

PRESS RELEASE

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WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY- *Let's Make Jackson a Healthier Place to Live*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JACKSON (May 23, 2008) – ***Tobacco Free Youth*** is the theme for **World No Tobacco Day** which is celebrated annually on **May 31st** each year. Tobacco is the leading preventable cause of death in the world. It is considered the only legal consumer product that kills one third to one half of those who use it, with its victims dying on average 15 years prematurely.

Nicotine is a highly addictive substance and child and adolescent experimentation can easily lead to a lifetime of tobacco dependence. Globally, most people start smoking before the age of 18, and almost a quarter of these individuals begin using tobacco before the age of 10. The younger children are when they first try smoking, the more likely they are to become regular tobacco users and the less likely they are to quit.

It is clearly proven that exposure to direct and indirect pro-tobacco advertising, together with other marketing strategies used by the tobacco industry, leads to an increase in experimentation by young people which in turn can result in the very real risk of their becoming regular users of tobacco products. The tobacco industry spends tens of billions of dollars worldwide every year to effectively market its products in as many ways as possible. In response, this year's World No Tobacco Day campaign focuses on decreasing the glamorization of tobacco.

In addition to the tobacco industry, parents and other responsible adults also play a big role in youth tobacco use. When youth see their parents, coaches, teachers, elected officials etc. use tobacco or allowing other people to use tobacco in their presence, it sends a message to youth that smoking is not harmful and is acceptable.

The Jackson Tobacco Reduction Coalition in collaboration with the Jackson County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition are working to encourage adults everywhere to become positive role models for youth and to avoid smoking in their presence. Speakers are available to talk with groups and educational materials for parents and caring adults are available by calling (517) 768-2131 or (517) 796-5133. Tobacco use is associated with heart disease, cancer, emphysema, asthma, allergies, bronchitis, stroke as well as the more short term effects such as bad breath, stinking odor, stained teeth and nails, and shortness of breath. Take a stand against a deadly habit and talk with your child about living tobacco-free.

More information about:

- *Jackson County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition* and its activities, please contact Kelsey Winston at (517) 796-5133 or via email at kwinston@uwjackson.org
- Jackson Tobacco Reduction Coalition, please contact Rhonda Rudolph at (517) 768-2131 or via email at rrudolph@co.jackson.mi.us

Additional Information can be found at:

- <http://www.who.int/tobacco/wntd/2008/en/>