

DRAFT
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 23, 2004

TRIANGLE TEEN WINS TRIP TO MTV'S VIDEO MUSIC AWARDS IN MIAMI ON AUG. 29

CHAPERONE DAD QUESTIONS HIS "BLING-BLING" QUOTIENT

NC'S TEEN TOBACCO USE PREVENTION CAMPAIGN MAKES TRIP POSSIBLE; WINS NEW ADVOCATE IN THE PROCESS

(Chapel Hill, NC) – Sophie Larter, 16, entered a statewide contest to win a trip to MTV's Video Music Awards despite the snickering of her twin sister, but now Sophie's the one laughing as she prepares to wing it to Miami, Fla., for the hottest event in pop culture.

Sophie's name was drawn last week in the culmination of a statewide contest promoted on MTV and sponsored by TRU (Tobacco. Reality. Unfiltered.), the state's teen tobacco use prevention campaign.

"My sister is soooooo jealous," said Sophie, a junior at Chapel Hill High School. "I feel kind of bad, but she can see the pictures!"

The contest's connection to TRU was bittersweet but appropriate; Sophie's grandmother, a longtime smoker, died in 2001 of emphysema. "I have always found smoking to be gross," Sophie explained. She added that she plans to sign the TRU Tobacco-Free Pledge and to get involved in the TRU movement, which is sponsored by the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF). TRU plans to post Sophie's photos and diary of the event on its Web site, www.realityunfiltered.com.

Sophie's dad, Michael, will serve as the teen's chaperone for her stay at the ultra-hip Blue Moon Hotel and the awards extravaganza at the bay front AmericanAirlines Arena on Sunday, Aug. 29. "I'm not sure I have the right 'bling-bling' to wear," Michael said, referring to the flashy jewelry preferred by some hip-hop stars.

TRU-MTV Award Winner/Page 2

The MTV Video Music Awards (airing Sunday at 8 p.m.) is one of pop music's major annual events. Among this year's confirmed performers are multi-platinum sensations Outkast and Usher. The VIP list includes Will Smith, Hilary Duff and "The Daily Show's" Jon Stewart.

For TRU, the VMA contest was a golden opportunity to reach its intended teen audience. "Our goal is to make teenagers aware of the dangers of tobacco use without being preachy or judgmental," said Alison McLaurin, HWTF's director of marketing and public affairs. "What better way to do that than through a contest that involves a medium as important to teens as MTV and an event as major as the Video Music Awards? We look forward to seeing Sophie's full report on the VMAs on our Web site, www.realityunfiltered.com."

ABOUT TRU

Tobacco. Reality. Unfiltered, commonly known as TRU, is North Carolina's first-ever statewide youth tobacco prevention multi-media campaign that uses testimonials of real North Carolina teens as well as hard-hitting facts to dissuade young people from using tobacco. This campaign is part of the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund's teen tobacco use prevention initiative. Funded at \$28 million from HWTF, this grassroots initiative includes the TRU media campaign, as well as a grant program including 70 grants (50 community-based grants, 4 statewide grants and 16 tobacco free school mini-grants) to a total of 55 organizations. To find out more about TRU, please visit www.realityunfiltered.com.

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 \$55 million to support preventive health initiatives and \$78 million to fund a prescription drug assistance program for seniors. For more information, please visit www.hwtfc.org.

###