

PRESS RELEASE

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CIGARETTE BRAND PREFERENCE REPORT SPARKS OUTRAGE WITH HOOSIER YOUTH

Marlboro, Newport & Camel: Still Tops with Youth Smokers

Westfield, Indiana – Youth from across Indiana recently expressed their outrage at the connection that exists between tobacco advertising and a report measuring the cigarette brand preferences among middle and high school students.

Results of the report, published recently by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), came as more than 150 youth from across Indiana met in Indianapolis at an anti-tobacco conference known as Project VOICE.

Five Latino youth from Hamilton County and one from Mario County attended Project VOICE.

“The tobacco industry is targeting my generation to increase its business and hook us into using their deadly products,” said Jeannete Fernández of Westfield.

According to the report, the three most heavily-advertised brands – Marlboro, Newport and Camel were preferred by 81 percent of youths aged 12-17. As a basis for the report, the CDC analyzed data from the 2004 and 2006 National Youth Tobacco Survey (NYTS). The survey is conducted every two years with students in grades 6-12.

Of particular outrage, according to the youth, is the “self-reporting” by teens (surveyed in the report) of the influence that is being gained by the tobacco companies’ promotional strategies.

“It seems wherever I go, the tobacco products are everywhere. It’s in the movies we watch and the magazines we read,” says Fernández.

In the report, it was indicated that teens are being marketed to by the tobacco companies through tactics such “...point-of-sale distribution, sampling, and entertainment sponsorships”.

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Key Focus: “Smoking in the Movies”

A major focus of the Project VOICE conference is centered on discussion and activities related to the prevalence of smoking in major motion pictures, especially in films rated G, PG and PG-13.

According to a report on the Smoke Free Movies Web site (www.smokefreemovies.ucsf.edu), from 1990 through 2007, at least 170 major U.S. motion pictures either displayed or mentioned tobacco brands. In two-thirds of these films, the brands belonged to Philip Morris (maker of Marlboro). Brand appearances in movies are especially valuable to tobacco companies eager to attract new smokers to “starter” brands such as Marlboro and Camel.

Most youth exposure to on-screen smoking occurs in youth-rated films, particularly PG-13. In 2008, PG-13 films delivered 65 percent of all tobacco impressions (11.7 billion of the 18.1 billion impressions) and G and PG films delivered another one percent (200 million impressions).

For her part, Fernández says it’s time for things to change as it involves the manipulation of youth by “Big Tobacco”.

“In Indiana, the tobacco industry spends \$425 million a year in marketing its products and, we’re tired of them taking, you might say, dead aim at us,” says Yessica Flores.

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