

# CLASSROOM CORNER

## *Prouty students take part in statewide anti-smoking campaign*



Courtesy photos

DPHS students worked with Senator Anne Gobi and other leaders to find new ways to help students stay tobacco free.

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SPENCER — Students at David Prouty High School recently took a stand against tobacco use by traveling to Boston and rallying with local legislators.

Students from throughout the state took part in Kick Butts Day on April 26. Supported by The 84 Movement, the annual event raises awareness of the importance of preventing tobacco use among teens. Over

200 students visited Boston to take part in several activities, including working with state leaders and attending workshops.

For DPHS students, the program allowed them to meet Senator Anne Gobi, State Representative Donald Berthiaume, and other legislators as part of engaging discussions on advocacy and prevention. Moving forward, the students can now be agents of change at their school and

spread the message.

"The kids did a fantastic job and are looking forward to continuing their efforts here," said DPHS health and physical education teacher Kelly King, who helped organize the visit to Boston. English teacher Nancy Gingras also chaperoned on the trip.

It is always rewarding for local legislators to work with students, many of whom have an interest in activism, community service, or politics. Gobi and Berthiaume enjoy taking the opportunity to invite students from their district to Boston.

"It was an amazing lobbying effort from the Prouty students who visited the State House," Berthiaume told the New Leader. "It's always great to see kids from my district visit Boston and get actively involved in issues that matter to them."

Both Berthiaume and Gobi are DPHS graduates, and teachers are thrilled by the example they set for aspiring students on being active in the community.

"Meeting them opens the students' eyes to where a David Prouty education can lead them," Gingras said.

The 84 Movement represents the 84 percent of Massachusetts youth who did not smoke when the movement began. Now, thanks to tireless work from students at Prouty and beyond,



David Prouty High School students supported The 84 Movement against youth tobacco use by attending Kick Butts Day in Boston.

92 percent of students across the state are tobacco free.

Chapters of The 84 movement exist throughout Massachusetts, advocating for change at the state level and working with their peers at the local level. One of the main objectives for members of the movement is to expose deceptive advertising methods and other strategies used by the tobacco industry to appeal to students. These include colorful packaging, flavored vapors, and increased product accessibility.

"A lot of these products are

very cheap, and some places don't even card kids," said King, who is hoping to organize an upcoming program in which the Prouty students can speak to fifth and sixth graders about staying tobacco free. "It would be a great event. Kids really respond well to listening to other students."

The 84 Movement is a program of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Tobacco Cessation and Prevention Program. For more information about how you can join the movement, visit [www.the84.org](http://www.the84.org).

