

Weston Teen Uses Power of Print to Promote Anti-Tobacco Message

BY STACEY BOMSER



GAVIN MARZAN WON AN ANTI-TOBACCO ESSAY CONTEST

Gavin Marzan was concerned about the influence adult smokers have on teenagers, so he decided to do something about it. The Tequesta Troce Middle School eighth grader entered an essay contest sponsored by the Tobacco Free Partnership of Broward County and won – twice.

The contest challenged teens and young adults to write an essay on anti-tobacco measures and have it published as a viewpoint or opinion piece on the op-ed page of a major daily Florida newspaper. Gavin had two articles published, so he won two \$100 gift cards.

The Tallahassee Democrat published Gavin's article proposing measures to reduce teen access to tobacco and nicotine products by cracking down on gas stations and convenience stores that sell tobacco products, while his article in the Northwest Florida Daily News promoted the creation of tobacco prevention clubs and usage of social media to promote the cause.

Gavin says he plans to create an anti-tobacco club when he starts Cypress Bay High School next fall. "I want to start a high school club to get the message out and to also get service hours which I will need and others will too. I welcome teens that are also interested in promoting the message of anti-smoking or never starting to smoke."

His article also suggested using social media, such as YouTube, Vine or iTunes, to reach teens

and promote the prevention of nicotine and cigarette usage. That idea was well received by the Tobacco Free Partnership of Broward County. In fact, Gavin says he was told his social media ideas would be shared with the national office to promote statewide "I

know teens use social media to promote messages and I thought this would inspire others to create ads about this message."

Gavin hopes his anti-tobacco messages reach teens so they never

start smoking. "If you never start smoking, you never have to worry about quitting. I have an uncle, who is also my godfather, who smoked since he was a teen and he just quit, but now he vapes. Vaping is also addictive and I feel sorry for him because he has a young son. I really want him to stop because I would never want his son to see him get sick."

When not working to spread anti-tobacco messages to his peers, Gavin says he enjoys gaming, part-time work and spending time with his family. "I am really interested in law enforcement too and try to always do the right thing no matter what I am doing."

