

# PHS student honored by anti-tobacco group

By Steve Biehn

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Kristy Adelina Ordonez , a freshman at Plainview High School, has been named Central Regional Youth Advocate of the Year by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. She is the daughter of Victor and Lori Ordonez of Ardmore.

Each year the Campaign chooses four regional winners, one group winner, one international grant winner and a national youth advocate of the year. The organization honors each recipient with a scholarship and a grant to continue their tobacco control work. Additionally, all winners are invited to Washington, DC to receive their awards and meet with their members of Congress.

April Kusper, associate director for youth advocacy for the Campaign, said the awards honor the outstanding work of young advocates who have taken the lead in holding the tobacco industry accountable for their efforts to market their products to youth.

"These young activists are fighting to protect their peers, their communities and the nation from the dangers of tobacco use through public education efforts, student-to-student training and outreach to policy makers," Kusper said by e-mail. "Many have worked to change policy at all levels to limit youth access to tobacco, protect people from secondhand smoke and ensure that tobacco prevention programs continue to receive funding. Through all of their work, these youth inspire and motivate other young people to join them in their efforts."

Past award winners have helped pass local and state smoke-free workplace policies, have advocated tobacco prevention funding and tobacco excise tax increases, and have helped build support for strong and effective FDA regulation of tobacco.

Ordonez has served as president of Plainview S.W.A.T. (Students Working Against Tobacco) for two years. She is also on the planning committee for the state S.W.A.T. Summit.

She was instrumental in making her school campus smoke-free, as well as lobbying for a city ordinance to ban indoor smoking. She wrote personal letters to each city commissioner and made a presentation before the Ardmore city commission. She is also active in efforts to make outdoor activities, such as bull riding events and the local skate park, tobacco free.

Janie Horton, coordinator for the Carter County Turning Point Tobacco Use Prevention Coalition, said Ordonez joined the SWAT team in middle school because it answered a deep, emotional need to do something about the industry whose products robbed her of one grandfather and left the other grandfather with only one lung.

"Kristy stands out as a leader among leaders," Horton said. "Kristy's passion, natural grace and intelligence are evident when she speaks before large or small groups of peers, adults, civic and government leaders and the press. Kristy has certainly made us proud at the local tobacco use prevention coalition by winning the central region award, and the future looks bright for more awards and recognition." Horton said SWAT teams are youth driven; each team decides its focus and strategy as long as it fits with the SWAT mission. Susie Dillard is the adult facilitator for the Plainview SWAT team. Members of the Plainview SWAT team have been active at the local, regional and state levels. Sally Mitchell advises the teams at Wilson, Healdton, Lone Grove, Fox, and Ardmore.

"All of my accomplishments in S.W.A.T. could not have happened without Janie Horton who nominated me; Susie Dillard, my adult S.W.A.T partner; my high school team members, Cierra Grey and Madison McCathern; my middle school principal, Lisa Hartman, who wanted to create a smoke-free school; and God who has blessed me with wonderful opportunities," Ordonez said.