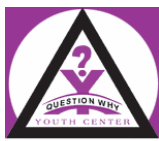


Haliwa-Saponi Outdoor Pow-wow Goes Smoke-Free



Process of creating CHANGE

A group of dedicated Haliwa-Saponi youth advocates have created a safer and healthier environment for the most important cultural event of the year, their annual Pow-wow. The weekend event is attended by thousands of youth, adults and elders each year.

The successful campaign began when the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs received a notice for the Tobacco Prevention Youth Leadership Institute in Raleigh on March 12-14th. Mickey Locklear, director of the Educational Talent Search Program, and Consuela Richardson, youth group adult leader, identified and sent 12 students from 4 counties, Halifax, Warren, Columbus, and Hoke, and 3 tribes, Haliwa-Saponi, Lumbee, and Waccamaw-Siouan. At the Institute, the student and adult leaders gained *critical awareness* about tobacco prevention initiatives, and decided that they would like their tribes and communities to be a part of those initiatives. They *developed skills* by attending workshops on media, spit tobacco, tobacco free schools and policy advocacy.

During the final action planning session at the Institute, the students decided to *create an opportunity* to get the message out to the people, and determined the best way to do that would be at each tribe's annual Pow-wow. With the Haliwa-Saponi Pow-wow to be held in April, the students in that area got together immediately and formed a group called S.W.A.T. (Saponi Warriors Against Tobacco). They decided they wanted to designate the entire dance arena and surrounding areas (bleachers, stage, and drum arbor) to be smoke free. Such a change was very innovative, as outdoor Pow-wows are almost never smoke-free.

The S.W.A.T adult leader introduced their idea to the tribal chair and Pow-wow planning committee, seeking permission to *create the opportunity* for youth to designate a smoke-free arena and post their artwork on trees and bleachers to indicate smoke free areas. Their request was granted; the campaign was underway. The youth prepared signs and posted them throughout the arena area, including a big banner on the Pow-wow stage (the most prominent area of the event). They crafted messages on tobacco abuse for the MC to read throughout the weekend. Cessation brochures were provided at the tribe's information table during the Pow-wow. The students received overwhelmingly positive compliance with the policy in the arena. The community is still talking about how well the campaign was respected by the people.

Type of Change:	Environmental Policy/Social Norm
Reach of Change:	Haliwa-Saponi Tribe
Contact:	Consuela.Richardson@ncmail.net

Since the successful Pow-wow, the S.W.A.T efforts have been applauded by the local physician in the tribal newsletter and by participants at the N.C. Native American Youth Organization Conference. S.W.A.T. continued building skills in advocacy by actively participating in the July tobacco conference at UNC-Pembroke sponsored by the *Many Voices* program. Youth will lead tobacco prevention campaigns at the Coharie Pow-wow in September, and the Waccamaw Siouan and Lumbee Pow-wows in October. Ms. Richardson notes, "It's amazing to see young people so passionate about such an initiative. I'm looking forward to see what the tribe's youth will be planning."



Importance of the CHANGE

Eliminating health disparities is one of four major goal areas of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. American Indians have the highest rates of commercial tobacco use in the United States (*MMWR—Cigarette Smoking Among Adults—United States, 2002. 5/28/04; www.cdc.gov/tobacco*). Many tribes use tobacco in sacred ceremonies, making the search to find culturally responsive ways to address tobacco use a high priority. In this case, S.W.A.T was able to have a great impact immediately by choosing a cultural event with deep meaning for tribal members, yet pointing out that youth were directly exposed to tobacco smoke and to role models using commercial tobacco. The youth will no longer witness adults smoking cigarettes (norm change) or be exposed to harmful smoke. They also used the opportunity to share quitting messages to the people.

What we learned about CHANGE

- Don't give up. Youth involvement may be slower than you'd like, given the difficulty scheduling events and activities outside of school time in rural areas. Build on school or tribal programs that already exist.
- Let youth lead the way, but recognize American Indian values for different leadership skills and styles, as well as respect for elders.
- Youth may need extra time, encouragement and opportunities to feel comfortable speaking in public.
- Draw on culture to build critical awareness, skills and opportunities (ask elders, families, tribal leaders.)