

Respiratory therapist is advocate for Smokeout

By Skye Kinkade

In hopes of helping Siskiyou County residents conquer a monumental addiction, respiratory therapist and nicotine cessation counselor Janyth Bolden is putting all her effort in supporting the Great American Smokeout on Nov. 19.

As a representative of Mercy Foundation North, Bolden has also coordinated with several other agencies, around the county to encourage all residents to kick the habit, she said.

(Continued on [A3](#))



American Smokeout . . .

(Continued from page [A1](#))

Bolden, who makes her home in Weed, has a passion for helping people gain the confidence, skills, and commitment required to stop tobacco use.

“I used to smoke,” Bolden admitted. After complications following a surgery she underwent nearly 30 years ago, she quit, she said.

She began teaching Freedom from Smoking classes after she “got sick of her patients dying on her,” while working at Mercy Medical Center, Mt. Shasta.

Though she now works at a hospital in the Bay Area, Bolden is still involved in tobacco cessation efforts closer to home, she said.

“Funding for these types of programs is usually a problem,” Bolden commented, though a grant from Mercy Foundation North is allowing her to continue her program until the end of the year.

Supplemented by funding from the Health Department, a Tobacco Use Prevention Education Grant, and donations from GlaxoSmithKline – the pharmaceutical company that manufactures several nicotine replacement products, such as Nicorette, Nicoderm CQ and Commit – this is the first county-wide effort in support of the Great American Smokeout, Bolden said. Several projects are taking place across the county, including the assembly of 600 Quit Kits by students from Dunsmuir and Yreka High Schools for distribution through the county’s ten Community Resource Centers, as well as at the Siskiyou County Public Health Department.

Students from Yreka High School created artwork that will be pasted on paper grocery bags at Price Less Foods in Yreka and Thriftway Market in Dunsmuir, added Maggie Shepard, the Prevention Services Coordinator at the Siskiyou Office of Education. “The bags will be decorated with messages of the dangers of tobacco use, as well as encouragement to quit,” she said.

Coordination efforts with the county’s schools has been an area of concentration, since tobacco is often the first addictive drug that youth experiment with, Bolden said.

“Schools are vigilant in their efforts to curb the initiation of [tobacco] use, especially since addiction can develop in a remarkably short time,” Shepard said. “All schools have board approved policies that prohibit the use of tobacco products on district property. Students found in violation of this policy are required to attend a six hour tobacco cessation course with the school nurse..”

Bolden was also involved in the production of four half-hour shows for broadcast on MCTV 15 about the dangers of tobacco use among teenagers, and is currently teaching a round of Freedom from Smoking classes which will be topped off by a Quit Party on Nov. 20.

When asked what the most important steps are for a person who wants to quit smoking, Bolden said identifying why you smoke and why you want to quit are at the top of the list. Bolden has been teaching tobacco cessation classes for about nine years, she said, and she enjoys helping people make a positive difference in their lives. She said a support group will help people find the determination to quit and stay cigarette-free.

For more information about quitting tobacco, call the California Smokers Hotline, which offers free telephone counseling, at 1-800NO-BUTTS

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