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GASTON COUNTY TEENS TO STOMP OUT TOBACCO USE AT STEP SHOW

TOBACCO FREE SCHOOL POLICY WILL SHARE SPOTLIGHT

(Dallas, NC) – Gaston County teens will kick up their heels at the first-ever Smoke Stompers Back to School Step Show Competition from **3 to 6 p.m.** on **Saturday, Sept. 11** in the **Myers Center Auditorium** at **Gaston College**. First Cancer Services of Gaston County, an organization funded by the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund, and the Gaston County Boys and Girls Club are sponsors for the step show competition. The event is free and open to the public.

Teens will present step routines and other performances designed to alert their peers to the dangers of tobacco. After the show, teen advocates will participate in tobacco use prevention training sessions.

“Step shows and other events are wonderful opportunities to reach young people and explain to them the dangers of tobacco use,” said Kenisha Bethea, health education coordinator with Cancer Services of Gaston County.

Bethea added that the event is also designed to build awareness of Gaston County School’s 100% Tobacco Free School policy (TFS), which prohibits the use of tobacco on all school property at anytime by any person. Adopted in July 2003, the TFS policy goes into effect during the 2004 - 2005 school year. “Because this marks the first official school year that we will be under new TFS rules,” said Bethea, “it is important to explain to everyone how TFS works and how wonderful it is for our children.”

PARTICIPANTS:

- Emmanuel Baptist Church’s Steppers for Christ
- Highland High School of Technology
- Hunter Huss High School
- North Gaston High School
- Southpoint High School
- West Gastonia Boys and Girls Club

ABOUT THE NC HEALTH AND WELLNESS TRUST FUND:

The NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund makes North Carolina stronger, both physically and economically, by funding programs that promote preventive health. Created by the General Assembly in 2000 to allocate a portion of North Carolina's share of the national tobacco settlement, HWTF has invested \$55 million to support preventive health initiatives and \$78 million to fund a prescription drug assistance program for seniors. For more information, please visit www.hwtfc.org.