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Tobacco-free Edison celebrates Smokeout

SPECIAL TO FLORIDA WEEKLY

The American Cancer Society's 34th annual Great American Smokeout was celebrated locally at the Charlotte campus of Edison State College. Murdock Family Medicine sponsored the event.

The day's activities hosted by Edison State College ranged from free blood pressure tests to yoga demonstrations to a Stop Smoking Seminar presented by Dr. Don Kennedy.

The American Cancer Society presented a plaque in recognition of Edison State College Charlotte Campus becoming the first public college or university in Florida to go 100 percent tobacco free.

"It's a tremendous honor to be recognized by an organization as respected as the American Cancer Society," said Christy Gilfert, Charlotte campus director of student services, who accepted the plaque on behalf of Edison State College.



COURTESY PHOTO Murdock Family Medicine provided free blood pressure screenings during as part of Thursday's Great American Smokeout festivities on the Charlotte campus of Edison State College. "I think the real recognition belongs to the Edison students," Ms. Gilfert added. "Many of our students were heavily involved with the tobacco-free initiative and their passion is what made it possible and continues to make it work."

Smokeout events also included free blood pressure screenings from Murdock Family Medicine and Fawcett Memorial Hospital. **The Charlotte County Health Department** and Drug Free Charlotte County provided cessation materials and support to anyone interested. Free yoga demonstrations were provided by the Punta Gorda Tennis & Fitness Club.

Murdock Family Medicine's Dr. Don Kennedy was the keynote speaker with his Stop Smoking Seminar. The presentation included guest speaker and lung cancer survivor Tom Cappiello.

"Low survival rates means lung cancer patients hardly have time to say goodbye to friends and family, much less organize a rally or golf tournament. Here in Charlotte County, we don't even have a lung cancer survivor support group because there simply not many of us," Mr. Cappiello told Florida Weekly recently,

"Following in the footsteps of the breast cancer lobby, I recently worked with Dr. Paige Kreegle, our state representative, to get Gov. Crist to proclaim November Lung Cancer Awareness Month. Next year we'll be working to make it permanent by state law in Florida, where 12,000 people a year die from lung cancer."

The Smokeout festivities concluded with a cold turkey sandwich giveaway sponsored by the Edison State College's department of nursing.