



The Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids is a leading force in the fight to decrease tobacco usage and its deadly toll all over the world. They work to save lives by advocating for public policies that prevent kids from using tobacco products, help smokers quit and protect everyone from secondhand smoke.



The following interview with Jena Bradshaw was conducted by BU Youth Leader Jayla Edwards.

Q: How do you feel about the BU Program?

A: I feel the BU Program is a great program for young adults to allow them to encourage their peers and community not to be involved with any tobacco products. This program is highly effective for those who have been involved with tobacco or may be influenced by its harmfulness and change their mindset.

Q: How has being a BU Youth Leader prepared you to be an Ambassador for the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids?

A: The BU Program allowed me to be more informed of the detrimental ways tobacco could ruin your life and how I could help others see and know the difference between different products. We all are aware that tobacco is bad for the body, but it is up to us to make the decision of not getting involved.

Q: Can you tell us a little about the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids?

A: The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids allows young adults to experience the following: training with the media, legislative engagement, social media advocacy and plan community events involving tobacco prevention. This program is to help our country to recognize the influential power of tobacco and its prevention. One of the main lessons for the people is to know the youth has the power to help change the future, so put your trust in them!

Q: What is your role as a Youth Ambassador?

A: My role as an Ambassador is to help spread the message to others whether it is gained through words or actions. Even though I am just beginning my task, I will enjoy my opportunity to the fullest.

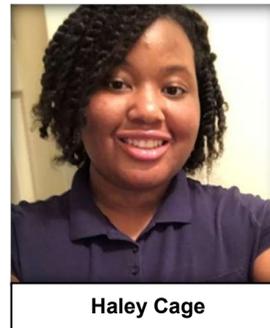
Last year, Jena Bradshaw stated, “I am an inspirational person who likes to encourage people to move forward, Through the many years of my youth, I have strived to change the thoughts of others, hoping to lead them in the right direction.” We believe that Jena is well on her way in making a difference in the lives of others and in this world. We wish her the absolute best on her future endeavors.



Photos of Youth Leader Jayla Edwards interviewing Jena Bradshaw.

BU Highlight Where Are They Now?

Haley Cage is a former Youth Leader for the BU Tobacco and Vaping Prevention Program. She attended Simmons High School and was an honor student and participated in dual enrollment. She is currently enrolled at Mississippi State University and majoring in Biology (Pre-Med). Haley was chosen to be a Youth Ambassador for The Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids.



Haley Cage

The following interview with Haley Cage was conducted by BU Youth Leader Roderick Mathews, Jr.

Q: How has being a BU Youth Leader impacted you?

A: Being a youth leader impacted my perspective about my surroundings. I began to understand why people choose to do the things they do.

Q: What did you enjoy most about being a BU Youth Leader?

A: I enjoyed being a youth leader for many reasons because I was able to influence people decisions. The program helped me be more social and connect with people better.

Q: What is the purpose of Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids and your role as an Ambassador?

A: The purpose of this campaign is to inform youth of all ages about the harmful effects of tobacco. The decision is theirs to make, so we try our best to inform them about possibilities. We know you cannot reach everybody, but knowledgeable smokers are better than careless ones. We inspire the youth to be true to themselves and not fall victim to peer pressure.

As a youth ambassador it is my job to inform and influence smokers and nonsmokers. I will provide knowledge to the youth about the harmful effects of tobacco and try to make a change.

Q: What advice or words of wisdom would you like to share with other BU Youth Leaders or youth in general?

A: My words of advice is to be honest with yourself and fully think out every decision you make.

Last year, Haley Cage stated, "I believe in the principals of freedom, change and equality for all." We believe that Haley is on the right path in making a difference and a change in this world for the better. We wish her the absolute best on her future endeavors.



Photos of Youth Leader Roderick Mathews Jr. interviewing Haley Cage.

Take Down Tobacco / Kick Butts Day

Take Down Tobacco, also known as Kick Butts Day, is the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kid's signature platform for empowering and encouraging people to take a stand and speak out against the tobacco industry. This year's Take Down Tobacco National Day of Action or Kick Butts Day will be held on Friday, March 19, 2021.



On March 19, 2021, teachers, students and health advocates are encouraged to raise awareness of the problems that tobacco usage has on their state and community, encourage youth to reject tobacco products and educate them on the deceptive message that tobacco companies are sending and urge elected officials to take action to protect kids from tobacco products.

Cigarette smoking usage has decreased among youth, but e-cigarette usage is on a skyrocketing incline among youth. The tobacco industry offers a broad range of addictive and dangerous products that put youth at risk across the globe. Youth and health advocates are calling on the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), states and

cities to ban all flavored tobacco products that targets youth. For more information on Kick Butts Day or to get involved, visit <https://www.kickbuttsday.org/>.

COVID-19 Safety

We can do it! We can slow the spread of COVID-19. As infections, hospitalizations, and deaths continue to rapidly increase across the United States, below are steps you can take to protect yourself and others:



🏠 Stay home if you can.

😷 Wear a mask.

🚶 Stay 6 feet apart.

🚫 Avoid crowds.

🧼 Wash your hands.

For more information, visit <https://bit.ly/2X0zmcw>.

BU Youth Leaders' Corner

“Being a Be You Tobacco Free Youth Leader was a great experience for me. It gave me a chance to advocate for something that had the ability to save lives before it was too late. I really enjoyed knowing that I was doing something that could not only change my community but eventually lead to changing the world.”

– **Shadea Freeman (Former BU Youth Leader)**

Contact Us

Contact us with your questions, concerns or testimonies. For additional updates on the Youth Tobacco & Vaping Prevention Program, follow us on social media.

Caffee, Caffee & Associates Public Health Foundation, Inc.

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This program is funded by a grant from the Mississippi State Department of Health – Office of Tobacco Control.