Yavapai Anti-Tobacco Coalition of Youth Earns MATFORCE Game Changer Award

Prescott Valley, AZ

MATFORCE awarded the Yavapai Anti-Tobacco Coalition of Youth (Y.A.T.C.Y.) its Game Changer Award for going ‘above-and-beyond’ in making a real difference in the lives of others. Youth of the Y.A.T.C.Y. earned the award for their outstanding work in tobacco education and becoming the next generation that is tobacco free. Their work is truly helping build healthier communities.

The Yavapai Anti-Tobacco Coalition of Youth is comprised of students from Mingus Union High School in Cottonwood. The group’s officers include: Sofia Rocha, President; Gunner Tillemans, Vice-President; Noemy Cervantes, Secretary; and Laury Perez, Reporter. Y.A.T.C.Y. members include: Alyssa Manion, Elie Abi Hanna, Katy Williams, Laura Pedrego, Charly Diaz, Destry Aston, Valerie Brenes, Mariah Worthy, Jeffery DeLong and Caitlin Maloney. Adult advisors include Jen Mabery, Yavapai County Community Health Educator, and Gretchen Wesbrock, a counselor at Mingus Union High School.

In making the nomination, Mabery said, “This group of Mingus Union High School students continues to impress and inspire me. My hope is that MATFORCE will consider these incredible youth for their passion and drive.”

In March of 2015, Y.A.T.C.Y. appeared before the Cottonwood City Council to help enact a non-smoking ordinance in designated areas of Cottonwood parks. Their many other projects include peer education, mentoring, hosting a Great American Smoke-Out Day, leadership training and various other events. Most recently the Y.A.T.C.Y. took on the challenge of Tobacco 21, which is an effort to raise the age purchasing tobacco products from 18 to 21.

The Game Changer award is a project of MATFORCE’s Underage Drinking Task Force. A new winner is selected each quarter. Nominations can be made for an individual, group, business or organization. To submit your nomination, visit matforce.org.

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Photo Caption: MATFORCE named the Yavapai Anti-Tobacco Coalition of Youth a Game Changer Award winner. The award was presented at the MATFORCE Verde Valley Steering Committee monthly meeting on April 13, 2016. (l to r) Cottonwood City Manager Doug Bartosh, Vice Mayor Karen Pfeifer, Mayor Diane Joens, Mingus Union High School District Superintendent Dr. Paul Tighe, Noemy Cervantes, Gunner Tillemans, Alyssa Manion, Sofia Rocha, Laura Pedreg, Daphne Roeske, Adult Coordinator/YCCHS Jen Mabery.