

# CAMPAIGN CHRONICLES

A CAMPAIGN NEWSLETTER FOR COMMUNITIES  
WORKING WITH THE CENTER

Produced by

**The CENTER** FOR TOBACCO POLICY & ORGANIZING



## San Mateo Organizing to Put Teeth into Local Licensing Law

By Vanessa Marvin,  
Organizing Coordinator

The San Mateo County Tobacco Education Coalition created a campaign committee (Stop Tobacco Sales to Youth) about eight months ago to fight for a strong county tobacco retail licensing ordinance. The campaign is not yet over – the final draft of the ordinance is not yet done, and the vote on the ordinance is not expected until later in the summer. However, to date the Stop Tobacco Sales to Youth campaign committee has been successful in using grassroots pressure, a variety of coalition partners, and youth activism to move their campaign forward and overcome obstacles.

The mission of the Stop Tobacco Sales to Youth campaign committee was to replace the county's current toothless tobacco retail licensing ordinance, which was scheduled to sunset in the fall of 2003, with a stronger and more effective ordinance. The current ordinance is so weak that in the five years since the original ordi-

nance passed no merchant has been cited in the County. Meanwhile, youth purchase rates of cigarettes were at least 30% according to an April 2002 youth purchase survey by a coalition partner, The Youth Leadership Institute.

The campaign last fall began with intensive planning, strategy development, and a process that involved the entire coalition in planning the tactics for the campaign. This preparation led to a successful community meeting in January. There, the Stop Tobacco Sales to Youth campaign committee taught community members about the issue and involved them in various workgroups.

One of these workgroups drafted a community survey to measure concern with this issue and support for the proposed ordinance. The short five-question survey was administered by youth and adult activists to people on the street, in meetings, and other places throughout the county. The results were promising. 77% of nearly 300 people interviewed sup-

■ See **TEETH**, page 2

## On-Going Campaigns at a Glance

*Communities working with The Center on Comprehensive Campaigns*

**Coalition for A Smoke Free Long Beach Tobacco Retailer Licensing Task Force**- Campaign goal: To pass a tobacco retailer licensing ordinance for the city of Long Beach that includes an annual fee to fund effective enforcement. **Smoke-Free Affordable Housing Campaign** - Campaign goal: To pass an ordinance that would ban smoking in half of the new affordable apartment buildings subsidized by the city of Los Angeles. **Stop Tobacco Sales to Youth Campaign, Stanislaus County** - Campaign goal: To pass a tobacco retailer licensing ordinance in the unincorporated areas of the county that includes an annual fee to fund effective enforcement. **Smoke Free Entryways for Stockton** - Campaign goal: To pass an ordinance within the city of Stockton that prohibits smoking within 20-feet of all entrances of buildings where smoking is prohibited indoors. **Stop Tobacco Sales to Youth Campaign, San Mateo County** - Campaign goal: To strengthen an existing tobacco retailer licensing ordinance in the unincorporated areas in San Mateo county that includes an annual fee to fund effective enforcement

### **For Internal Distribution Only**

This newsletter has been designed for, and distributed to, Proposition 99 funded agencies and their partners who are currently working with The Center on tobacco policy campaigns. As it contains general information about ongoing campaign activity, please limit distribution only to your members participating on your local campaign.

# Campaign Spotlight

*In this reoccurring column, the Center will focus on how individuals are playing a critical part in the success of the campaign featured in the newsletter.*

In the Stop Tobacco Sales to Youth campaign in San Mateo County the young people are playing a noteworthy role. YO Mateo (Youth Organizing San Mateo) is tirelessly committed to combating youth accessibility to tobacco. They are partnering in the leadership of the campaign, are a major force in accomplishing all of our goals, and are always eager to talk about the importance of the campaign to

community members, reporters and key decision makers.

This group of hard workers initially made this campaign possible based on their youth purchase survey experiences, and have since been active in every subcommittee of the campaign. **Yikna Wu** helped draft the ordinance, advocating for tough language. **Jessica** and **Elizabeth Leong** collected petition signatures and public opinion survey information. All members were involved in setting up press conferences, and serving as core members of the speaker's bureau.

YO Mateo members were especially key in the meetings with each of the County Supervisors, impressing

the decision makers with their knowledge, wisdom, and commitment. **Andrew Huang's** powerful statements in meetings with Supervisor's Nevin and Gordon, helped propel their authorship of the ordinance. Supervisor Jerry Hill was amazed at the wisdom, community engagement, and passion of 12-year-old **Eddie Hu**. In a recent newspaper interview, **Ashley Hu** eloquently highlighted the importance of retailer accountability as a part of the larger social justice issues that young people face.

YO Mateo serves as the countywide youth tobacco coalition and Friday Night Live youth council. YO Mateo is a program of The Youth Leadership Institute. Core YO Mateo members involved in this campaign include: **Yikna Wu, Vicky Li, Jessica Leong, Elizabeth Leong, Ashley Hu, Eddie Hu, and Andrew Huang.**

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**TEETH**, from page 1, ported a retail license with a fee for enforcement.

Another workgroup met with staff from the Technical Assistance Legal Center (TALC) and drafted a tough ordinance that required enforcement and imposed a fee on retailers to pay for it. A third workgroup held meetings with each of the Supervisors to discuss the proposed ordinance. All the Supervisors seemed supportive in these early meetings and Supervisors Mike Nevin and Richard Gordon, who had co-sponsored the original ordinance, offered to co-sponsoring the new version.

A key component of our grassroots strategy has been the participation of youth in campaign activities and decision-making (see Spotlight article). Youth activism, by YO Mateo and the ACS Youth Board, has been the engine driving the campaign

Next we had to get the word out. This was done through a media

push with assistance from O'Rorke, Inc, the public relations firm advising the tobacco education coalition. The most exciting consequence was an Op-Ed written by Senator Jackie Speier. We also issued press releases about our proposed ordinance and received good print media coverage in May around the county.

Currently the ordinance is still in draft form, being worked on by the County. However, the Supervisors have put the ordinance on the agenda for a first reading in August. In the meantime, we are working towards another broad community meeting to gather more support. We are determined to show the Board that the public supports a tough licensing ordinance that will help enforce all tobacco laws and uses licensing fees to conduct regular stings on county retailers selling tobacco products.

*- Vanessa Marvin has been providing Community Organizing Assistance to the STSY campaign since November 2002.*

## The Center Team - At Your Service

Wherever you are in your campaign, whether between scheduled meetings or teleconferences, don't hesitate to call any of the Center's team members for technical assistance at (916)442-4299. Or if you prefer email, here are our individual addresses.

**Brian Peterson**, Project Director,  
brian@chico.com

**Vanessa Marvin**, Organizing  
Coordinator, vmarvin@alac.org

**Julie Bradley-Hart**, Policy Coordinator,  
jbhart@alac.org

**Jack Nicholl**, Campaign Consultant,  
jnicholl@verizon.net

**Malka Kopell**, Campaign Consultant,  
mkopell@communityfocus.org

Contact us: **THE CENTER FOR TOBACCO POLICY & ORGANIZING**  
phone (916)442-4299 - email thecenter@californialung.org - web www.californialung.org/thecenter  
921 11th Street, Suite 700, Sacramento, CA 95814-2821