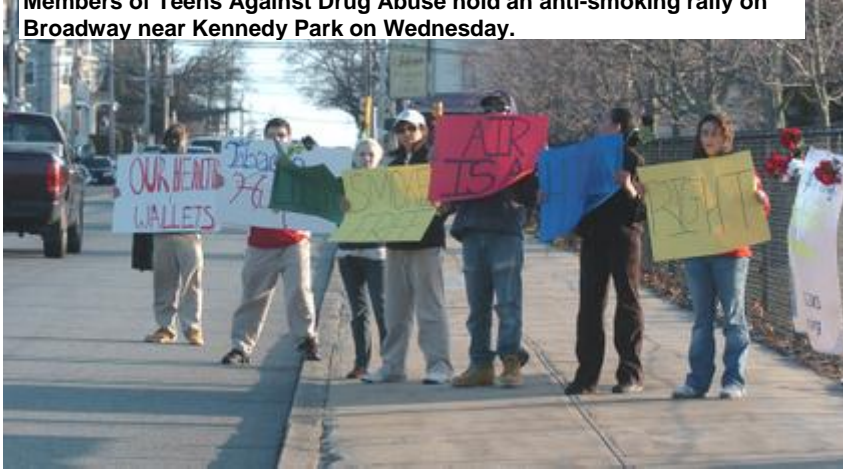


Teens Rally Against Smoking

Dave Souza

Members of Teens Against Drug Abuse hold an anti-smoking rally on Broadway near Kennedy Park on Wednesday.



Fall River — April 2, 2008

Kick Butts Day

Local youth from Teens Against Drug Abuse gathered on Broadway between upper and lower Kennedy Park Wednesday night for a public awareness event as part of National Kick Butts Day,

a way to educate people about the dangers of smoking.

The youths braved the cold and windy conditions to hold signs, warning of the dangers of smoking, and to encourage the public to kick the habit.

"This is a visibility campaign," said Michael J. Aguiar, youth program director of the Stanley Street Treatment & Resources. "The message is tobacco kills people."

The campaign was organized by Chris Paryano, a TADA peer leader and Bishop Connolly High School student.

He and Ross Dexter shared two signs that read, "Tobacco Hurts Our Health and Wallets."

"Hey baseball players, you shouldn't be smoking," Paryano yelled to players on a ballfield.

He said he was prompted to hold the campaign after receiving a Kick Butts Day handbook from Aguiar.

"Me and Ross got the idea to make ourselves visible," Paryano said.

Asked why his face was painted black, Dexter said, "I'm trying to portray death and what the effects are from smoking."

"Second-hand smoke kills children and animals," Dexter warned a woman walking her dog in the park.

Other placards read, "Smoke Free" and "Arsenic Lollipop."

The TADA group is a youth subcommittee of the Building Our Lives Drug-Free Coalition.

Youths across the state joined their peers nationally to stand up and take action against smoking and the tobacco industry.

By participating in the 13th annual Kick Butts Day, they have sent a message to their friends, communities and lawmakers that the time has come to kick butts in Massachusetts.

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