



FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY



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For Immediate Release

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Park Authority Board Approves Tobacco-Free Play Zones

The Fairfax County Park Authority Board established Tobacco-Free Play Zones in local parks and agreed to post signage notifying the public of this new designation and thanking residents for their voluntary cooperation. The action, taken last Wednesday during their regular meeting will help parks remain clean and safe outdoor environments for children and their families as they recreate. The signs request that park visitors refrain from tobacco use at skate parks, playgrounds and athletic fields.

In June 2011, the Partnership for a Healthier Fairfax conducted a Community Health Status Assessment. That report found that 20 percent of Fairfax County residents listed tobacco use as the most important health-related issue for this community. With that in mind, reducing tobacco use and exposure to second-hand smoke became a priority item for the county and this Park Authority program was initiated. This initiative is being implemented in coordination with the Partnership for a Healthier Fairfax and the Fairfax County Health Department.

Smoking increases risk for disease, disability and death for smokers and those who are exposed to second-hand smoke throughout their life. Besides the apparent health benefits any reduction in second-hand smoke or primary tobacco-use provides, there are also benefits to the environment. The reduction of cigarette butt litter will improve the health of local streams, lakes and rivers into which they migrate. Cigarette butts contain carcinogenic materials that also pose a danger to wildlife which may ingest them.

The program will begin this summer as signs are posted in parks. Partial funding for the signs is anticipated from the Live Healthy Fairfax initiative funded by a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Community Transformation Grant. For more information contact the Public Information Office at 703-324-8662.

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