

LifeSmarts

Alabama LifeSmarts coordinator:

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LifeSmarts...the ultimate consumer challenge is a unique educational game show competition for youth in grades 9 through 12. Participants are prepared to answer questions covering a broad range of consumer issues including credit, contracts, refunds, charitable contributions, food labels, food production and consumption, etc. Sponsored by the Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs unit of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System and the National Consumers League, the competition is open to youth from any school, group, or organization in the state.

The National Consumers League (NCL) owns the program and licenses the use of the program to other non-profit organizations approved by the NCL Board of Directors. One agency in each state is the lead partner and a designee of that agency becomes the state coordinator for the program.

NCL coordinates the national competition. To keep costs and time away from school at a minimum, the national competition is held in April at various locations throughout the US.

FOCUS ON ALABAMA

Meet the Alabama 2007 Winners!



DHS DECA4th team from
Demopolis High School in Demopolis, AL
[L to R: Coach LTC (Ret.) Beverly Jones, Katie Reeves,
Captain (Junior), Matthew Cox, (Junior), Gracie Smith
(Senior), and Victoria Barley (Sophomore)]

Team DHS DECA4th of Demopolis High School, Demopolis, Alabama, attended the National LifeSmart Competition on April 21–24 in Orlando, Florida.

The trip began with a great flight from Birmingham to Orlando. At the hotel the Captains and Coaches attended a meeting to discuss the rules and guidance for the competition. Later that evening everyone came together for a "Welcome" by NCL President Linda Goldner followed by a dinner, mixer, Team Photos, and a chance to meet our Sister Team–Hawaii. The students introduced themselves and exchanged gifts. Both Teams enjoyed the evening through dancing and meeting other Teams.

The competition began the next day. Team Alabama was behind by several points but made a dramatic comeback to win the first Match. The team had designed a T-Shirt for the T-Shirt competition but unfortunately did not win. They enjoyed a stroll through Downtown Disney, meeting other teams, sight seeing, and food sampling. They also won a free tour of the Theme park Innoventions.

Day 3 of the competition kicked off and we lost that Match which was very disappointing time for the Team. At the end of the day the Team toured the Innoventions Park and spent some exciting time at the MGM Park.

The students had a wonderful time during the competition and they represented the State of Alabama with their great Southern mannerism, which was admired by all, including the Judges. This was a very rewarding trip for all and they are looking forward to LifeSmart 2008!!!!

LIFE SMARTS Q & A

Q: What does LifeSmarts teach teens?

A: The content and competition questions focus on five key areas of consumer knowledge that teens need to know to function effectively in today's marketplace. These areas are: Personal Finance, Health and Safety, Environment, Technology, Consumer Rights and Responsibilities.

Participants develop teamwork, self-esteem, verbal communication skills, leadership abilities, and have fun in the process. They learn to spot and avoid frauds and scams and how to make smart purchasing decisions. Brochures, booklets, videos, teaching guides, text books, and other educational resources provided by government agencies, businesses, consumer groups, and trade associations are the source of this information which can easily be obtained by any consumer.

The state champion team represents their state at the national competition. Players win prizes such as savings bonds, products, certificates, t-shirts, hats and other items.

Q: How do we create a team?

A: How team members are identified is up to the coach and the group or school. Consumer tests, play-offs, and interest groups are ways that have been used.

Q: Who can be a coach?

A: Coaches are adults over 18 years of age who are committed to the education of teens. A coach can be a teacher, business leader, college student, or youth group leader. Coaches teach students consumer life skills and give them information needed in the "real world." A Coaches Guide is available from the LifeSmarts State Coordinator, it will help answer all your questions. It also gives access to a national network of consumer educators.

Q: Is there a fee to participate?

A: LifeSmarts is FREE to any group of teens and their coach who want to participate. There is NO fee or registration cost.

Q: How much time will participating take?

A: Team members spend a few hours away from school to work on the State Finals. If the team proceeds to the national competition, time away from school will not exceed two days. Most of the preparation time is spent learning about the consumer topics in ways chosen by the coach and team.

Q: How does the team sign up to get involved?

A: Teams must sign up to participate in their state competitions. To sign up, you must return the following forms:

- signed permission and release form from the organization
- signed individual permission and release form for each team member and coach

Q: How does the competition work?

A: There are four rounds to each competition and teams play for points.

Round 1: Individual Questions

Round 2: Team Questions

Round 3: Team Plus

Round 4: Challenge Round

Experts from all over the country prepare and review the questions to ensure accuracy. Each competition has officials such as the question master, judges, referee, scorekeeper, and timekeeper. The officials are adults from the community who support teens and education. Teams that win their state competition compete for the national title.

Q: When will the competitions be held?

A: Practice tests for 2008 competition is available online at www.LifeSmarts.org. Alabama's 2008 online LifeSmarts Competition is from September 17, 2007 through January 31, 2008. Alabama's in-person state competition has been scheduled for February 27, 2008.

Alabama's in-person finals will be held at Auburn University in Montgomery (AUM), in Montgomery, Alabama.

The 2008 National Competition will be held April 12-15, 2008 in Minneapolis, MN.

Q: What other information do I need?

A: The staff of the National Consumer League and your state coordinator are available to answer questions and to provide suggestions on how to get involved in LifeSmarts. NCL has inexpensive resources available for order.

Q: What if I have more questions?

A: Please contact your local county Extension office for further information.

www.aces.edu/lifesmarts



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