



NEWS RELEASE
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Back to School Vaping Crisis Hits Close to Home: Join the Fight

SAN JOSE, CA August 20, 2024 – Local youth have gone back to school this fall, and the threat of tobacco addiction looms large. **The alarming reality is that vaping has become an epidemic among our youth.** A recent California Department of Public Health survey revealed that nearly one in five high school students have experimented with tobacco, with vaping being the most popular choice. These numbers are a wake-up call for our community. We can't afford to stand idly by.

Breathe California's Youth for Lungs (Y4L) Advocate Group is rallying young people to take a stand against this crisis. This summer, Breathe California's Anti-Tobacco Poster Contest showcased the incredible power of youth voices in raising awareness about the dangers of tobacco. **But the battle is far from over.** Vaping devices, often disguised as harmless tech gadgets, are luring our kids into a dangerous addiction. These trendy devices contain harmful chemicals that can irreparably damage lungs and overall health. The Contest was a powerful testament to the impact of youth activism. Over 100 young artists submitted inspiring artwork, proving that young voices have the power to make a significant difference in the fight against tobacco. Their artwork showcased incredible talent and passion for creating a healthier future.

Three winners were selected and presented prizes for their artistic contributions in support of public health. Attendees viewed the youths' artwork and met with young artists and health experts. A Press Event followed with information about current tobacco use and product trends in addition to a panel discussion by three "Y4L" members. They shared about their own work in tobacco prevention and education efforts over the years and how the program has enriched their academic and personal growth, shaped their career aspirations, and inspired them to consider working in the public health field.

It's time to turn the tide. Our youth are champions for a tobacco-free future. Together, we can educate, advocate for stricter regulations, and create a healthier environment for everyone. **Don't let this crisis define a generation.** Be the change you want to see. Join Youth for Lungs today!

www.lungsrus.org/youth-for-lungs.

Youth for Lungs is the perfect volunteer opportunity for interested youth ages 14-21, who will learn about tobacco prevention, education, and policy. While supporting Breathe California's annual and special events, they will organize fundraisers and workshops and serve as ambassadors to their peers, schools, and communities, gaining leadership experience and developing management, public speaking, and other professional skills.

Breathe California presents several other programs to prevent youth from using tobacco as well as aiding those that already do. Smokeless Saturday School offers schools the chance to educate minors cited for use of tobacco products or paraphernalia on school premises about making healthier choices and teaches the parents strategies for supporting their children in this journey. Quit the Hits for teens ages 13-17 includes both cessation assistance and general tobacco education, including electric cigarettes and vapes. Breathe California staff and experienced interns also provide tobacco education presentations for schools.

Those interested in Breathe California's important other programs and services or joining the organization as a Volunteer or Intern can visit www.lungsrus.org for more information.

BREATHE CALIFORNIA OF THE BAY AREA, GOLDEN GATE & CENTRAL COAST is dedicated to fighting lung disease and advocating for clean air. As one of California's oldest voluntary health organizations, BREATHE CALIFORNIA addresses the most critical lung health threats through prevention, education, patient support, research, and advocacy.

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