



Personality Profile: Roy Rosell

Roy Rosell is full of energy, and he energizes the people around him. He does his tobacco control work for the Asian Youth Center (AYC) in San Gabriel. But as you will see, he is organizing everywhere he goes. AYC contracts with the LA County Tobacco Control and Prevention Program (TCPP) and much of the credit for AYC's victories in passing smoke free parks ordinances in Alhambra, Temple City, San Gabriel and Monrovia goes to Roy. We sat down with Roy to talk about his approach to community organizing.



What accounts for your ability to get involved in and gain respect in the communities in which you work even though you don't live there?

I reach out to everything that is happening in whatever city that I'm working in. If the Fire Department has a barbecue going and a lot of members of the community will be there, I'm going to show up. In Monrovia I joined the Coordinating Council, worked on the local food bank, Meals on Wheels and other groups. Pretty soon people were saying, "Wow! These people from tobacco control are into everything."

But you manage to gain people's respect as well.

I believe that community organizing is about building and forming personal relationships. People have to trust you, be comfortable with you. What makes them believe in you? Your integrity and your passion. If I'm going to make you a believer in tobacco control, then you're going to have to believe that I'm for real and that I really believe in what I'm doing.

A Special Preview

At the Center, we are always looking to come up with new ways to connect with you and connect you to each others organizing experiences. We have our [website](#), we have organizing and policy updates, we even [tweet](#), and soon we will have... a blog called "Center's Stage"!

Now, given all of the new technologies out there, you may be thinking that a blog seems a little dated, but we disagree. The purpose of our blog is to provide a stage where activists from our network (not just funded Prop 99-ers but also your coalition members) can take Center Stage and share your perspective on the issue of the day. We hope that all of you will use the blog as a way to keep informed, discuss, debate and if asked, even write a guest post. Along with that you'll get new insights from (and about) the Center staff as we take the stage and tell you our story or perspective on the latest training, policy or recent tobacco control news.

So get ready! We are launching Center's Stage soon and we hope you will not only check it out but comment on posts, share your experiences, and let us know what you disagree with or like, including some good ol' fashion debating!

You've got to love what you're doing.

Do you receive any training or technical assistance which helps your work?

My organization has had some real successes in passing policies but I give a lot of credit to the Coalition for a Tobacco Free LA County, and the training that we get from the county's tobacco control program and what we learn at the task force meetings. For example, the Center trained us to learn what the politicians feel and what they like. So when I go to city council, and this is part of being a community organizer, I have already studied each and every one of my council members, what they believe, what they like.

In one campaign for smoke free parks in San Gabriel, you flooded the council chambers with people. How did that happen?

We could do it in San Gabriel because we really had the community involved. One hundred and thirty people came to the meeting. Sixty to seventy were students from the local high school. Earlier I had presented to their classes on tobacco issues, and I suggested to their teachers that they give the kids extra credit for attending the council meeting. So boom, three or four classes came and there is no room in the council chambers, so people had to be outside. The Mayor and Council passed the ordinance.

Personality Profiles is the start of an occasional series highlighting accomplished individuals around the tobacco control community. People who've done amazing work, but may not always be featured. It's an opportunity to learn more about how they are successful in their day to day work. If you have suggestions of deserving people for us to profile email us at vmarvin@alac.org.

Follow Up Story: Success in Santa Barbara!

Ever wonder what happens after someone is featured in a story you've read? Well, Santa Barbara County's coalition ([featured in our January Community Organizing Update](#)) had a tremendous win!

In planning for the first reading with the Board of Supervisors (BOS) on April 6 the coalition did everything right. They held a planning meeting back in December with the Center to plan their strategy. They met with all but one of the Supervisors individually before the first reading.



On April 6 the coalition turned out 60 people (including 20 youth) to the hearing and everyone was wearing stickers with the campaign logo. In fact, there were so many people there that their champion Supervisor Janet Wolf moved up the time of their ordinance to accommodate all of the people and the youth who were there.

The coalition had eleven speakers who were prepared ahead of time on the messages (litter, environment and health) -- three youth, a lawyer, a doctor, a nurse, a coach of youth football, and someone who works with youth. The coalition made sure that one or two speakers were from each Supervisor's district. In addition, the sheriff sent a representative to give his support.

The coalition kept up their fantastic social media and website presence throughout the campaign. In particular, they engaged with the Surfrider Foundation and others via Facebook, leading to both speakers and turnout at the April 6 BOS meeting.

All of their tremendous work led to a unanimous vote, even getting the support of Supervisors who were not supportive or were unsure beforehand!

The BOS approved the ordinance on a second reading on April 20 and the ordinance went into effect May 20. Congratulations to CEASE, Santa Barbara's tobacco control coalition!

The Center for Tobacco Policy & Organizing assists local Prop 99 funded projects throughout the state meet policy objectives using proven community organizing strategies, and serves as a statewide and local tobacco policy resource. The Center is a project of the American Lung Association in California and is funded by the California Tobacco Control Program.

The Center for Tobacco Policy & Organizing ♦ American Lung Association in California
1029 J Street, Suite 450 ♦ Sacramento, CA 95814 ♦ Phone (916) 554-5864 ♦ Fax (916) 442-8585
www.Center4TobaccoPolicy.org
