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Contact: Diane Holm, PIO

(239) 332-9561 (desk)

(850) 519-5728 (cell)

Diane_holm@doh.state.fl.us**Lee Youth Fights Tobacco Use On Kick Butts Day**
Former Baseball Great to Speak

Fort Myers, FL—Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) hired former Minor League Baseball Player Rick Bender to discourage teens from using tobacco products on Wednesday, March 23, 2011, national Kick Butts Day. Lee County Health Department's grant funded anti-tobacco program is paying for the speaker.

Kick Butts Day will begin with Bender, a former player for the Los Angeles Angels (now the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim), telling Cypress Lake High School students how he lost half his face and part of his right arm to cancer while in his mid-20s. Following his talk at Cypress, Bender will do a second presentation at Ida Baker High School and another at the Lee Alternative Charter School that same day.

All students at the three schools are invited to attend his presentation with teacher and administrative approval. That same day, Bender will tell his compelling story in a short video which will be shown to all middle and high school students in Lee County later this year.

Bender's career ended abruptly due to cancer and the life saving treatments. He now devotes his work to educating youth about the danger of all forms of tobacco, with an emphasis on chew tobacco, and the easy-to-fall-for lure of Big Tobacco advertising.

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Main Office
3920 Michigan Avenue • Fort Myers, FL • 33916
www.leechd.com