

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 savings, credit & credit counseling, net & gross income, contracts, refunds, insurance as risk protection, food labels, exercise & good health, 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

Team Baker #1 of Baker High School, Mobile, Alabama, attended the National LifeSmart Competition on April 25–28 in St. Louis, MO.

Meet the Alabama 2009 Winners!



Baker #1 team from
Mobile High School in Mobile, AL
[L to R: Dakota Hollstein; Brody Dunn, Captain;
Taylor Gwin; Doug Roberts; Sandy Falgout, Coach]

The trip to the National LifeSmarts Championship began with a wonderful flight from Mobile, Alabama to St. Louis, Missouri. Upon arriving at the hotel in St. Louis, the team captain and coach participated in the Coach and Captain Orientation. Shortly thereafter, the students and coaches received a welcome from a representative of the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Later in the evening the team ate dinner and had fun participating in the dinner and other get acquainted activities. After dinner they continued to have fun at the mixer where they interacted with their sister team from Delaware. The evening ended with a photo shooting for the team and coaches.

The LifeSmarts competition began the next day with a welcome from the National Consumer League President Sally Greenberg. The team played well although they did not place in the competition.

At the end of the third day the students and coaches walked and toured the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial Gateway Arch and the Museum of Westward Expansion. They took a fascinating tram ride to the top of the stainless-steel Gateway Arch where they were able to tour the inside of the structure. The description states, "The stainless steel structure rises 630 feet high from a 60-foot foundation and spans 630 feet at ground level." The outside view from the top of the Arch was magnificent. The students and coaches also took a boat ride up the Mississippi River at the Gateway Arch Riverfront.

On the last day the team and coaches participated in the Awards Banquet where the coach received the team's recognition. The students had a wonderful time and represented Alabama well. They look forward to LifeSmarts 2010.

www.aces.edu/lifesmarts

Resource Management Consumer Helpnet
www.aces.edu/urban/resource.html

LIFESMARTS 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 skills, 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 the 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 and online via the national LifeSmarts website under the coaches tab, 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 one day away from school to participate in the state competition. 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
- forms are also available at the national site

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 the state competition compete for the national title.

Q: When will the competitions be held?

A: Practice tests for 2010 competition is available online at www.LifeSmarts.org. Alabama's 2010 online LifeSmarts Competition is from September 14, 2009 through February 5, 2010. Alabama's in-person state competition has been scheduled for March 10, 2010.

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

The 2010 National Competition will be held April 24-27, 2010 in Miami, FL.

Q: What other information do I need?

A: The staff of the National Consumer League (NCL) 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.

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