



## Association for Nonsmokers - Minnesota

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### **Youth go the distance on Blaine tobacco-free park policy**

After several park board hearings and a workshop, the tobacco-free park policy introduced by the Blaine Youth Teaching Youth group was approved by the Blaine City Council. The Blaine park policy creates tobacco-free areas within 25 feet of all playgrounds, athletic fields, bleachers and seating areas, building entrances, and park shelter areas.

The Blaine Tobacco Free Youth Recreation, TFYR, students worked on this policy for almost two years. They presented at numerous park board meetings and participated in workshops with the city council. Blaine TFYR students are commended for their dedication and perseverance. Richfield passes comprehensive tobacco-free parks ordinance.

The Richfield City Council voted unanimously to adopt a tobacco-free parks ordinance that will prohibit tobacco use within all city-owned parks, conservation areas, open spaces, or recreational facilities. These areas are without limitation; but include trails, picnic shelters, athletic fields, and play areas. Richfield had adopted a “youth activities” policy back in 2001, but decided it was time to upgrade their policy because it worked so well in the youth-focused areas. Richfield is the 4th city in just the last year to upgrade their youth activities, joining Mahtomedi, Savage, and Elk River.

**If you live or work in Brooklyn Center, Fridley, Minnetonka, New Hope, Hugo, St. Louis Park, or Osseo, we need you!**

Tobacco-Free Youth Recreation provided educational materials and worked with the Richfield Parks Department and the Bloomington Public Health Department on this policy.

Your help is needed on tobacco-free parks. If you live or work in Brooklyn Center, Fridley, Minnetonka, New Hope, Hugo, St. Louis Park, or Osseo, we need your support to get tobacco-free park and recreation policies adopted in those communities! Contact Brittany McFadden, Tobacco-Free Youth Recreation program director, at (651) 646-3005 or [bhm@ansrmn.org](mailto:bhm@ansrmn.org) to learn how you can help!

### **Smoke-Free Multi-Housing: Looking Back, Moving Forward**

Ten years ago, smoke-free multi-housing was nearly unheard of, both in Minnesota and throughout the country. At the time, most apartment owners and many Housing and Urban Development (HUD) officials thought it was illegal to have a smoke-free policy; many newspapers thought it was illegal to allow ads saying “no smoking” or “SF”, and most tenants didn’t realize they had some rights to smoke-free housing.

As early as the 1990's, ANSR received complaints from renters experiencing secondhand smoke in their apartment units. In 2000, these complaints prompted ANSR to organize pioneering research conducted by the Center for Energy and Environment that found that Minnesota renters wanted smoke-free housing; that landlords who did own smoke-free buildings were satisfied with them, that these policies were legal; and that fixing air leaks in smokers' units did not sufficiently stop the spread of secondhand smoke in apartment buildings. With funding from the American Cancer Society, ANSR began sharing the research findings with landlords in 2003. Progress was slow, but by 2007, ANSR landed a grant from the Minnesota Department of Health to begin working on smoke-free housing full time. ANSR created the Live Smoke Free program and began intense education and outreach, and landlords began making their buildings smoke free.

In 2000, less than 50 apartment buildings had smoke-free policies. Today, over 650 buildings have adopted smoke-free policies, a 1200 % increase. These policies are in effect in buildings managed by large, multi-state companies, moderate sized companies, small companies as well as market-rate buildings, and public housing. Forty-two housing authorities have adopted policies in Minnesota, and HUD has issued two memos encouraging public housing authorities and Section 8 buildings to consider adopting smoke-free policies. Apartment search listings such as HousingLink incorporated "smoke free" into their searches.

Many Minnesota renters still do not have smoke-free air in their apartment buildings because the majority of buildings still allow smoking. In order to protect the health of these Minnesotans, we need to continue to create more smoke-free apartment buildings. In addition, there is an increasing demand from owners of condos and townhomes for smoke-free living environments. Live Smoke Free is partnering with the Public Health Law Center and the Center for Energy and Environment to research these issues. Stay tuned for tools to create smoke-free condos and townhomes!

View *Killing us Softly 4: Advertising's Image of Women* at the Merriam Park Branch Library 1831 Marshall Avenue February 22 at 7:00 p.m. The event is free and open to the public. A discussion will follow the film. Author Jean Kilbourne takes a fresh look at how advertising traffics in distorted and destructive ideals of femininity. The film marshals a range of new print and television advertisements to lay bare a stunning pattern of damaging gender stereotypes. The tobacco industry is adept at capitalizing on distortions of sexuality and thinness to promote cigarettes like Virginia Slims. Kilbourne has not specialized in reviewing tobacco tactics but their aggressive marketing to women has not escaped her notice!

**Where do we go from here?**

## Killing us Softly



CHARTER MEMBER



**The ANSR Bulletin is published quarterly. For more information contact ANSR at 2395 University Ave. W. Ste 310, St. Paul, MN 55114 (651) 646-3005.**

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## ANSR joins effort to reduce window signs



ANSR and Ramsey Tobacco Coalition partners are collaborating with Scenic Saint Paul and Scenic Minnesota to reduce store-front window advertising in St. Paul. Window signs are often paper signs that clutter windows of convenience and other low-end retail stores. Although a variety of products are promoted with these signs, tobacco and alcohol advertising predominate.

These signs are a problem because they create a safety hazard as people can not see into nor out of the stores and they degrade the community by signaling cheap/not cared for. Many communities including Minneapolis, Roseville, Maplewood, Little Canada, and Mounds View regulate these signs. Youth groups from Aurora Saint Anthony, Mount Airy Boys and Girls Club and Jovenes de Salud have taken photos from their neighborhood and made presentations to community groups, city staff and elected officials in support of the ordinance.

If you would like more information about this issue, contact Jeanne Weigum at 651-646-3005.

## Onteneros starts Jóvenes de Salud chapter



Jóvenes de Salud, youth health workers who work primarily with the Hispanic/Latino community, has a new chapter at Johnson High School thanks to the enthusiasm of Carissa Onteneros.

Carissa is a long-time Jóvenes member and when she started thinking about what she wanted to do for her senior project, she hit on the idea of starting up a group at her high school. Prior to her project there was no Jóvenes program at Johnson.

There are very few Latino based programs at Johnson which focus on community issues. Carissa said, "I want to bring the Latino community together to create a positive environment through positive experiences and community involvement and make a positive impact in keeping our community healthier."

## Cheap 'Little Cigars'

The federal excise tax on little cigars (or those weighing three pounds or less per 1,000) was increased to match the federal cigarette tax in 2010. That tax is about \$10.07 per carton. It appears that the cigar industry responded to this tax increase by increasing the weight of many of their little cigars. Many little cigars were already close to three pounds per 1,000. Therefore, it was relatively easy to get around the new regulation by increasing the weight above this threshold. Cigars above this weight threshold are taxed at the much lower federal large cigar rate of 52.75% of the manufacturers price, or approximately \$2-\$4 per carton. Once again, the tobacco industry was able to adjust in order to avoid regulation.

Since the excise tax was enacted, sales of "large" cigars more than quadrupled while sales of little cigars fell by 79%. This change led the U.S. House Energy and Commerce Committee to begin investigating whether cigar manufacturers are

## Tobacco-Free Funding movement grows



Boys and Girls Club accepts certificate from Bernadette Chlebeck of RTC.

avoiding taxes through product manipulation. The committee is also examining if some cigar manufactures are violating the FDA rules against marketing to youth.

The FDA banned the sale of flavored cigarettes. However, many filtered cigar brands are available in fruity, kid-friendly, flavors like chocolate and grape. According to U.S. Representative Henry Waxman: “It appears that some tobacco companies are attempting to evade tax and health laws that protect our children.” Waxman went on to say that the weight changes made by cigar manufacturers were “efforts to evade the law” and that they “should be stopped.”

In the meantime, tobacco retailers are enjoying a huge surge in cigar sales. According to Andrew Beaupre, manager of a Cigarette Outlet in Cedar Rapids, Iowa: “Those [cigars] blow off the shelves.”

According to Frank Davoli, director of sales and marketing for Richmond-Master Distributors Inc., which both supplies and retails tobacco, “We see consumers looking for options other than cigarettes to satisfy their smoking needs... Consumers are purchasing both cigarettes and little cigars in the same transaction and switching between the products... It seems they are taking a ‘smoke a cigarette, smoke a cigar’ approach as a way to decrease the total cost of tobacco enjoyment.”

Cost is a powerful tool in combatting tobacco addiction. The most direct way to increase tobacco prices is through increases in tobacco taxes. Making sure those increases are not subverted by the ever-wily tobacco industry remains a problem.

Thirty-three organization which serve Ramsey County have adopted a policy not to accept financial support from the tobacco industry. The industry has a long history of offering funding and materials to nonprofits that serve, low income, people of color, women, the GLBT community and youth.

Many nonprofits and organizations are learning how tobacco donations are used to improve the industry’s image in the community. Accepting tobacco money sends a false message to the community leaving many of our youth with the image that Philip Morse and R. J. Reynolds are positive businesses who make an acceptable product.

RTC urges all organizations to examine their funding policies and insure a tobacco-free funding policy is included. A written policy is one of the best ways to send a truly positive message while protecting your organizations good name and the people you serve from the tobacco company. Contact Bernadette Chlebeck at 651-646-3005 for more information and a copy of a model policy.

### Organizations with a tobacco-free funding policy

- African American Aids Task Force
- Aguilar Productions
- American Lung Association
- Association for Nonsmokers- MN



Earnest Simpkins, President of the Twin Cities Black Pride is the first Pride organization in the country to adopt a tobacco-free funding policy. Simpkins accepts award from Bernadette Chlebeck of RTC.

- Aurora/St Anthony Neighborhood Development Corporation
- Ballet of the Dolls
- Bisexual Organizing Project (BOP)
- Camphor Memorial United Methodist Church
- Color CoordiNATION
- Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio (CLUES)
- Dialog One Interpretation and Translation Solutions
- East Side Boys and Girls Club
- Fourth District Nurses Association
- Hmong American Partnership
- Minnesota 2020
- Minnesota Public Health Association
- Minnesota School OUTreach Coalition
- Mt Airy Boys and Girls Club
- PFLAG
- Prepone Consulting LLC
- Quorum
- Rainbow Health Initiative
- R.A.R.E. Productions
- RECLAIM
- Riverview Economic Development Association (REDA)
- South ST. Paul Healthy Youth Community Coalition (SSPHYCC)
- The Camphor Foundation (UJIMA)
- Trinity Church Fest
- Twin Cities Black Pride
- Vietnamese MN Association (VMA)
- Vietnamese Social Services (VSS)
- West 7<sup>th</sup> Community Center
- West Side Boys & Girls Club

## ANSR Membership Form

*Already a member? Not your renewal date? Pass this form along to someone you think might be interested. Share your newsletter.*

- I want to help in ANSR's work for nonsmokers as a:
- Guarantor \_\_\_\$100 \_\_\_\$200 \_\_\_Other
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Please mail this form with your check to:  
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 2395 University Ave. W Suite 310  
 St. Paul, MN 55114-1512

*ANSR is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Contributions are tax deductible*

## VIA-Champ



Brian Gioielli from Riverview Economic Development Association (REDA) accepts certificates from Bernadette Chlebeck of RTC and Carmen Robles of Jevenes de Salud in recognition of their tobacco-free funding policy.

Veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan Cessation Program (VIA-Champ) presented information on how tobacco use affects military performance at two pre-deployment trainings sponsored by the Minnesota Army National Guard. Approximately 3000 soldiers and their family members attended the two day training in Rochester.

Most Americans all familiar with the physical effects of tobacco use such as lung and heart disease. But for members of the military there are immediate consequences of tobacco use that can put the mission in danger. Research shows that tobacco use can reduce night vision, decrease wound healing and slow mental acuity. The tobacco user can be less prepared for battle than the non- user.

Tobacco use by one soldier can also put there fellow soldiers in danger. The smell of a lit cigarette can travel a long distance giving away the soldier's location. The lit butt of a cigarette can be a deadly give away to a patient sniper. Chewing tobacco can leave a dip trail for the enemy to follow.

The soldiers and their family members received cessation resources and healthy alternatives to stress reduction to use during deployment. VIA-Champ will conduct classes during pre-deployment trainings in Minneapolis and Brainerd in the upcoming months.

For more information on VIA-Champ please contact Bernadette Chlebeck at 651-646-3005 or [bc@ansrmn.com](mailto:bc@ansrmn.com). The VIA-Champ team wishes all the soldiers a safe deployment and thanks them for their service.



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