exposure.

The Newsletter of the Tobacco Free Task Force in Washington County

Issue: Set Them Free, January 2006

Prevention Programming Needs to Start in Early Grades

20% of middle school students, and 10% of high school students in the Washington School District first used cigarettes by age 8 or younger while nearly 30% of middle school students and 20% of high school students first tried smokeless tobacco during the same age period.

The current smoking rate amongst district high and middle school students is at 29.8%, and 18.9%, (higher than the state averages of 23.1% and 7.8%).

Current smokeless tobacco usage rates amongst district high and middle school students is at 9.4% and 5.2%, (higher than the state averages of 8%, and 2.8%).

Washington County School Program Presenters

Ms. Lee Rutledge-Falcione, Break Free Program

The Break Free Program, a comprhensive tobacco free, school-based program, began in the Washington School District's 2004-2005 academic year.

It is modeled after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) guidelines.

- Mandatory education programs were started for tobacco violators;
- Installed smoke detection devices in student bathrooms;
- Provided the "Why Animals Don't Smoke" program in grades K-2;
- Not On Tobacco (N-O-T) education classes were provided in grades 10 and 12;
- Trained youth educators from grades 9 and 12 led the T.A.T.U. (Teens Against Tobacco Use) program for grade 4 students;
- A focus group was held with high school students to determine appropriate messages;
- Teachers of grades 3-8 were trained in the evidence-based LifeSkills prevention program and teachers to be trained in the N-O-T program were identified;
- Parents were sent letters explaining the program;
- A Peer Factor youth group assisted with school-based activities that promoted tobacco use prevention and cessation;
- The program was promoted at various school events;
- A Visual Arts Contest was held;

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December 9, 2005 Tobacco Free Task Force Meeting Issue: Set Them Free

Set Them Free works with school-related audiences to implement tobacco-free programs.

Meeting Highlights

- Washington County School Program Information
- Discussion/Q & A
- Administrative Updates

Guest Speakers

- Lee Rutledge-Falcione, Washington County Health Partners
- deRicci Horwatt, Gateway Vision
- Bill Cousins, Monessen Tobacco Free Coalition
- Joan Adley, The Washington Hospital Teen Outreach
- Laurie Nicholl, Nicholl Brandt Communications and Girl Scout Leader

Next Tobacco Free Task Force Meeting...

Friday, January 27, 2006
9-11 a.m.
Presbyterian SeniorCare
Hillsview Chapel Meditation Area
Washington, PA

Next Issue: Knowledge in Action

Fast Facts

Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) Annual Report
The latest report by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids on the use of Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement Funds (MSA) did not present good news.

Pennsylvania fell from 9th to 15th place by cutting MSA funds from $46.10 million (from the last fiscal year) to $32.9 million, about half of the minimum recommended funding levels ($65.5 million) for tobacco prevention from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

January marks a critical time period in Pennsylvania as the General Assembly begins budget talks for the next fiscal year.

Please go to www.tobaccofreewashington.org under the **Knowledge in Action** section to find out who your legislators are in the county and remind them of the importance of tobacco free programs in the commonwealth.
Source:www.tobaccofreekids.org

Westin Hotels Smoke Free
The Westin Hotel Chain introduced a chain-wide, smoke-free policy effective January 1, 2006, including their Pittsburgh facility.

To express your approval of Westin's smoke-free policy, visit the "contact us" page of their web site at: http://www.starwoodhotels.com/westin/support/contact/index.html.

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Prevention Programming (cont.)

- Assemblies were held in grades K-5 with the Washington Wild Things on why athletes do not use tobacco;
- The district participated in the Pennsylvania Youth Tobacco Survey for grades 6 though 12; and
- Administrators, teachers, and staff focus groups met to determine how to improve, coordinate, and monitor the program.

The fall strike in the school district and funding reduction has hampered efforts for the 2005-2006 school year.

deRicci Horwatt, Program Director, Gateway Vision
The Minnesota Smoking Prevention Program (MSPP) designed for students in grades 4-8, consists of six classroom sessions where the process is more interactive than lecture-based.

The peer-led MSPP is based on a social influences model of prevention, focusing on social and psychological factors that have been shown to reduce the onset of tobacco use. The program strives to build on students' skills and behaviors rather than simply increase their knowledge, beliefs, or motivations.

The intended outcomes are that students will not begin to use tobacco or not continue using tobacco if they have experimented with it, and to influence friends and family members not to use tobacco.

3,259 students completed the program, since its inception in Washington County during the 2002-2003 school year. MSPP has been implemented in the following schools: Burgettstown Elementary; Canonsburg Middle School (MS), Cecil MS, North Strabane Intermediate; Charleroi MS; Chartiers Houston Elementary; McGuffey MS; Peters Township MS; Trinity MS, John F. Kennedy School, and St. Patrick Elementary.

The MSPP 2004-2005 Results showed 912 students took the pre-test, with a score of 50.6% correct answers, while 889 students took the post test, scoring 60.1% correct answers, an increase of 9.5%.

During this school year, the test will be broken out by subjective and objective questions and will be administered differently. "I think what kids have to say informally through sentence completion is just as important as getting a question right to get a chance to read what they are thinking about,"said Ms. Horwatt.

Bill Cousins, Monessen Tobacco Coalition
Mr. Cousins has given presentations at 13 schools in the four-county area and has 11 more presentations pending. The presentations are about the dangers of tobacco. Mr. Cousins' knowledge of tobacco's dangers comes through his son, Paul, who passed away after battling cancer caused by tobacco use.

Mr. Cousins' presentations include photos of the surgeries and hospital stays that Paul went through during his struggle with cancer.

Paul Cousins 1974-2004

Prevention Programming (cont.)

Paul Cousins had his wife take the photos. "He wanted his daughter to see what could happen if she ever decided to use tobacco," Mr. Cousins said.

"I will go anywhere (to speak) if I have to," said Mr. Cousins. "Not one parent…not one kid should go through this."

Mr. Cousins has received letters of commendation from school principals for his presentations.

Joan Adley, Program Director, The Washington Hospital Teen Outreach
Teens Against Tobacco Use ® (T.A.T.U.) began in 1996 focusing on helping teens remain tobacco free by:

- Developing skills to teach younger children about tobacco use and become advocates for a tobacco-free community.
- Understanding and identifying the positive aspects of being tobacco-free and realize that the majority of teens and adults do NOT smoke.
- Understanding how tobacco advertising and promotions deceive youth.
- Understanding how getting hooked on tobacco destroys youth's freedom and control over their personal lives.
- Developing self-confidence.

40 teens completed the T.A.T.U. program at The Washington Hospital Teen Outreach since 2003, and prepared peers to participate in tobacco free activities with elementary age youth in Washington County Schools.

One of the more popular aspects of the program is the use of life-size puppets to promote a tobacco free message amongst younger audiences. "Kids see these life-size puppets and their eyes just light up," Ms. Adley said.

Laurie Nicholl, Nicholl Brandt Communications and Girl Scout Leader
Ms. Nicholl, a Girl Scout leader in the Bentworth Area, spoke about the "Why Animals Don't Smoke" Program, based on a brochure by Journeyworks Publishing.

According to Ms. Nicholl, there is no other program on the dangers of tobacco use for so young an audience. "It is so critical that kids are reached in preschool and kindergarten with a prevention message."

Through a facilitator who presents the displays, the children get to explain their experiences with tobacco products, e.g., a parent or an older sibling who smokes. The children get to express their opinions on tobacco, often times sharing elaborate tales of how it has affected them.

The displays, which feature a variety of animals, are used to reinforce the message of why smoking is not a good thing.

Neighborhood Drug Awareness Corps (NDAC) can be contacted at (724) 229-8321 to present the "Why Animals Don't Smoke" program in Washington County.

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Fast Facts (cont.)

Cigar Bar to Open at PNC Park
Management representatives for the Pittsburgh Pirates say that the "Montecristo Club," a cigar and martini bar, will be open when the new season starts.

"Montecristo" is the name of a popular brand of cigar which accounts for more than half the Cuban cigar exports each year.

Please use the following contact information for Pirate Management and express your concern about this project:

- Mr. Kevin McClatchy, CEO: Kevin.McClatchy@pirates.com
- Mr. Tim Schuldt, VP Marketing & Sales:Tim.Schuldt@pirates.com
- Mr. Bob Derda, Senior Director of Corporate Development: Bob.Derda@pirates.com

Mailing Address:
Pittsburgh Pirates Baseball Club
PNC Park at North Shore
115 Federal Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15212

Many tobacco free advocates have already contacted the Pirates regarding the matter. Here are some of the comments they've sent:

"...employees are being placed at risk for cancer, heart disease, etc. Therefore, the price of a job is to risk their health by exposure to a smoking environment."
Joseph Moffa

"If you are truly committed to the children of our community, it would be wiser to partner with organizations that promote health and well-being, not cancer."
Anne M. Lail

Source:
www.post-gazette.com
www.lifetip.com

tobacco free.

A Program of Washington County Health Partners

Tobacco Free Task Force
Washington County Health Partners
Washington Federal Square Building
190 North Main Street, Suite 208
Washington, PA 15301

www.tobaccofreewashington.org

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December 9th Meeting Notes Inside...

Note: You are invited to the next Tobacco Free Task Force Meeting. Details on the flipside. Please let us know if you are going to attend.

Next Tobacco Free Task Force Meeting Issue:

KnowledgeInAction

Friday, January 27, 2006, 9-11 a.m.

Hillsview Chapel Meditation Area, Presbyterian SeniorCare, Washington, PA

Knowledge in Action facilitates the exchange of information between experts, advocates, and lawmakers.
Invited guest speakers include:

- The Honorable J. Barry Stout, Pennsylvania Senator, District 46
- A member of the PA House of Representatives
- A representative of the Pennsylvania Alliance to Control Tobacco (P.A.C.T.)
- Mr. Bill Cousins, Monessen Tobacco Free Coalition and Washington County Health Partners' (WCHP) Tobacco Free Task Force

All members of the Tobacco Free Task Force and the WCHP Board of Directors are invited to attend. This meeting will be of interest to any tobacco free advocate, interested citizens, and others who are concerned about the sustainability of Washington County's Tobacco Free Program.

To ensure enough materials are available for all attendees, please RSVP(no later than January 23rd) by contacting:
Craig Whyel, Tobacco Free Outreach Specialist:
Phone: 724-222-6511, ext.12 or 1-866-904-3733 (FREE) ● E-mail: crw@wchpinc.org

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