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Kicking Butts Encouraged in WI

Milwaukee, WI - Kicking butts usually isn't encouraged in school, but that's not the case today. That's because it's 2009 "Kick Butts Day," a day the *American Lung Association* in Wisconsin says is a good time to think about how to get kids to stop smoking. The Association's "Not On Tobacco" or "NOT" program has helped thousands of kids kick the habit.

Tammy Foerester, a social worker who coordinates the program at Watertown High School, says when it comes to smoking, kids will follow the lead of parents at a very young age.

"At about 12 and when they have easy access to cigarettes at home, you know, to kind of try, that's when they start."

Foerester says programs such as NOT and the Kick Butts Day really have had an impact on teen smoking.

"The Kick Butts Day is just one more tool that we can use as awareness. The numbers have been going down. You know the percentage of kids smoking is going down, which is great news."

Foerester says kids that come from homes where the parents smoke are at much greater risk of becoming smokers themselves.

"For the element of kids that kind of grew up around smoking, I think it's a real big lure."

NOT helps kids understand why they smoke and helps them develop the skills, confidence and support they need to quit. Kids learn the techniques they need to tackle tough problems like nicotine withdrawal, getting through urges and cravings, and responding to peer pressure. Foerester had a piece of advice for parents as well: If you don't smoke, odds are greater that your children won't either.

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