

October, 2006

Dear Parent or Guardian:

About 500,000 people in the U.S. die each year of tobacco-related causes. The tobacco companies spend millions of dollars on advertising, much of which is directed to children and adolescents. In fact, cigarette companies spend \$1.7 million every day in California marketing their products. Smoking and tobacco use is portrayed by the tobacco companies as cool, rebellious, glamorous, macho, and even athletic. The advertising works: 3,000 children start smoking each day. Many kids just experiment, but 90 percent of adult smokers were hooked when they were teenagers.

It's clear that anti-tobacco efforts must be concentrated in the teen and pre-teen years. Tobacco education and smoking cessation programs are two answers. A third is to attack the supply side of this drug problem. **The Stay Safe Youth Coalition wants to reduce the illegal sale of tobacco to youth. We plan to accomplish our goal by first raising community awareness of the problem.** {In June 2005, The Stay Safe Youth Coalition held a press conference to share information collected from a Jefferson Union High School District wide peer-survey. We were shocked to find that almost three quarters of youth (74.2%) who purchase tobacco reported that they are not consistently asked for ID when buying from a store.}

As a survey taker, he/she will attempt to buy a tobacco product from a retailer to document illegal sales. The overall results of our survey will be used to raise community awareness in presentation to local city councils, key opinion leaders, and the media.

Although the local police department will be informed of the survey, the survey is not a law enforcement operation. Teens will simply attempt to buy tobacco products, purchase tobacco if able to with provided funds and then quietly leave the store. An adult will always be present in the store with them, and another teenager who will also be a surveyor will accompany survey-takers when possible.

If you give the permission for your daughter/son to participate in the survey, your teen will receive trained instruction and education prior to and a brief recap on the day of the survey.

If you have any questions about our project, please do not hesitate to call Etan Zaitso at 650-756-3230 ext. 18

Sincerely,

Etan Zaitso
Program Supervisor
Stay Safe

DRAFT