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Orange County Recognizes Tobacco Litter Impacts

Orange County, VA – The Orange County Litter Control Committee and Orange County Office on Youth recently partnered to address tobacco litter in Orange County. Staff members and six (6) youth volunteers from the Orange County Youth Council, collected tobacco litter, including cigarette butts, in addition to non-tobacco litter.

Cigarette butts are the most littered item in our local community and in the world. At a spring 2021 event, an estimated 6,500 cigarette butts were recovered during a clean-up event in the Town of Orange. In just under one and a half hours, volunteers collected an estimated 5,000 cigarette butts in the Town of Gordonsville for the fall 2021 event as well as four (4) bags of assorted non-tobacco litter.

With funding from the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth, the Orange County Office on Youth hopes to spread awareness about the harmful effects of tobacco product use. Tobacco use is not only harmful to the body of the user, but also to the environment when tobacco litter fills streets and other areas. Cigarette butts are nonbiodegradable and mostly made up of plastic fibers, despite their cotton-like appearance. Littered cigarette butts leach toxic chemicals, such as arsenic and lead, into the environment.

Resources are readily available to help those who wish to quit the use of tobacco products. Quit Now Virginia provides free information and coaching by telephone or online to residents who want to quit smoking or using tobacco. Interested persons can dial 1-800-QUIT-NOW or visit QuitNow.net/Virginia for assistance that is free and confidential and available 24 hours per day, seven days per week.

Orange County youth and young adults can also text VAPEFREEOC to 88709 for free and completely confidential assistance with vaping cessation. Enrolled persons will receive up to 12 weeks of daily text messages with quit date assistance. The text messages show the real side of quitting, to help young people feel motivated, inspired, and supported throughout their quitting process.

For more information, please contact Ashley Jacobs, Office on Youth Program Coordinator, at (540) 672-5484 ext. 1 or at ajacobs@orangecountyva.gov.

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