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News Release

Grundy County Teens Say Yes to Helping Younger Kids Say No to Tobacco

Teens Against Tobacco Use (TATU) Training held September 20, 2006

When it comes to keeping kids from smoking, sometimes the most effective prevention messages come from other youth. That's what 75 students from the four Grundy County High Schools and one middle school intend to prove during the 2006-07 school year.

The 14- to 17-year-old students were trained on September 20, 2006 in a research-based program called Teens Against Tobacco Use (TATU) developed by the American Lung Association. The training was sponsored by the Grundy County No Tolerance Task Force (NTTF) and led by Paula Goodwin, NTTF Coordinator. She was assisted by the following faculty advisers: Carolyn Reynolds of M-V-K Middle School, Mary Kay Nelson of Coal City High School, Todd Severns of Garnder-South Wilmington High School, Adriana Martinez of Minooka High School, and Cecilia Mistretta of Morris High School.

According to Goodwin, the TATU program teaches young people how to reach out to younger students and educate them about tobacco. "In the weeks ahead, these TATU students will be giving presentations and talking to elementary school students. They will tell children how important it is to stay tobacco-free as a teen, since nearly 90 percent of smoking-addicted adults started before the age of 18. They will also help younger students understand how the tobacco industry

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must continually recruit new smokers in order to replace the nearly half-million who die annually of tobacco-related diseases.”

Goodwin said she was pleased to have such a large class of students participate in the one-day training—56 percent more than last year. However, it created a logistical problem for Goodwin because there are few sites available during the school day that can accommodate so many students. “Thankfully, the First Christian Church had their big meeting area available, and we were able to accomplish our goals. The NTTF really appreciates this kind of community support in providing programs for our youth,” she said.

The following students participated in the TATU training:

COAL CITY HIGH SCHOOL—Virginia Knaack, Kelsi Bertheaume, Cassandra Anciulis, Lindsay Snider, Blaine Tisdale, Samantha Williams, Rosa Martinez, Catie Montoro, and Kellie Kwiecien.

GARDNER–SOUTH WILMINGTON HIGH SCHOOL—Julie Pfeifer, Danielle Aichele, Stephanie Staciwa, Ashley Cox, Michelle Ruffatti, Chrissy Kovalcik, Josh Hall, Heaven Kramer, Courtney Wood, Cecily Kovalcik, Heather Heelan, Rachel Mack, Missy Gretz, and Natalie Vogal.

MINOOKA HIGH SCHOOL—Maegan O’Brien, Kate Menne, Angela Mateo, Dan Hayes, Bryan Bartnik, Sam Menne, Brianna Tibbitts, Jordan Alberico, Charlsey MacArthur, Ashley Hayes, Gloria Vivanco, Angela Celmer, Amanda Shanesy, Carly Johnson, Anna Musclow, Julie Johnson, Misty Durov, Denise Aapian, and Justin Schubert.

MORRIS HIGH SCHOOL—Mike Ochoa, Danny Berrins, Christy Gerardy, Sabrina Futia, Scott Borchert, Hannah Sandgren, Lacey Hennigen, Lauren Hausken, Caitlin Beshoar, Liz Smith, Shaina Walker, Emma Roseland, Matt Ochoa, Race Higgins, Brandon Hood, Monica Brown, Sarah Flaa, Heather Washburn, Sam Sartori, and Jessi Georgacopoulos.

M-V-K MIDDLE SCHOOL—Megan Kelley, Taelor Coughlin, Alanna Veken, Emily Nelson, Melissa Jebens, Amanda Houchin, Alexandria Miller, William Fillenwarth, Megan McCormack, Brooke Latham, Linzi Szobar, Corey Foster, and David Kelley.

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For more information about local TATU activities, please contact Goodwin at (815) 941-3130. To learn more about the American Lung Association, visit the American Lung Association of Illinois-Iowa web site at www.lungil.org.

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CAPTION INFORMATION



TATU_Large_Group_9-20-06.jpg

Seventy-five students from the four Grundy County high schools, along with 8th graders from M-V-K Middle School took part in the September 20 Teens Against Tobacco Use (TATU) sponsored by the Grundy County No Tolerance Task Force (NTTF).

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TATU (Teens Against Tobacco Use) participants have a little fun together while planning a skit for younger children poking fun at the “glamour” of smoking.

