



WILL COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT & COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

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News media calls to Vic Reato: Media Services Manager at (815)727-5088.

Agency Website: www.willcountyhealth.org

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STUDENTS SAY “NO!” TO TOBACCO LITTER

JOLIET – Are you sick of all the cigarette butts you see on the ground? Does the sight of people flicking cigarettes into the grass or onto sidewalks disgust you?

Elementary and high school students in Joliet and Rockdale are taking a stand against cigarette litter. During October, students from Oak Valley and Rockdale Elementary will participate in a cigarette butt clean-up at the parks surrounding their school.

During this event, the students will learn important information about the dangers of cigarette litter and outdoor tobacco smoke. Participating schools will receive a tobacco prevention education basket, incentives for their students and raffle prizes.

In November, Joliet Central High School students representing the Reality Illinois program will conduct a similar clean-up program at Preservation Park in Joliet. In all, more than 110 Will County students will participate in area park clean-up initiatives during the next few weeks.

Cigarettes are the most littered item in the world. Several trillion cigarette butts are carelessly discarded every year. The butts account for 1.7 billion pounds of annual litter.

Why are cigarette butts such a vexing problem? Discarded butts are more than just a nuisance littering are parks, beaches, hiking trails, sidewalks, gardens and other public places. Butts are not biodegradable.

“A single cigarette butt can take up to 10 years to disintegrate,” according to Jennifer Blair, community health educator for the Will County Health Department. “During the decomposition, each butt leaks traces of 4,000 chemicals into the soil and water systems. Many of those chemicals are dangerous poisons linked to cancer.”

Pets and wildlife often mistake discarded butts for food. Worse yet, young children will put almost anything into their mouths. Fires are also a serious issue. Cigarette butts can smolder for three hours, and are linked to numerous and costly fires annually.

If your school or youth group would like to participate in a park clean-up or for more information about our youth tobacco prevention programs, telephone the Will County Health Department’s Tobacco Control & Prevention program at (815) 774-7312.



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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