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# Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids Honors Kyle Picha of Prairie du Chien, WI As Youth Advocate of the Year

*--Leadership in Fight Against Tobacco Recognized Nationally--*

WASHINGTON, May 6 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Kyle Picha, 17, of Prairie du Chien, Wis., has been named the Central Regional Youth Advocate of the Year by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids for his leadership in the fight against tobacco. Kyle is being honored at a gala in the nation's capital tonight (May 6) along with a national winner, three other regional winners and a group winner.

(Logo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20080918/CFTFKLOGO>)

Kyle understands the importance of changing government policies to reduce tobacco use and has dedicated hundreds of hours to tobacco prevention and control activities. Currently, Kyle is working with his local coalition C.A.R.E. (Crawford Abuse Resistance Effort) to advocate for a comprehensive, statewide smoke-free law in Wisconsin and recently testified before the Joint Finance Committee in support of state tobacco prevention funding. As a member of FACT (Fighting Against Corporate Tobacco), Kyle also has played an integral role in the group's award-winning media campaign about the 8,000 people in Wisconsin who die each year because of tobacco-related disease. Additionally, Kyle has worked with Wisconsin Wins, a program that works to ensure the age requirements for purchasing tobacco products are enforced.

More than 400 public health, political, civic and business leaders will attend the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids' 13th annual anniversary gala in Washington, D.C., to recognize these young leaders. The winners will receive educational scholarships and grants to continue their prevention efforts and serve as ambassadors for the Campaign.

"Kyle Picha and other young leaders from across the nation are making great strides against youth tobacco addiction and their voices are being heard," said Matthew L. Myers, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids president. "Every day, 1,000 kids in the United States become regular smokers and one-third of them will die prematurely from tobacco-caused disease. Almost 90 percent of adult smokers began at or before the age of 18. Youth are powerful allies in the fight to turn these trends around."

In Wisconsin, more than 20 percent of high school students smoke, and 7,900 kids become daily smokers every year. Every year, tobacco use kills 7,200 Wisconsin residents and costs the state over \$2 billion in health care bills. Nationally, tobacco use kills more than 400,000 people and costs the nation more than \$96 billion in health care costs each year.

The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids is a leader in the fight to reduce tobacco use and its devastating consequences in the United States and around the world. By changing public attitudes and public policies on tobacco, the Campaign strives to prevent kids from smoking, help smokers quit and protect everyone from secondhand smoke.

SOURCE Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids

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