

# Youth Advocates of the Year Awards

**MAY 7, 2026**

National Portrait Gallery &  
Smithsonian American Art Museum



Global  
Health  
Advocacy  
Incubator



# Program

## Welcome

**YOLONDA C. RICHARDSON**

President & CEO  
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids,  
Global Health Advocacy Incubator

## Global Young Ambassador of the Year

**JUDY CORTES DELOS REYES**

Philippines

## Champion Award

**DR. VIVEK MURTHY**

19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Surgeon General  
of the United States

## Judy Wilkenfeld Award for International Tobacco Control Excellence

**DIEGO RODRÍGUEZ SENDOYA**

Uruguay

## Global Health Advocacy Changemaker

**ALEJANDRA LEAL**

Mexico

## Introduction of Youth Advocates of the Year

**DR. BRIAN KING**

Executive Vice President  
for U.S. Programs,  
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids

## Group Youth Advocates of the Year

**FIRE SQUAD**

South Carolina

## Barrie Fiske National Youth Advocate of the Year

**BREANNA CUTRIGHT**

West Virginia

## Closing Remarks

**YOLONDA C. RICHARDSON**



# WELCOME

## to the 2026 Youth Advocates of the Year Awards!

We began 2025 facing unprecedented challenges and new realities for public health in the United States and around the world. It was a year that called for focus, persistence and a willingness to adapt.

Yet even in the midst of those challenges, we remained resilient. We held firm in our mission to use the power of public health advocacy to protect communities and create a healthier, more equitable future.

And we did more than hold steady — we moved forward. What could have slowed our progress instead sharpened our focus, strengthened our collaboration and deepened our resolve.

Together, we turned challenge into action — advancing solutions, refining strategies and continuing to make meaningful progress.

Tonight, we celebrate the people behind that progress. We are proud to honor outstanding young leaders and public health champions who are helping to create healthier, safer and more equitable communities. Young advocates continue to play an essential

role, bringing energy, urgency and fresh perspective to the challenges ahead.

We are deeply grateful to our partners, colleagues and sponsors who make this work possible. Our shared commitment — and our determination to keep moving forward — will continue to guide us.

Thank you for being part of this community.

**-Volonda C. Richardson**

**PRESIDENT & CEO**



## Champion Award

# DR. VIVEK MURTHY

**19<sup>TH</sup> AND 21<sup>ST</sup> SURGEON GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES**

**The Champion Award recognizes leaders who have made a significant contribution to reducing tobacco use, improving health and saving lives in the United States and around the world.**

A renowned physician, public health expert, research scientist, entrepreneur and author, **DR. VIVEK MURTHY** served as the 19th and 21st Surgeon General of the United States. As Vice Admiral of the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, he commanded a uniformed service of 6,000 public health officers.

During his tenure as Surgeon General, Dr. Murthy advanced tobacco control by issuing two landmark, first-of-their-kind reports. In 2016, he issued the *Surgeon General's Report on E-Cigarette Use Among Youth and Young Adults*, which identified e-cigarette use among young people as a major public health concern and called for comprehensive action to address this growing problem. In 2024, he issued another groundbreaking Surgeon General's report — *Eliminating Tobacco-Related Disease and Death: Addressing Disparities* — that highlighted disparities in tobacco use and health impacts across racial, ethnic, socioeconomic and other populations and detailed actions needed to eliminate these disparities and advance health equity in the U.S.

As Surgeon General, Dr. Murthy also championed evidence-based tobacco control policies, including supporting a smoke-free public housing rule that protected over two million Americans from the dangers of secondhand smoke.

Dr. Murthy's work has widened the lens through which we understand forces that shape our health and well-being. During his two terms as Surgeon General, his initiatives shaped national and international conversations, garnered global media coverage and compelled change across business and non-profit organizations. In addition to tobacco, he has drawn attention to critical, underappreciated health issues including the epidemic of loneliness, the impact of social media on youth mental health, parental mental health and well-being, the youth mental health crisis and health worker burnout.

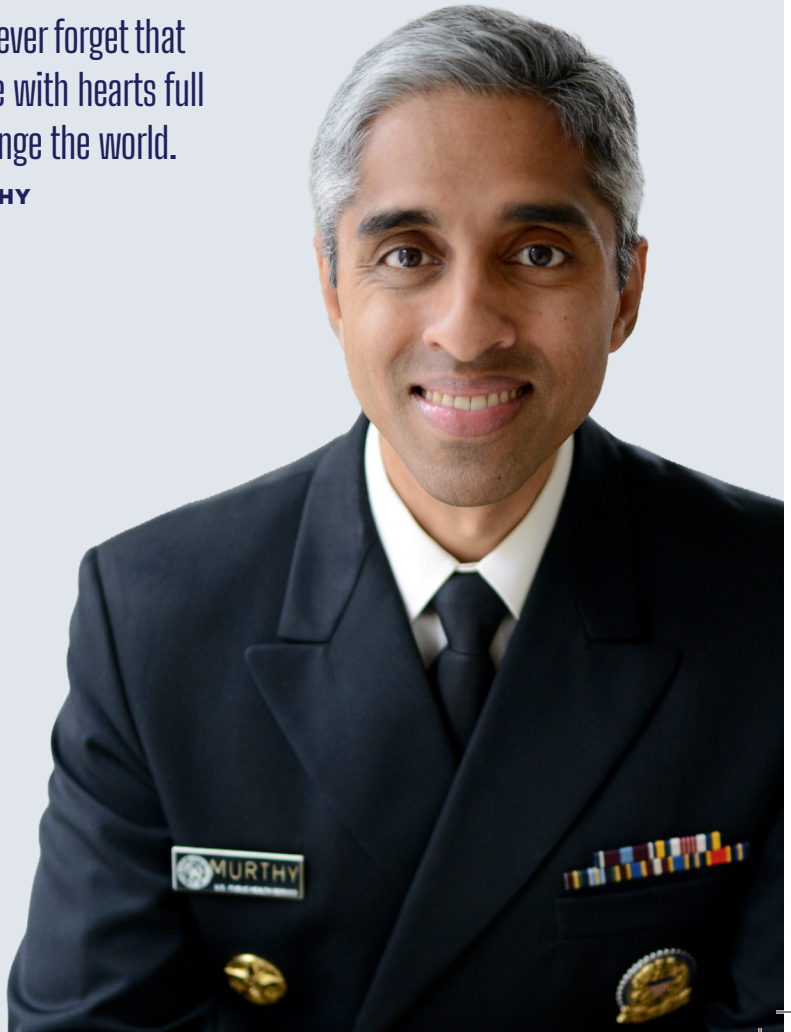
We are thrilled to present our 2026 Champion Award to Dr. Vivek Murthy for his visionary leadership and lasting contributions to advancing tobacco control and public health.



“

To be a healer you have to be able to listen, to learn and to love. And never ever forget that it is good people with hearts full of love who change the world.

**DR. VIVEK MURTHY**



## Global Young Ambassador of the Year

# JUDY CORTES DELOS REYES

### PHILIPPINES

**The Global Young Ambassador of the Year Award honors a young adult from our Global Young Ambassador Network who has demonstrated excellence in tobacco prevention in areas such as policy change, peer mobilization and media advocacy.**

**JUDY CORTES DELOS REYES** is a passionate tobacco control advocate in the Philippines who has mobilized young people to take action to address youth e-cigarette use. Known for his approachable leadership style, Judy has built a strong network of youth and parent advocates committed to advancing public health.

Judy's tobacco control journey took shape through his work with HealthJustice, where he contributed to public engagement and policy initiatives. He developed a strong understanding of how policy, education and community engagement can drive meaningful change

in protecting young people from the harms of tobacco use and nicotine addiction.

Judy now serves as project leader for Parents Against Vape, where he empowers

parents and young people to become effective advocates. He also helped establish Youth Against Vape, a movement that activates young people in their communities.

Judy's work in tobacco control and public health is diverse. He supported passage of smoke-free legislation that covers both cigarettes and e-cigarettes, while elevating youth voices into the national spotlight. He has addressed the Philippines Senate to share firsthand stories from communities and young people about the impact of e-cigarette use and to call for stronger protections for youth.

Judy's impact extends beyond the Philippines. As a three-time participant in the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids' Global Young Ambassadors Summit, he collaborated with peers from around the world to cofound Global Youth for Tobacco Control (Y4TC), a network uniting young advocates across countries.

From supporting policy wins to speaking before national leaders, Judy brings the voices of young people to decision-makers at every level. He is inspiring the next generation of advocates and helping create a healthier, tobacco-free future — both in the Philippines and around the world.



## Judy Wilkenfeld Award for International Tobacco Control Excellence

# DIEGO RODRÍGUEZ SENDOYA

### URUGUAY

**The Judy Wilkenfeld Award for International Tobacco Control Excellence recognizes an advocate from a low- or middle-income country who has worked to significantly reduce tobacco use through policy advocacy. It is given in honor of the late Judy Wilkenfeld, an inspiring advocate and early leader of our international work whose expertise and devotion forever changed the world of tobacco control.**

**DIEGO RODRÍGUEZ SENDOYA** is a leading sociologist and public health advocate who has been instrumental in safeguarding Uruguay's progress in tobacco control during a period of significant political change and industry interference.

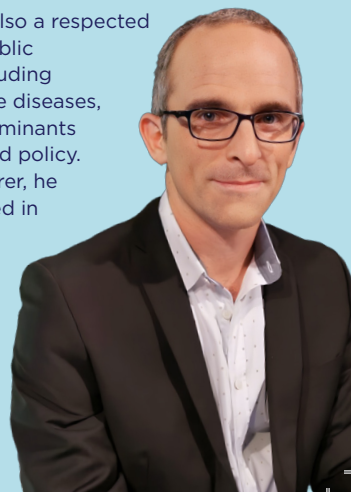
His work has united civil society and academic leaders to counter the efforts of powerful tobacco companies, which have sought to undermine Uruguay's world-class tobacco control policies and aggressively introduce new tobacco products. These efforts have succeeded in stopping the industry from weakening Uruguay's plain packaging policy and regulations for emerging tobacco products.

Mr. Rodríguez's work in tobacco control began nearly a decade ago through academic research on the impact of public health policies in Uruguay and evolved into high-impact national advocacy. He serves as president of the Multidisciplinary Organization for Social Integration (OMIS). He is an active member of the

Uruguayan Society of Tobaccology and coordinator of the National Noncommunicable Diseases Alliance.

His leadership is grounded in a deep commitment to equity and social justice, shaped by his personal journey as one of the first in his family to attend university. He firmly believes that sustainable tobacco control depends on meaningful civil society participation, an approach that guides his tireless efforts to ensure that public health policies serve all communities.

Mr. Rodríguez is also a respected voice on other public health issues, including noncommunicable diseases, commercial determinants of health, and food policy. A university lecturer, he is actively engaged in mentoring new generations of professionals and advocates.



## Global Health Advocacy Changemaker

# ALEJANDRA LEAL

### MEXICO

**The Global Health Advocacy Changemaker Award honors a public health leader from a low- or middle-income country who is advancing public health policies that save lives, reduce disease and prevent injuries.**

**ALEJANDRA LEAL** is a leading advocate for sustainable mobility and road safety in Mexico and co-director of Céntrico, an organization with more than 10 years of experience advancing evidence-based policies. An economist and public policy specialist, Ms. Leal has dedicated her career to promoting mobility as a public health and social justice issue. In a country where more than 16,000 people die every year from road crashes, she works tirelessly to bring that number down to zero.

Working with civil society organizations, government institutions and international partners, Ms. Leal has helped advance transformative road safety policies in Mexico. She played a key role in coordinating civil society efforts that led to the recognition of the constitutional right to mobility in Mexico in 2020 and the passage of the General Law on

Mobility and Road Safety in 2022. These landmark reforms established national standards to address major road safety risk factors such as speed management, drink-driving, child restraint systems and motorcycle helmet use — measures proven to save lives.

Through her role coordinating the Safe Mobility Coalition, a network of 117 civil society organizations, Ms. Leal helped develop the technical proposals and advocacy strategies that made these reforms possible. She continues to support efforts to align mobility and road safety legislation across Mexico's 32 states, helping position the country as a regional leader.

Ms. Leal's work is driven by a deep commitment to social justice and equal access to opportunity via mobility, incorporating a gender perspective. She believes that safe mobility is social justice in motion and works to advance governance frameworks that protect life and expand opportunity for all.



## Group Youth Advocates of the Year

# FIRE SQUAD

**PJ HUBBARD AND JEREMIAH MORGAN**

**ORANGEBURG, BAMBERG AND CALHOUN COUNTIES,  
SOUTH CAROLINA**

**The Group Youth Advocates of the Year Award recognizes a leading U.S.-based youth coalition working to protect their peers and community from tobacco. This group demonstrates the collective power of youth working together to drive meaningful change.**

The Fearless Individuals Reaching Excellence Youth Coalition — **FIRE SQUAD** — is a dedicated group of youth advocates working to reduce tobacco use and its devastating consequences in their rural South Carolina communities. Having witnessed the impact of tobacco use and nicotine addiction on their schools and families, they are driven to create change.

Alarmed by widespread use of e-cigarettes in their schools and an influx of tobacco and vape shops, FIRE Squad members educated their communities about the problem and advocated for local policymakers to act. Their efforts led the Orangeburg City Council to pass an ordinance restricting tobacco retailers near schools, childcare centers, recreation facilities and other youth-focused spaces.

FIRE Squad members spoke before the council and presented community survey data they collected showing that easy access to tobacco products is a key risk factor for youth use. Their efforts also generated media coverage about the problem and their solutions.

FIRE Squad has also hosted school and community events to educate young people and parents about the dangers of e-cigarettes and other tobacco products. They partnered with other organizations to host the first-ever statewide, youth-led conference on vaping, called Escape the Haze, which brought together 142 students from across South Carolina.

We honor FIRE Squad for their leadership, persistence and creativity as they work to improve the health of their communities and free South Carolina youth from the grip of tobacco and nicotine addiction.



## Barrie Fiske National Youth Advocate of the Year

# BREANNA CUTRIGHT

### CLARKSBURG, WEST VIRGINIA

**The Barrie Fiske National Youth Advocate of the Year Award is presented to one exceptional youth advocate in the U.S. who has worked to reduce tobacco use in their state and community. The award pays tribute to the extraordinary life and work of the late Barrie Fiske, a tireless tobacco control champion and longtime member of our Board who used her strong voice to fight for change.**

**BREANNA CUTRIGHT** began her advocacy journey in middle school, driven by growing alarm about widespread e-cigarette use among her peers. Her advocacy was also deeply personal as she encouraged and supported her grandfather as he quit smoking, shaping her belief in the power of individual voices.

As an ambassador for Raze, West Virginia's youth-led tobacco prevention program, Breanna educated peers about the risks of vaping and other tobacco use and supported prevention efforts across West Virginia — challenging work in a state with high rates of tobacco use. Breanna also serves as a National Youth

Ambassador for the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, honing her leadership, media and policy advocacy skills.

When federal funding cuts led to the closure of Raze in 2025, Breanna helped lead West Virginia youth advocates in rising to the challenge.

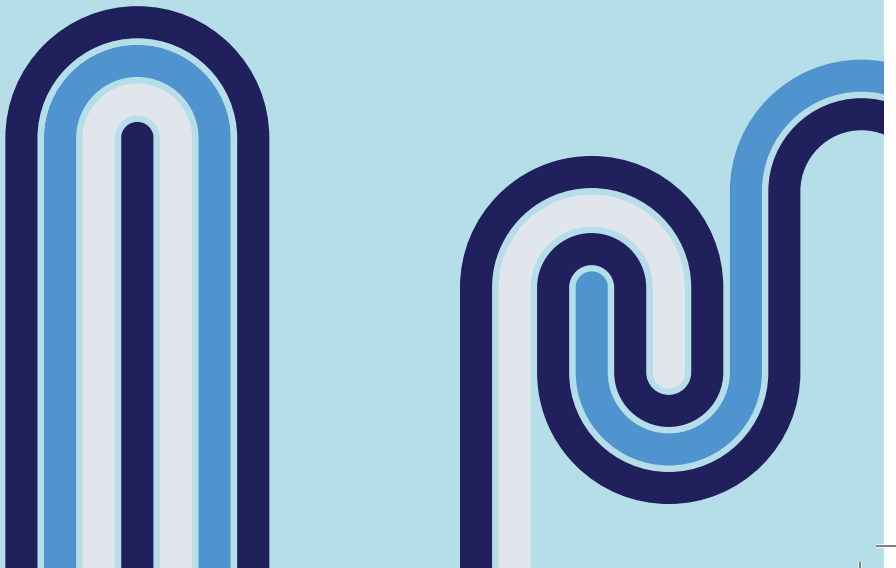
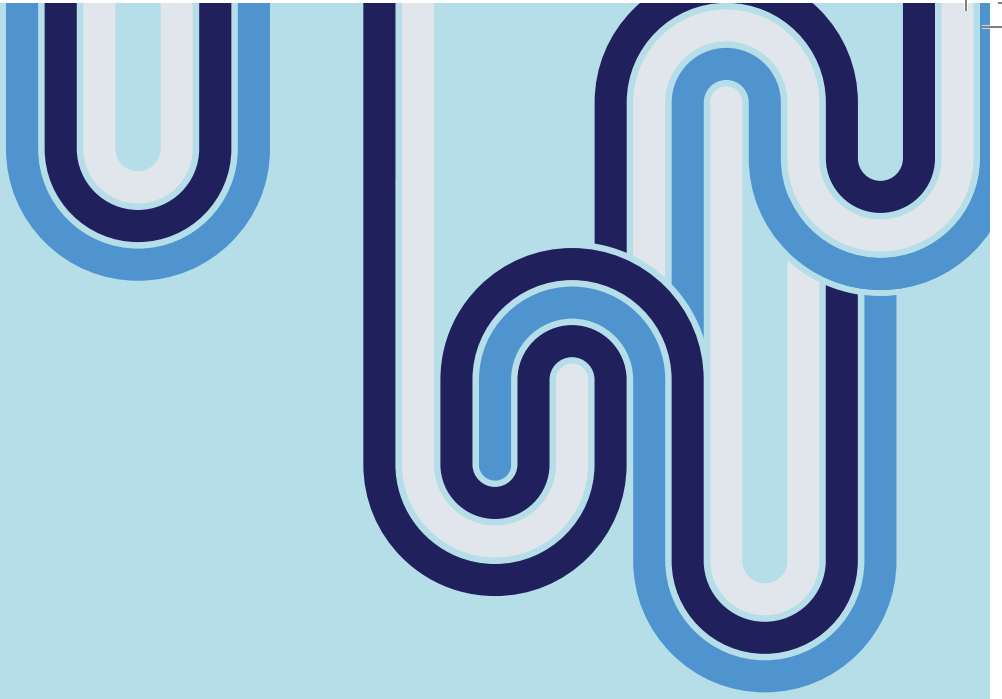
She was featured in national and state media coverage about the devastating impact of the cuts and authored an op-ed in West Virginia's largest newspaper.

At the federal level, Breanna spoke at a congressional briefing and met with U.S. Senator Shelley Moore Capito, chair of the Senate appropriations subcommittee that funds health programs, to advocate for funding.

At the state level, Breanna played a leading role in advocating for tobacco prevention funding. She met with state lawmakers, trained fellow youth advocates, helped lead a statewide youth rally and was widely quoted by the media. These efforts contributed to the enactment of state legislation that allocated \$2.9 million of West Virginia's Juul settlement funds to tobacco prevention programs.

Now a high school senior, Breanna is committed to supporting the next generation of youth advocates and ensuring young people have the information and resources to lead healthy lives.





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2024 Barrie Fiske National  
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**The Boards of Directors  
congratulate tonight's  
exceptional honorees.  
Your tireless efforts are  
saving lives and creating  
a healthier future for all.**



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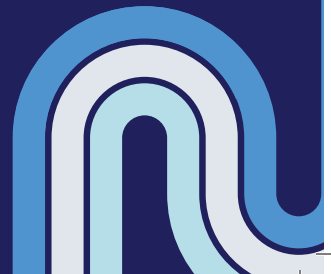
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Congratulations to this year's honorees, and thank you to all who make this work possible. Your dedication reflects the strength of our community and shared purpose. Together, we continue to move forward with resilience and a deep commitment to protecting public health.



**AMBASSADOR OMAR AROUNA  
AND YOLONDA C. RICHARDSON**



Through advocacy and collaboration with our partners and supporters, we're protecting health and saving lives in the U.S. and around the world. We congratulate this year's honorees and thank all who champion this mission. Together, we are making lasting change for generations to come.

**CHRISTOPHER AND PATRICIA CONLEY**

**Bloomberg  
Philanthropies**

Proud to support the

**Campaign for  
Tobacco-Free Kids**





**PUBLIC POLICY ADVOCACY SAVES LIVES  
HERE AND AROUND THE WORLD.**

**THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS,  
SUPPORTERS AND FRIENDS OF THE  
CAMPAIGN FOR TOBACCO-FREE KIDS**

*Fran and Bill Novelli*

**FRAN AND BILL NOVELLI**

Congratulations to this year's honorees.  
The progress we've made together  
through the Campaign for Tobacco-Free  
Kids is remarkable—and the work  
continues. I'm honored to support this  
mission and those leading it into the future.

**Matthew L. Myers**



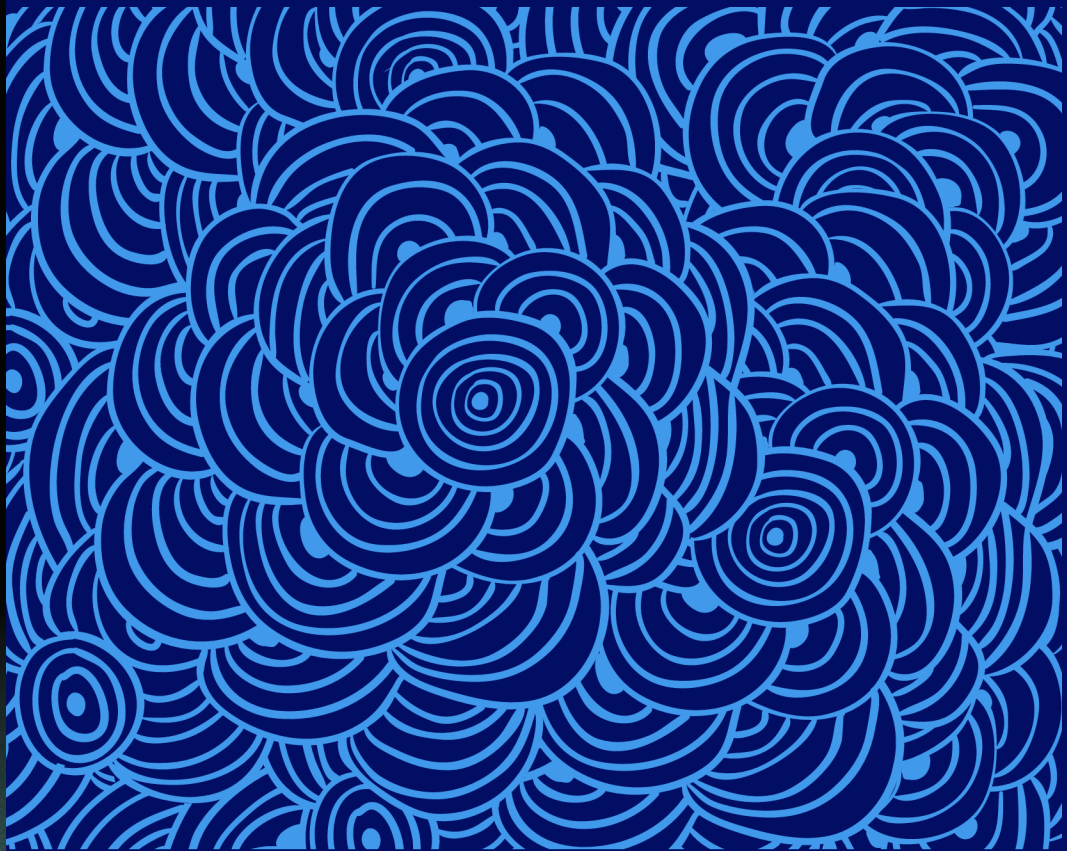
## **We champion public health's champions.**

Tonight, we honor those who bring together communities to create change. Thank you, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, for over 20 years of partnership. And thank you to all the trailblazers who continue to save lives.

**Avōq**

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**WE ARE PROUD TO SUPPORT THE  
CAMPAIGN FOR TOBACCO-FREE KIDS  
AND ITS MISSION TO CREATE A  
HEALTHIER FUTURE FOR ALL. WE  
APPLAUD THIS YEAR'S HONOREES FOR  
THEIR LEADERSHIP AND COMMITMENT TO  
PROTECTING THE NEXT GENERATION AND  
DRIVING LIFE-SAVING POLICY CHANGE.**

**DRS. SUSAN AND RYAN WALLEY**

**Congratulations to Dr. Vivek H. Murthy,  
Judy Cortes Delos Reyes, Alejandra Leal,  
Diego Rodríguez Sendoya, Breanna Cutright,  
and the FIRE Squad on their outstanding  
accomplishments in the name of public health.**

Truth Initiative is proud to join the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids in celebrating this life-saving work. Together, we envision a healthier and more equitable future free from nicotine addiction.





# This year, over 2.1 million people will hear the words “You have cancer.”

Cancer impacts everyone.  
But it doesn't impact everyone equally.

When access to prevention, screening, and care improves, so do outcomes. The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) is proud to partner with the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids to advocate for policies and programs that support stronger tobacco control and help ensure everyone has a fair and just opportunity to prevent, detect, treat, and survive cancer.

Join us at [fightcancer.org](https://fightcancer.org)





American Heart Association

**HEART  
POWERED**



# Congratulations Honorees! Together, we're standing up to Big Tobacco.

The American Heart Association and our Heart Powered national grassroots advocates are committed to championing proven, science-based public policies that:

- Prevent youth tobacco and nicotine addiction.
- Ensure effective regulation of the manufacture, marketing and sale of tobacco products.
- Preserve, protect and restore tobacco prevention, cessation, public education and surveillance initiatives.
- Reduce exposure to secondhand smoke.

**Join us**





MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL  
IS A PROUD SUPPORTER OF THE

# CAMPAIGN FOR TOBACCO- FREE KIDS



# Health with heart

A decade after removing tobacco from CVS Pharmacy® shelves, we're still working to make it easier for people to quit nicotine for good. Because every day, in every way, we are passionate about bringing our heart to every moment of your health.

**We're proud to support Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids and their work to help deliver the first tobacco-free generation.**



  
Healthier happens together®



**PROUD TO SUPPORT  
THE CAMPAIGN FOR TOBACCO-FREE KIDS**

CONGRATULATIONS  
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EXTRAORDINARY  
YOUTH  
ADVOCATES

**WE TELL STORIES THAT MOVE PEOPLE TO TAKE ACTION**

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riester.com

A healthier future starts

# ON THE OTHER SIDE.

Riester honors the young leaders and public health champions helping the next generation move beyond tobacco's reach and toward healthier futures.



THIS IS

# Epic!

HATS OFF TO THE YOUNG LEADERS SCALING NEW HEIGHTS FOR A HEALTHIER TOMORROW.



JOHNS HOPKINS  
BLOOMBERG SCHOOL  
of PUBLIC HEALTH

Institute for Global  
Tobacco Control

**Bully Pulpit International**  
congratulates the 2026 Youth Advocates  
of the Year honorees.

Together, we've made significant steps to remove flavored e-cigarettes from shelves. We're proud to continue to advance this critical public health fight to protect kids from the harmful effects of e-cigarettes and predatory tactics of Big Tobacco.



**Congratulations to  
the Youth Advocates  
of the Year.**

You're saving countless lives through  
your leadership and commitment!



**KELLEY DRYE JOINS THE  
CAMPAIGN FOR  
TOBACCO-FREE KIDS**

**IN HONORING THE 2026  
YOUTH ADVOCATES OF THE  
YEAR AWARD WINNERS**

**Kelley  
Drye**



IS PROUD TO PARTNER  
*with the*  
CAMPAIGN FOR TOBACCO-FREE KIDS

*Together,*  
we're advancing our shared  
mission to protect children and  
save lives from tobacco use.

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POLICY ▪ ADVOCACY ▪ STRATEGY

NVG proudly supports the  
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids

[nvgllc.com](http://nvgllc.com)

# Congratulations to this year's Awards winners from your partners at Quit For Life, powered by RVO Health

Quit For Life® is the leading quit services provider, partnering with employers and health plans, as well as leaders in **DC, Maryland, Virginia, and 20 other public health agencies** to make tailored tobacco cessation support accessible to every demographic.



Helping people **quit with confidence** for a tobacco-free future.

Quit For Life takes the daunting task of quitting commercial tobacco and breaks it into practical steps that fit into any lifestyle. **Participants receive support via our online dashboard, a dedicated Quit Team, and free NRT for those who qualify.**



Creating a healthier future for teens and young adults, **free from vaping.**

**Participants get all the support they need to quit – including coaching and free NRT** (ages 18–26) – with none of the judgment.

# Parents Against Vaping congratulates the 2026 youth advocates of the year!



Parents Against Vaping is the national parent voice fighting the vaping and tobacco industries.

[PARENTSAGAINSTVAPING.ORG](https://PARENTSAGAINSTVAPING.ORG)





QUADRANT  
STRATEGIES

## PROUDLY SUPPORTING THE CAMPAIGN FOR TOBACCO-FREE KIDS

with message research to help turn advocacy  
into action with DC Policy Insiders.



The future is bright,  
thanks to you.

**AFTER 20+ YEARS IN TOBACCO CONTROL,**

the driving force behind our efforts is the  
passion and dedication of the young  
advocates being honored today.

We are endlessly inspired by your  
commitment to creating a healthier future,  
and we thank you for all that you do.

**GOLIN**

# Celebrating the Next Generation of Tobacco-Free Leaders



## Honoring the Youth Advocates driving change in their communities and beyond.

Your voices are shaping the future of tobacco prevention—protecting the health of your peers, influencing policy, and challenging misinformation.

For more than 30 years, IQ Solutions has partnered with public health leaders to reduce youth tobacco use through strategic communications—combining evidence-based messaging, digital innovation, and human-centered storytelling to reach the audiences who matter most.

**Proud to support a tobacco-free generation.**



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## GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE. SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCE.

We are proud to support **Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids** and its commitment to ending the devastation caused by tobacco industry.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO  
THE YOUTH ADVOCATES  
OF THE YEAR**



**FOLEY  
HOAG**



# Thank you!

**Every person behind the scenes – the teams who built the stage, prepared the meals, set the lights, captured the moments and filled the evening with music and artistry.**

**4Wall Lighting**

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**Lucy Black Entertainment**

**Smithsonian American Art Museum**

**Well Dunn Catering**

## **OUR OUTSTANDING ENTERTAINMENT**

**Lucy Black Youth Drumline**





Global  
Health  
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