FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SOS Asks Students to Write a Letter
Encouraging Role Models to Quit Using Tobacco

Stamp Out Smoking Announces 2012 Essay Contest

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (Sept. 17, 2012) – Stamp Out Smoking announced today the 2012 Essay Contest, “My Reason to Write.” Arkansas students in grades 2-9 are given the opportunity to submit a letter asking a role model in their lives to quit smoking, quit using smokeless tobacco, or thanking them for not smoking or using smokeless tobacco. In addition, students can write a letter to a peer encouraging them to never start using tobacco. The online contest requires students to submit their entries on news.sosenews.com by 5 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 26.

"The theme of this year's contest highlights the significance of role models in a child's life and how their decisions affect the children around them," said Miriam Karanja, section chief for media and health communications at the Arkansas Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program. "Stamp Out Smoking hopes the letters derived from the essay contest will encourage the tobacco-using adults in students' lives to successfully quit using tobacco."

Winners will be announced by 5 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 19, on sosessaycontest.com. Each teacher of a first-place winner will receive a $300 gift card for classroom supplies. All winning schools will receive a visit from the Youth Extinguishing Smoking Team (yesteam.org) for the opportunity to celebrate with a tobacco-free rally. Judging categories and prizes are as follows:

Prizes for Winners:

- Grades 2-3: 1st place – Nintendo Wii, 2nd place – Nintendo DS, 3rd place – Portable DVD player
- Grades 4-6: 1st place – iPad, 2nd place – iPod Touch, 3rd place – iPod Nano
- Grades 7-9: 1st place – iPad, 2nd place – iPod Touch, 3rd place – iPod Nano

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Essays submitted in the grades 2-3 category should be no fewer than 200 words and cannot exceed 450 words. Essays submitted in all other categories must contain no fewer than 300 words and cannot exceed 750 words.

The “My Reason to Write” Essay Contest is a tobacco prevention activity for the SOS campaign, the media and public education component of the Arkansas Department of Health Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program. For more information on “My Reason to Write,” contact Allison Lafargue at allison.lafargue@cjrw.com or (501) 975-7253. For additional information on other tobacco prevention programs in your area, contact the Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program office at (501) 661-2953 or visit stampoutsmoking.com.

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