

# CIVICS RENEWAL NETWORK

## William Britton

**Teacher** Sarah Anderson      **School** Southwest Charter School | Portland, Oregon

**Issue** The issue we decided upon was secondhand smoke in public parks. As public parks are indeed public, we feel that everyone should be able to enjoy a healthy, smoke-free environment. We found that about 45,000 people who are not smokers die each year from secondhand smoke-related diseases. However, because of the people around them, they are affected by it in negative ways.

**Project Description** As part of the project, we conducted surveys around our school and parks, talked to both adults and children in our community and reached out to many different sources as a part of our research. Sources such as State Rep. Mitch Greenlick, City Commissioner of Portland Amanda Fritz and several related associations were contacted. We received letters of support from various associations, and we were fortunate enough to speak in person with State Rep. Mitch Greenlick and City Commissioner of Portland Amanda Fritz. Our chosen solution was to ban smoking in public parks. Some cities have used the same solution as we have proposed; cities such as Albuquerque, San Jose, New York, Chicago and Los Angeles, to name a few. We were able to contact one of these cities, and they indicated that the solution was working well. People may complain about this solution with the reasoning that this restricts one or many of their freedoms. A question to ask: Which one? The Right to Bear Arms, the Right to Vote, the Right to Speech, the Right to Press, and the Right to Due Process of Law are all not affected by this solution. This solution is a protection for the general health of the people.

**Project Outcome** We have not felt any immediate outcomes, because the solution requires government action. However, we have spoken to City Commissioner of Portland Amanda Fritz, and she stated that she was considering proposing a bill in the winter involving this problem. We were invited to that meeting to share our project and to possibly help sway the voters.

**Request** Unfortunately, there is not much we can ask for from our senator or representative, as this is a city-based problem. What they can do is speak to their fellow colleagues and constituents, on the city, state and national level, and encourage them to support this plan.

**Project Link** <http://www.change.org/p/amanda-fritz-ban-smoking-in-city-parks-and-plazas-in-portland-oregon>