



Dillard University (DU) supports being smoke-free, with signs posted across the institution reminding staff, faculty and students there is no smoking in any building. However, on March 3, 2012 hundreds of Louisiana middle, high and college students will also offer their support for being smoke-free when they descend onto the DU campus to mark the importance of being aware of tobacco marketing and living a tobacco-free lifestyle, at the fifth annual Youth and Young Adult Summit on Tobacco Advocacy.

Sponsored by the Louisiana Campaign for Tobacco-Free Living (TFL), the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals Tobacco Control Program, American Legacy Foundation, Dillard University and WQUE-FM Q-93, the day-long event will feature a rally, special guest speakers and a performance by music artist Dee-1.

“Not only do we want to create awareness around tobacco industry marketing toward youth, but we also want to empower youth to resist that manipulation and live healthy, tobacco-free lives,” said April Cabrera, TFL Program Coordinator for Youth and Young Adults.

Despite growing awareness of anti-smoking campaigns, the rate of teen smokers has risen in Louisiana from 19 percent in 2009, to 23.6 percent in 2011. Such statistics emphasize the need to continue the fight to be smoke-free.

Other highlights include breakout sessions with high profile speakers including:

- Duffy, from MTV's Road Rules -- "Taking it to the Streets" using visual arts and graffiti to promote tobacco-free messages

- Chris Blackburn, former Biggest Loser contestant - "The Size of Addiction-How Smoking and Obesity Go Hand in Hand"

- Chad Bullock of MTV fame, "Igniting Initiative"- exploring tobacco's impact and how taking initiative is the only way to change it.

The American Legacy Foundation will also host a session entitled "Social Justice and Tobacco". Cabrera and other organizers hope to focus on the reality of youth access to tobacco products, and how attendees can become involved in policy debates on tobacco products at both the state and local level.

For more information on the event, contact April Cabrera at acabrera@lphi.org or call (504) 301-9843.