



FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY



12055 Government Center Parkway, Suite 927 • Fairfax, VA 22035-5500
703-324-8700 • Fax: 703-324-3974 • www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks

For Immediate Release

Judy Pedersen, PIO

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E-mail: parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov

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Press Inquiries: 703-324-8662

Officials To Unveil First Tobacco-Free Play Area Signs

On Saturday, September 27, 2014 officials will gather at Ossian Hall Park to unveil the first sign establishing Tobacco-Free Play Zones at local parks. The ceremony celebrates the May 1, 2014 decision of the Fairfax County Park Authority Board to establish these smoke-free zones and post signs thanking residents for their voluntary compliance. The Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) informally endorsed the concept earlier this year and plans to take formal action later this month to put tobacco-free signage on all FCPS fields and playgrounds. The signs request park visitors to refrain from tobacco use at skate parks, playgrounds and athletic fields. Dozens of signs will be placed in the coming weeks.

Park Authority Deputy Director Sara Baldwin, who has coordinated this effort with schools, the Unified Prevention Coalition and the Live Healthy Fairfax initiative supported by the Partnership for a Healthier Fairfax and the Fairfax County Health Department is pleased that this effort has moved forward quickly and garnered widespread support. “Public schools, the Board of Supervisors, the Athletic Council and youth sports groups have all shown enormous support for this voluntary program and we look forward to the expansion of this initiative in the near future,” said Baldwin.

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. Funding for the signs was provided by the Live Healthy Fairfax initiative sponsored by a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Community Transformation Grant.

The sign unveiling will be held at the events pavilion in the park at 1 p.m. Ossian Hall Park is located at 7900 Heritage Dr., Annandale. For more information, call the Public Information Office at 703-324-8662.

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