

Altus School District Implements LifeSkills Training Curriculum



Altus Intermediate School students Alex Sawyer and Erica Reyes, along with Judy Morgan, counselor, Jay Richeson, principal, and Gerry Drury, counselor, pose with Botvin LifeSkills curriculum materials. Altus Intermediate School and all five Altus elementary schools received a donation of the curriculum materials thanks to the efforts of the Jackson County Tobacco Education Committee.

Altus Public Schools is proud to announce the implementation of Botvin LifeSkills Training, an evidence-based prevention program for youth that teaches skills to reduce the use of alcohol, tobacco, illicit drugs, and violence. This curriculum was provided by the Jackson County Tobacco Education Committee (JCTEC), which is funded by the Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust.

Wendell Browne, chair of JCTEC, said, "We are happy to provide this curriculum to Altus Public Schools, in hopes of reducing tobacco use in youth. Our committee goal is to educate youth about the insidious nature of the tobacco industry and arm them with the skills to say NO to tobacco use."

Throughout the 2009-2010 school year, students in grades two through six will learn and practice skills such as decision-making, assertiveness, and effective communication, to help them make healthy choices and avoid risky behavior.

"We are really excited to start the Botvin LifeSkills Training program," said Dr. Nancy Evans, director of curriculum for Altus Schools. "This prevention program is tested and proven effective at reducing unhealthy behaviors among our youth."

Botvin LifeSkills Training is a highly effective and well-respected evidence-based substance abuse and violence prevention program with more than 25 years of peer-reviewed research behind it. The program was developed by Dr. Gilbert J. Botvin, professor of Public Health and Psychiatry at Cornell University's Weill Medical College and director of Cornell's Institute for Prevention Research.

LifeSkills Training has been cited for excellence by numerous organizations, including the U.S. Department of Education, the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, the National Institute on Drug Abuse, and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, part of the U.S. Department of Justice. Studies testing its effectiveness have found that the Botvin LifeSkills Training program can reduce the prevalence of tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drug use by as much as 87 percent.

For more information on JCTEC, contact Dennie Christian at 482-5040.

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