



MEDIA RELEASE

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JOE CAMEL MAY BE LONG DEAD, BUT TOBACCO ADVERTISING TO KIDS IS ALIVE AND WELL Community Groups Urge Parents to Get Mad About Ads

Albany, NY, May 19, 2008 – Capital Region community groups and tobacco-free advocates are urging parents to get mad about the tobacco industry’s multi-billion dollar efforts to hook young smokers, and to involve parents in getting local retailers to voluntarily reduce or eliminate their tobacco advertising.

The community activists – members of Girls, Inc., the Boys and Girls Clubs of Schenectady, Reality Check Youth Action, and the South American Spanish Association, among others – are partnering with the Capital District Tobacco-Free Coalition (CDTFC) to increase parents’ awareness that tobacco ads in stores increases the odds that their children will smoke.

“Three out of four teens shop in convenience stores every week,” said Judy Rightmyer, Director of CDTFC. “It’s no coincidence that the average convenience store displays 26 tobacco ads on its premises, many of them at kids’ eye level. Tobacco companies spend 80% of their marketing dollars on retail advertising and promotion.”

“Our communities are blanketed with tobacco ads that many adults hardly notice. However kids do notice since many seem to be strategically placed at their eye level.” said Tom Ciancetta, Executive Director of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Schenectady. “Kids are not only more likely than adults to notice and remember the ads, but tobacco ads have more influence on their decisions to smoke than peer pressure. As the director of the Boys & Girls Clubs, that gets my attention.”

CDTFC has booked billboards, bus shelters and radio spots that will run through May. Look for bumper stickers, t-shirts and other on-the-ground materials to surface as community activists of all ages work to spread the message.

“I don’t smoke and I don’t want my kid sister to ever start,” said Reality Check youth, Will Gallagher. “It gets me mad to think that even the advice of her big brother might not be enough to keep the tobacco companies from getting their hands on her.”

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But while the message to parents may be to get mad about ads, it's also about fighting back. You can go to GetMadAboutAds.org to find out how.

CDTFC collaborated with four other community coalitions to develop this campaign which is running in an additional eleven counties in the northeastern part of the state.

The Capital District Tobacco-Free Coalition is a non-profit partnership of people and organizations from Albany, Rensselaer and Schenectady counties funded by the NYS Bureau of Tobacco Use Prevention and Control. CDTFC works to decrease the social acceptability of tobacco use, eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke, promote cessation and prevent the initiation of tobacco use among youth and young adults. For more information on the Coalition and their programs, go to www.SmokeFreeCapital.org.

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