

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**April 22, 2010**

**NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund Launches TRU Recruitment Ad for Earth Day**  
*Orange County's Tobacco.Reality.Unfiltered. group featured in TV ad*

**Raleigh, NC** – In honor of Earth Day, the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF) is launching a new television ad that shows Orange County teens in action collecting discarded cigarette butts and educating their peers about the dangers of tobacco use to human health as well to the environment. The ad is the second in HWTF's most recent campaign to recruit more North Carolina youth to join Tobacco.Reality.Unfiltered. (TRU), the state's teen movement to prevent youth tobacco use.

"As part of statewide activities for Earth Day, TRU teens not only have the opportunity to educate their peers about how cigarettes affect our health, but also about how tobacco trash damages our environment," said Dr. Chuck Willson, HWTF Chair. "Just as the residue from tobacco use builds up in our bodies, the residue accumulates in our environment too. These teens are the real heroes behind this grassroots movement, and we are proud to support their efforts."

TRU is the HWTF's statewide initiative to prevent tobacco use among teens. HWTF grantees across the state have founded more than 200 TRU groups, which are comprised of teen advocates who are working to prevent teen tobacco use in their communities and schools. TRU teens educate middle school youth and their peers about tobacco use and encourage tobacco-free policies in local businesses and recreational facilities. The recruitment campaign shows TRU teens in action and aims to attract more NC teens to the movement since youth engagement is an effective youth tobacco use prevention strategy.

Earth Day is an opportunity for TRU groups to conduct peer-to-peer tobacco education, encourage cessation among their peers who smoke, and to attract the attention of environmentally-minded teens with yet another reason not to use tobacco. TRU groups across North Carolina will be participating in Earth Day activities, such as the educational sessions that will take place today in the Wake Early College of Health and Sciences where TRU teens will be entering classes to discuss the environmental impact of tobacco waste as well as cessation resources that are available.

The new TV ad, "Get Out There," features the Orange County TRU group that made the commitment to pick up cigarette butts on the grounds of Chapel Hill High School in honor of Earth Day in 2009.

Since the September 2007 launch of the TRU Recruitment Campaign, nearly 12,000 NC teens have pledged to be tobacco free via the TRU Web site ([www.realityunfiltered.com](http://www.realityunfiltered.com)). The most recent evaluation report from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill indicated that HWTF's teen tobacco prevention program has contributed to major successes in the state's effort to combat tobacco use. Smoking rates among NC teens are at an historic low. High school and middle school smoking rates continue to decline and 53,000 fewer teens are smoking today compared to 2003.

The first television spot highlighting local TRU teens at work aired in 2009 and featured a Vance County TRU group educating local middle school students about the dangers of tobacco use. To view the new TV ad, please visit [www.realityunfiltered.com](http://www.realityunfiltered.com) and go to the "Cool Stuff" tab, "TRU TV" section.

**ABOUT THE NC HEALTH AND WELLNESS TRUST FUND**

*The NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund makes North Carolina stronger, both physically and economically, by funding programs that promote preventive health. Created by the General Assembly in 2000 to allocate a portion of North Carolina's share of the national tobacco settlement, HWTF has invested \$199 million to support preventive health initiatives and \$116 million to fund prescription drug assistance programs. For more information, please visit [www.HealthWellNC.com](http://www.HealthWellNC.com).*