



DEAR
COUNSELORS

The Arkansas Department of Health Stamp Out Smoking campaign is proud to announce "The Big Pitch Film Festival" for the 2012 spring semester. In its ninth year, the contest formerly called The Big Pitch Drama Contest invites middle, junior and high school students in Arkansas to film, star in and produce their own tobacco-free TV commercials. "The Big Pitch Film Festival" is a great opportunity for students to express their creativity and showcase their talents to promote being tobacco-free. We ask that you encourage your teachers to incorporate this unique project into their lesson plans.

SOS has received many outstanding entries in past contests and some have even been incorporated in SOS' media buy and aired statewide. Since it is designed to be a group project, students are asked to work with their peers by recruiting team members, researching the health hazards of tobacco and putting it all together in a 27-second commercial. Students will be competing for first, second or third place, and fans across Arkansas will be voting to determine "People's Choice." Winning commercials will be those that incorporate this year's themes into their work. Selected schools will win money to purchase media equipment or supplies for the school's program. (See entry forms for further details.)

Again this year, SOS will be hosting a film festival screening event and award show for participants to see the finished products. There will be five categories in which students can place – Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Editing, Best Representation of Topic and Rookie of the Year, awarded to a first-time participant school. This year, students are highly encouraged to showcase behind-the-camera skills, and will be awarded for their hard work.

A third party will select the winners, and while we appreciate receiving entries from multiple teams, spots will be evaluated based on quality, not on quantity of entries. All qualified entries will be posted on stampoutsmoking.com for voting beginning March 14 and ending April 11. All winners will be announced on stampoutsmoking.com by 5 p.m. on April 16.

"The Big Pitch Film Festival" is one of many important programs instrumental in keeping Arkansas youth healthy and tobacco-free. We hope you will find this to be a fun and educational assignment for your students. For more information about "The Big Pitch Film Festival," please contact Allison Lafargue at allison.lafargue@cjr.com or (501) 975-7253, or visit stampoutsmoking.com.

Sincerely,

Miriam Karanja
Section Chief, Media and Health Communications
Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program
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