

Empowering Youth Leaders

From the outset, Legacy has concentrated on inspiring leaders among American youth – those most likely to be seduced by tobacco. The facts are astounding. Over one million children a year become regular smokers. Nearly one-third of them will end up dying from tobacco-related disease.

While truth advertising hit youth with the harsh facts about tobacco and the manipulative practices of the industry, the real work began when teens got involved themselves. Legacy hosted a national Youth Planning Meeting in September 2000, bringing together 100 teens from every state. In workshops, meetings, and social events, teens had a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to create a national campaign for youth involvement in tobacco control.

Their input would become the backbone for a national advertising campaign, a major youth summit for tobacco control, and a cross-country tour that brought truth off the TV and into the backyards of America. The truth campaign became the largest-ever youth-led anti-tobacco campaign in our nation's history.

Truth's grassroots campaign was complemented by a national call for proposals from states to develop locally driven youth empowerment programs. Over \$35 million in funding was awarded to states to develop a coalition model of leadership for youth tobacco programs.

As Legacy moves forward, we want to help grow leaders in tobacco control in many locations and among diverse populations. We want to partner with those involved in a wide range of social programs and build coalitions among supporters never before included in tobacco control.

Youth Leaders Rally Against Tobacco

They came from every state in the country and as far away as Puerto Rico and Guam. One thousand impassioned youth volunteers chosen from peer leader programs and anti-tobacco groups across the nation. Legacy's National Youth Summit took place in Seattle June 23-26, 2000, and kicked off one of the biggest anti-tobacco efforts ever planned by and for teens. The four day summit was designed to give teens the motivation and the know-how to unite against tobacco use in their communities. It was a major jump-start for Legacy's efforts to inspire a national youth movement.

Convened in a giant airplane hangar on the University of Washington campus, the summit was the brainchild of Legacy's teen volunteers, nearly 100 of whom served as youth trainers at the event. In workshops, role-playing sessions, and multimedia immersions, participants were armed with facts about tobacco's health effects and the manipulations of the industry. Seminars helped youth develop skills in grassroots campaigning, leadership, and journalism to help them begin their own tobacco initiatives at home.

The conference was laced with laser-age entertain

The National Youth Summit did much to energize youth around the issue of tobacco. Nearly 80 percent of summit-goers surveyed at the event said they thought they "were in on the beginning of something big."

Teens Roll Out Truth

When 30 youth from Legacy's National Youth Summit loaded up 14 trucks and hit the road, they were hard to miss. They envoy of orange vans, emblazoned with the truth logo, criss-crossed the country making over 2,000 stops in a crusade to educate their peers about the devastation of tobacco.

The vans hit a total of 27 cities in six weeks, making stops at malls, beaches, amusement parks and sporting events. As crowds gathered around the trucks, drawn in by 1,000-watt stereos, video games and displays, and live Web hookup, multi-ethnic teams of teen "tour riders" got to work.

They traded free gear – truth-emblazoned hats, T-shirts, wristbands, and dog tags – for tobacco magazine advertisements. The so-called "Rip It Out" events called attention to the proliferation of tobacco ads aimed at youth and resulted in thousands of ads being collected and sent back, in protest, to tobacco companies. Riders gave personal testimonies about how tobacco affected their lives. In some cities, riders participated in Local Initiative Trainings, meeting

with teenagers from local communities to identify possible truth-style events they could stage at home.

Media visits on MTV, the CBS Early Show, and local news/talk shows gave The Truth Tour teens a national platform for tobacco control and helped draw widespread attention to the

The reality is, everyone is affected differently by tobacco. Legacy gives hope to people working in the field that their voice won't be lost."

JULIA CARROLL, GRANT RECIPIENT

ment and events industrial dances and concerts by the popular bands Blink-182 and Roots. The summit drew publicity from MTV and other youth-oriented media, galvanizing truth's youth appeal. The culmination of the summit was an enthusiastic send-off rally for The Truth Tour, a six-week, teen-led outreach that brought truth to teen hangouts around the country.

involvement of youth in a national revolt against tobacco.

Youth Empowerment Grants

Legacy augmented its truth marketing initiative with a major programmatic push to develop youth empowerment programs. In the foundation's first national call for proposals, Legacy awarded nearly \$35 million in program and planning grants to 19 states and the District of Columbia to help communities build and sustain youth-led tobacco prevention programs. It was the largest award ever made to motivate teens to reduce tobacco use.

The grants encourage state departments of health to bring together broad-based coalitions of organizations and individuals within their community to ignite youth interest in tobacco control and funnel it into sustainable action.

The grants are unique because they encourage youth participants to design grassroots programs tailored to their communities. In Georgia, for instance, youth constructed a Wall of Memories at the state capital, a personal testament to lives lost to tobacco.

Youth in New Jersey organized nine mini-summits around the state to give peers practical skills for leading anti-tobacco initiatives in their schools and communities. Program grant awards of \$500,000 to \$1 million per year were given to states that completed State Youth Tobacco Survey (SYTS) – greatly helping the foundation gather data about the prevalence of smoking and attitudes toward tobacco from state to state. This information will be critical in helping to determine a baseline measure of factors that impact youth prevention, fueling some of Legacy's most important research.

Broadening Leadership Opportunities

Legacy's efforts to train leaders reached beyond the boundaries of the continental U.S. As a result of a media training program in Guam in January 2001, teen leaders there are now hitting the radio airwaves once a week with anti-tobacco messaging. Legacy hosted the 40-person training for both youth and adults in communication strategies, media advocacy, and message development. While Pacific Islanders have higher youth smoking rates than those in the continental U.S., a large percentage of their MSA dollars are being used to support public health in hospitals, which suffer from chronic under-funding. Legacy plans to further assess needs in Guam and other U.S. territories to begin developing training and technical assistance to bolster tobacco control efforts there.