

Regional Born to Breathe Youth Media Festival underway

March 29, 2023



The Born to Breathe Youth Media Festival is accepting entries from youth in the four-county North Coast region of Lake, Mendocino, Humboldt, and Del Norte counties. Due to a generous donation from Adventist Health Clearlake, the prize fund for this year's festival is \$5,000.

Young people ages 13 - 24 are eligible to enter the festival and the deadline to enter is April 12, 2023. Entry details can be found on the NorCal 4 Health website at www.NorCal4Health.org/born-to-breathe.

Born to Breathe 2023 is the brainchild of the California Health Collaborative's NorCal 4 Health project and is in its second year. Young people are encouraged to learn more about the dangers of tobacco and nicotine products and then morph that knowledge into artful expression.

Most art mediums are accepted, including spoken or written word, video, audio, two- or three-dimensional art pieces. The entries must address a tobacco-related topic, such as normalization, marketing and targeting

special populations, mental health and wellness, vaping, environmental impacts, and/or traditional vs. commercial use.

NorCal 4 Health offers examples, fact sheets, and the 2022 participant gallery on its website. In addition to the festival, the team will produce a mini-documentary about this year's festival participants and messages.

"Tobacco companies specifically target our young people, rural communities, and communities of color," noted NorCal 4 Health Project Director, Amber Wier. "We want our kids to know this so they can be empowered to speak up in their community. After researching their topics, many of them look to us for help."

Since the Born to Breathe 2022 festival, Del Norte County passed a tobacco retail license policy that included support to shield youth from exposure and initiation to tobacco and vape products. Lake and Humboldt counties and the cities of Clearlake, Willits, Ukiah, and Fort Bragg are all engaged with either introducing or strengthening existing tobacco retail policies.

Tobacco companies spend more than \$8,000,000,000 a year on advertising and over 90% of that is in the retail environment. "That means wherever there is a store selling tobacco, whoever passes by or enters is inundated with tobacco and nicotine product advertising. And, unfortunately, there is a higher per capita rate of tobacco stores in rural and impoverished communities," explained Wier. "We know the more we're exposed to it, the more we're likely to do it. It's really unfair."

Wier and Saccato are available to present details about how to enter the youth groups between now and the entry deadline, April 12, 2023. For a limited time, attendees of these workshops will receive a snack and a \$10 Starbucks gift card. Additionally, a video presentation of the workshop is available on the Born to Breathe 2023 page (www.NorCal4Health.org/born-to-breathe), also with an opportunity to earn a gift card.

NorCal 4 Health is a project of the California Health Collaborative serving Lake, Mendocino, Humboldt, and Del Norte Counties. It provides education and resources on community-level solutions to elevate health and economic prosperity. The project is funded by the California Department of Public Health and works alongside local residents and organizations. Learn more at www.NorCal4Health.org or call Amber Wier (Del Norte and Humboldt) at 707-954-4365 or JoAnn Saccato (Lake and Mendocino) at 707-530-5171.

The California Health Collaborative is a statewide non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the health and wellness of all Californians with a focus on rural and underserved populations. Learn more at www.healthcollaborative.org.