

**CITY OFFICIALS HELP QUITTERS DESTROY 6,000 PACKS OF
CIGARETTES AS PART OF THE GREAT AMERICAN SMOKEOUT**



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New York City Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) Commissioner Gretchen Dykstra and New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) Assistant Commissioner for Tobacco Control Nancy Miller today joined American Cancer Society (ACS) Executive Vice President Hector Batista to help "Great American Quitter" Paul Kenney destroy 6,000 packs of cigarettes as part of the Great American Smokeout. The Smokeout is an annual national event sponsored by the American Cancer Society and held on the third Thursday of November, geared toward helping smokers quit for good. All 6,000 packs, bought undercover by teens as part of the DCA's Teen Tobacco and Prevention Program, were compacted in a New York City Sanitation truck.



American Cancer Society Executive Vice President Hector Batista said, "Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in the U.S. for both men and women, and is the most preventable form of cancer death in our society. Cigarettes kill more Americans than alcohol, car accidents, suicide, AIDS, homicide, and illegal drugs combined. In fact, every day 1,300 people die from tobacco use. Quitting smoking is the best thing someone can do for themselves and their family, and the Great American Smokeout is a great day to do it."

"We believe if you never start smoking, you never have to quit, but we congratulate those who have, and are thrilled to celebrate the American Cancer Society's efforts on behalf of quitters throughout New York," said

DCA Commissioner Gretchen Dykstra. "New York City has the best teen tobacco prevention and enforcement program in the country and we continue to build on our strong record to improve the City's high compliance rate among businesses."

"If you're a smoker, quitting is the most important thing you can do to improve your health," said Dr. Nancy Miller, DOHMH's Assistant Commissioner for Tobacco Control. "Over the past two years, the Health Department distributed free nicotine patches to 60,000 smokers, and the City's Health and Hospitals Corporation continues to provide cessation services to anyone who needs them. Last month, we launched a new campaign entitled 'Everybody Loves A Quitter,' which urges New Yorkers to call 311 for access to effective cessation programs. As we celebrate the Great American Smokeout, we congratulate those who have stopped smoking, and encourage those who want to quit to call 311 or talk to their doctor for more information about quitting."

Paul Kenney, one of the Great American Quitters, wrote in his latest online journal entry "It's been a little over two weeks without a cigarette, and I really am feeling much better. Physically, I am sleeping better,

and I am not wheezing first thing in the morning. I can actually have a cup of coffee and not crave a cigarette. Mentally I am feeling strong and confident. Any time I have a thought about wanting a cigarette I just tell myself that I DO NOT SMOKE a few times. So if I DO NOT SMOKE why would I want to light a cigarette? That seems to be working for me.”

The American Cancer Society's 28th annual Great American Smokeout is an opportunity for smokers around the country to give up their cigarettes for a day or forever. It is estimated that more than half a million New Yorkers will stop smoking for the Great American Smokeout. This year, a cop, a fireman, a journalist, a politician and others from New York and New Jersey are chronicling their efforts to quit smoking online, sharing their struggles and strategies on the Society's special web page, www.cancer.org/livefreesmokefree.



In addition to licensing more than 12,000 tobacco retailers in New York City, the DCA runs the Teen Tobacco and Prevention Program where teens, ages 14-17, work with agency inspectors and go undercover to curb illegal sales to minors. Accompanied by a DCA inspector, teens conduct more than 14,000 routine inspections year-round in all five boroughs, by going into stores and attempting to purchase cigarettes. If not asked for identification, the vendor is cited and faces both City and State penalties, including the loss of their license. (DCA's Teen Tobacco Enforcement Program is made possible by a New York State grant administered by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene). Citywide business compliance is at an all-time high at 85%. Since the program formally began in 1998, compliance among City businesses has increased by more than 30%.

For more information about the Great American Smokeout, and tips on how to quit, visit www.cancer.org/livefreesmokefree.

Visit the Department of Consumer Affairs' web site at www.nyc.gov/consumers