



photo by [David Snow](#)

DMS students get a feel of a healthy lung and a diseased lung with the help of LifeSkills instructors Loretta Wilson (far left) and Zina Wiggins (far right).

## LifeSkills programs begin for sixth-graders

By [David Snow](#) ([Contact](#)) | Demopolis Times

Published Tuesday, December 15, 2009

DEMOPOLIS — As the students at Demopolis Middle School came filing into the science class last week, they couldn't help noticing the pair of lungs displayed on the table at the front of the room.

They really took notice when an air pump attached to the lungs enabled them to fill with air, then release it in the act of breathing.

One lung was a healthy red. The other was black from prolonged tobacco use. One by one, students from Ola Ross's class and Deborah Brown's class filed in front of the lungs, putting on latex gloves and feeling the difference between a healthy lung and a diseased lung.

This hands-on experience is a big part of the LifeSkills program in teaching about the dangers of smoking and tobacco use to sixth-graders. It is funded by a grant through the Tombigbee Healthcare Authority.

"It's a part of our TEMPO (Teens Empowering and Motivating their Peers to Opt out) program," said Loretta Wilson, the program administrator and a LifeSkills instructor. "The program consists of 15 sessions. Demopolis Middle School is the first to have the program this season. We are going to be in John Essex, A.L. Johnson and George P. Austin schools as well.

"Our primary instructor for the LifeSkills program is Zina Wiggins. This is our third year to provide LifeSkills to Marengo County. Last year, we were highlighted in the national Botvin newsletter as the

program having the most impact on its students throughout the nation.”

A LifeSkills program lasts about six weeks, depending on the school’s schedule. Sessions include self-improvement, self-image, making decisions, smoking myths, alcohol myths, drug myths, assertiveness and resolving conflict.

“They chose sixth-graders because statistics say that if you can capture them at that age, then they will most likely never start smoking cigarettes,” Wilson said. “They will also have a huge impact on their parents and peers because they are likely to become huge advocates who talk about what they’ve learned, what they’ve seen and what they’ve witnessed in this program.”

Being told that smoking is bad for you is one thing. Being able to see the effects of smoking on an actual lung is a lesson that is more likely to stay in the minds of teens for the rest of their lives.

---

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SHARE THIS STORY?



## Comments

Posted by [DarrylDavis](#) (anonymous) on December 16, 2009 at 6:34 a.m. ([Suggest removal](#))

If this much effort is being made to cause young children to not use tobacco then why is no effort made to teach the young children about the additives that are in food that they obtain by going to " Mcdoodles", Colonel Chicken", Burger Whopper" etc. People are dieing a whole lot faster and at a younger age from being severely overweight than from smoking cigs or cigars. Who was the entity that funded this program, the government??

Posted by [voiceofreason1](#) (anonymous) on December 16, 2009 at 8:35 a.m. ([Suggest removal](#))

Burger King funded the anti-smoking program so it would take all the heat off the launch of their new quadruple, Mega Bacon Whopper with cheese, extra cholesterol and mayo.

They're not even going to put lettuce and tomato on it. It's pure death on 39 sesame seed encrusted buns.

To make matters worse, they're even going to sell them at Hardees and McDonalds. Krystals will be the only place safe from the carnage because the quadruple, Mega Bacon Whopper with cheese, extra cholesterol and mayo won't fit in one of those little boxes.

Oh, the huge-manity!!

Post a comment ([Terms of Use Policy](#))

(Requires free [registration](#).)

Username:

Password:

([Forgotten your password?](#))

Comment:

Preview comment