



TRU Postcard Activity

Background information:

The TRU initiative, which has successfully reduced teen smoking in North Carolina to historic lows, may disappear after June, 2012. Since 2003, funding for the award-winning program and media campaign has been provided by NC's portion of the tobacco Master Settlement Agreement, as approved by the General Assembly. The program's future is uncertain after this funding year. Without funding, progress in reducing teen smoking in North Carolina will likely stall and smoking rates will eventually begin to climb to previous levels. Only consistent, ongoing funding and programming will make NC kids and teens safer from the influences that encourage them to use tobacco. To find out more about TRU, please visit www.realityunfiltered.com.

TRU Postcard Activity Ideas:

Legislators need to know how the money is being spent. A postcard campaign can be used to advocate for the continuation of TRU program funding with legislators by giving people an opportunity to send quick personal messages directly to their legislators. A few ideas for using TRU postcards are:

- 1- Provide materials and instructions for youth and adult participants at meetings, trainings or event booths. After people have written their messages and addressed the postcards, you can collect, review and mail them. Be sure to add postage which is currently 29 cents.
- 2- Have youth send postcards to their legislators weekly to update them on what their TRU group is doing or with a general message about tobacco use prevention and the TRU movement using impact statements (examples below).
- 3- Have a postcard contest. Package blank postcards and simple instructions in envelopes and hand them out to the youth. The youth will then try to collect as many postcards as possible. Whoever collects the most post card by the finish date WINS!. They need to be filled out with a message and address and you may want to put a limit on how many they can collect from one person.

Sample instructions:

- 1- Find the names and mailing addresses of your NC House Representatives and Senate members. You can visit www.ncleg.net and click on the 'who represents me?' tab and follow the instructions to do this. (You can do this ahead of time and have these printed out).
- 2- Write each one a message and include at least two sentences. One about the impact of tobacco and one about the impact of TRU. The statements can be personal about yourself, your family, friends, your school, or they can be facts or statistics or a mix of both! Make it YOURS!
- 3- Turn your cards in to be mailed.

Examples of tobacco impact statements:

My uncle had throat cancer because of using tobacco and now he can't eat or talk. It makes me really sad and I wish he had not ever started using. So does he.

I worry about my parents health because they both smoke and have not been able to quit.

Smoking costs North Carolina almost \$6.5 billion annually in health care costs and lost productivity.

12,200 NC adults die each year from their own smoking.

Secondhand smoke makes people sick. 416,000 NC kids are exposed to secondhand smoke at home.

Nearly 90% of adult smokers started smoking under the age of 19.

In the U.S. tobacco companies spend approximately \$10 billion on advertising annually.

Examples of TRU impact statements:

My TRU group educated 150 middle school students last year about the harmful effects of tobacco use.

My TRU group did 4 tobacco activities for our whole school and had a SAVE speaker come talk to 1,000 students.

My TRU club helped make the Pinetree park tobacco free.

Because of TRU, I have been able to talk with my _____ and tell them how I feel about their tobacco use and what it's doing to them.

Since TRU started in 2003, 53,000 fewer NC teens smoke.

For every \$1 invested in tobacco use prevention programs, approximately \$2.54 is generated in financial benefits for our state.

The rate of smoking among high school students in NC is lower than it has ever been at 16.7% (down from 27.3% in 2003).

Sample
Postcard

<p><i>My grandmother is on oxygen because of using tobacco most of her life. It's hard seeing her not be able to breathe on her own. My TRU group educates other teens about the harmful effects of tobacco use. Since TRU started in 2003, 53,000 fewer NC teens have started smoking. Please support TRU funding.</i></p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
---	-------------------------



TOBACCO REALITY UNFILTERED



TOBACCO REALITY UNFILTERED





