

SPORT Helping County's Youths Quit Smoking

Rural News
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By BENNY FAIRCHILD

While there are many tobacco prevention programs available for children and teens, St. Lawrence County has only one tobacco cessation program for minors and that is SPORT.

According to Director Deborah L. Miller, SPORT stands for Supporting Peers Options to Resist Tobacco.

"It's the only youth tobacco cessation program in the county," she said.

Mrs. Miller said that she typically works with children ages 11 to 19, and she has never turned anyone away. In addition to working with children and teens who may be addicted to smoking, Mrs. Miller said that she also works with their families to help them become tobacco free as well.

She said she has worked with children as young as 9 years-old who were addicted to tobacco products and has heard of children who started using tobacco products when they were only 6 or 7 years-old.

While SPORT used to be funded through the state Department of Health's tobacco control program, they lost that funding several years ago when they changed their focus, stopping all funding for youth cessation.

Mrs. Miller said that SPORT now relies on funding

from a rural health grant from the St. Lawrence County Youth Bureau, the E.I. Moses Walk/Run, Linkages For Youth and private donations.

"It's kind of a modge podge of funding to keep us going," she said.

"We just keep getting cut more and more."

To help provide her program with additional funding, Mrs. Miller has written a book, "Recipes for Success: Eating and Moving Your Way to a Tobacco Free Life."

All proceeds from the book's sales will go back to help fund SPORT.

When asked why she decided to write a book, Mrs. Miller replied that there were two reasons.

The first was to provide people with a unique approach to quitting.

Reason number two was a little more personal.

"While helping others, I could also work to keep the program going," she said.

Mrs. Miller explained SPORT as a "three pronged program."

- Youth tobacco cessation
- Peer education
- community education

She explained that their service helps children quit smoking at no charge to them or their families.

For peer education, Mrs. Miller said that she meets with student groups in

Brasher Falls, Canton, Gouverneur, Herman-DeKalb, Massena and Ogdensburg. While those groups are designed to help teens quit smoking, she said that is not all that they do.

"We focus on many different teen topics, not just tobacco," she said, adding that they also sponsor a variety of activities for teens and their families.

Lastly, Mrs. Miller said that in addition to working with children, she also works with area school districts and community organizations to help educate them on youth tobacco use.

"All of our funding helps keep this going," Mrs. Miller said.

Copies of "Recipes for Success: Eating, and Moving Your Way to a Tobacco Free Life" can be found at the St. Lawrence County Health Initiative's office in Canton, The Birch Bark Bookstore located above the Evans & White hardware store in Potsdam, libraries in Colton and Watertown and the Massena Chamber of Commerce, as well as Timeless Treasures on State Street in Ogdensburg.

The book may also be purchased on-line at Amazon.com.

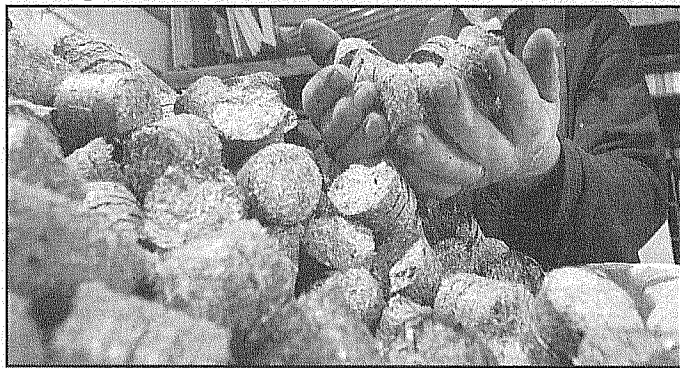
However, to purchase the book on-line, one must search for "Cessation Cookbook," rather than the book's actual title.

Chicken Dinner

HEUVELTON - The Msgr. Robert Giroux Knights of Columbus, St. Raphael's Parish, Heuvelton, will be holding a chicken and biscuit dinner on Feb. 13 from 4:30-6:30 p.m. at the parish center. Cost is \$7 for adults, \$5 for students and five and under are free.

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