



THE POWER

People who are involved in youth activism— whether adult facilitators or the youth themselves— cannot say enough about the excitement and energy that empowered young people bring to the table.

THE CHALLENGE:

So, what exactly do we know about interventions that work to prevent youth tobacco use?

- *Get the price of tobacco up. The cost of tobacco products makes a big difference to kids: higher prices can keep them from starting or nudge them toward trying to quit!*

Youth Leaders & Tobacco Education

Lake County high school students have been involved in our communities and they do make a difference! Since the beginning of this school year Ronan and Polson high school students have been involved in teaching elementary grades about risk behaviors that include tobacco, drugs and alcohol. The students prepare their own lessons with the assistance of Janet Sucha the "TRACKS" (Together Raising Attached Committed & Kind Students) Program Coordinator at Ronan High School and Tracy McNair the Polson Partnership Project Coordinator in the Polson School District..

In January, Khristina Kukus, Kristina Trim and Amber Mergenthaler from Polson High School and Jennica Joscum from Ronan High School attended a two day

Speak Out Leadership Training in Missoula. They learned to mobilize people, programs and events that work to educate communities about the harmful affects of tobacco and second hand smoke.

In March the group, also including Crystal Cornelisen from Ronan High School invited Lake County professionals and legislators to a breakfast. They shared their concerns and how they have been involved in the community.

These students are eligible

to apply for the American Cancer Society *Speak Out Summer Summit* which will be held in August in Washington. This is an advanced youth leadership training for high school aged participants to learn how to mobilize their peers and communities around the issues of tobacco prevention and school health advocacy. The American Cancer Society covers all of the costs for the selected students.

We congratulate them on their community involvement.



Youth leaders, left to right: Jennica Joscum and Crystal Cornelisen, Ronan High School; Kristina Trim, Amber Mergenthaler and Khristina Kukus, Polson High School.

The Youth Challenge

Keeping kids away from that first smoke and helping young smokers to quit presents a set of unique challenges for local tobacco advocates. The strategies used must fit a broad range of growth stages

and must include a variety of individual approaches.

So what works? A coordinated approach in communities should include the following:

- Increased excise tax
- Media campaigns
- School cessation and education programs, and
- Tobacco free environments.

A PACK OF LIES

“What we are trying to do is associate Marlboro with Activities which are favored by young people.”

Makers of Marlboro

America has a choice. The choice is to put health and life over the profits and political concerns of the tobacco industry.

In Montana:
Each year
2000 kids
become
new daily
smokers!

Jean Kilbourne to speak on tobacco and the image of women.

Dr. Jean Kilbourne, Ed.D., an internationally known media critic, lecturer and writer on the topic of women's and girls' use of tobacco, will be the featured speaker at the forum, appropriately titled, "Pack of Lies: the Truth About Women & Tobacco."

The evening, which is free to the public, is slated for Monday, April 19, 7 – 8:30 p.m., at the University Center Ballroom on the campus of the University of Montana.

Those attending the April forum sponsored by the American Cancer Society,

Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program, American Heart Association and the American Lung Association of the Northern Rockies will hear the truth about advertising and the tobacco industry.

The forum is open to all women, girls and interested men, and is an invitation for them to come together and learn how to resist the promotion and resulting addiction of tobacco.

According to Kristin Nei, State Advocacy Manager for the American Cancer Society, Dr. Kilbourne offers a new way to think about body image, tobacco addiction and eating disorders. Using a series of visual images presented on

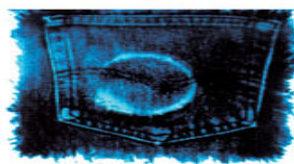
slides, combined with her sense of humor, she reveals the hidden messages attached to familiar advertising images.

The evening will begin at 6:00 p.m. with registration, interactive exhibits and snacks. Dr. Kilbourne will speak and give her multimedia presentation from 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. Finally, dessert will be served and Dr. Kilbourne will sign her newest book, *Can't Buy My Love: How Advertising Changes the Way We Think and Feel*.

To RSVP for the free forum, call the American Cancer Society in Missoula at 406- 728-1004.

Dip—Not A Safe Alternative

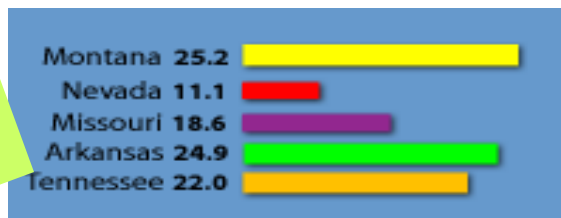
While some youth view spit tobacco (or dip) as a safe alternative to cigarettes, it is not. In fact, its use is associated with cancer and can lead to disfigurement and death.



First Warning Sign of Cancer.

Spit Tobacco: Not a Safe Alternative.

Percentage of youth under 18 using Spit/Dip



Youth, Media & Tobacco

Young people smoke and dip for a variety of reasons, including being influenced by peers, family, and the media. By the time youth enter middle school, they have spent tens of thousands of hours watching television, listening to the radio, watching movies and videos and playing video and computer games.

Armed with this information, tobacco companies use every form of media. There is no ignoring the intensity with which they promote their products as normal and glamorous, as ways to celebrate life's joys and escape its frustrations. Tobacco companies spend huge sums of money every year to surround us with images of their products as healthy, fun and exhilarating. These messages easily reach and influence young people to develop

- Strong brand awareness

- Beliefs that "everybody" uses tobacco
- Perceptions that tobacco use is associated with personal success and attractiveness.

A more subtle use of the media by tobacco companies is in television and films. Tobacco companies arrange to have their specific brands used in a particular TV program or film. This placement may be arranged and paid for through brokers or through donating products for use by set designers. The use of brand name products by popular media characters, as well as the actors who portray them, builds upon the well-established practice of celebrity product endorsement.

It is important that we teach youth how to analyze media. To understand the underlying purposes and contexts of media messages, allowing them to see

through the glitz and power of messages that promote tobacco.

SOME CRITICAL MEDIA QUESTIONS:

- **Who owns, profits from and pays for media messages?**

Understanding the profit motive is key to analyzing media messages.

- **What are the intended or underlying purposes and whose point of view is behind the message?**

Behind every message is a purpose and point of view. Knowing WHOSE point of view is being expressed and WHY is crucial to what's true.

- **What is NOT being said and why?**

Rarely are all the details provided.

"The base of our business is the high school Student."

-Executive for the Makers of Newport

Each year—in Montana:

The tobacco industry spends 26.3 million to market their products

"My job was to get a half million kids to smoke by 1995."

-Actor/Model for Winston Cigarettes

Common Misperceptions of Tobacco "Benefits" by Youth

Because of the power and presence of media, it is essential to help youth distinguish media fiction from fact. In the case of tobacco, a lot of facts are left out, and a lot of fiction is created.

The five most common misperceptions about tobacco "benefits" by youth are:

1. **Use Is A Rite of Passage**
- a way to enter adulthood, or be

grown up.

2. **Use by Successful, Attractive People**

- a way to be glamorous, sexy, charming, tough, independent, strong.

3. **Use Is Normal** - a sense that "everybody's doing it."

4. **Use Is Safe or Not Harmful**

- a sense that it can't be that bad or so many people wouldn't do it, or that use isn't dangerous in moderation for just a few years.

5. **Use Is Relaxing in Social Settings**

- a way to feel at ease in a group or a crowd; to relax, escape, and celebrate.

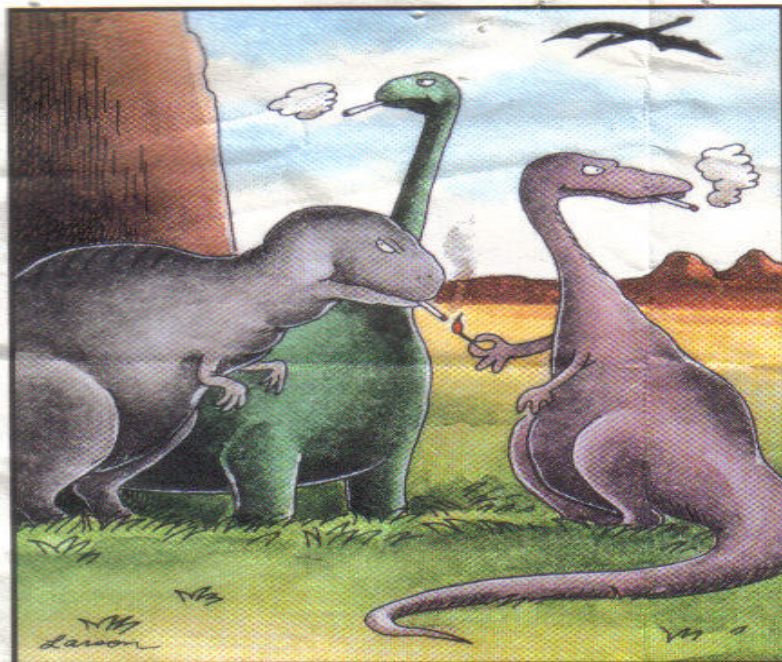
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