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**TEEN TOBACCO USE PREVENTION ADVOCATES FIND PEACE IN GREENSBORO
MORE THAN 200 NORTH CAROLINA TEENS PARTICIPATE IN YOUTH SUMMIT ON THE EFFECTS
OF TOBACCO USE IN THE MEDIA AND LEARN TO TAKE ACTION**

(Greensboro, NC) – Teen tobacco use prevention advocates will assemble in Greensboro today and tomorrow for the 2005 PEACE (Peers Effectively Advocating for Change Everywhere) Summit, a two-day youth summit sponsored by the Question Why Youth Empowerment Center of Central North Carolina and TRU (Tobacco.Reality.Unfiltered.), the state's first-ever statewide teen tobacco use prevention and cessation campaign, funded by the North Carolina Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF).

The Summit invites teen advocates from central North Carolina to participate in a series of breakout sessions that shed new light on tobacco use in a variety of contexts – from the music industry to public policy. The goal of the weekend summit is to engage youth in tobacco use and specific media literacy and advocacy programs. Each session, many of which are youth-led, includes an education component followed by an advocacy component.

"Youth empowerment is extremely important to teen tobacco use prevention," said Bronwyn Lucas, Question Why's regional coordinator. "All too often, our teens are under the misconception that they are too young to make a difference when, in reality, their messages can be some of the most powerful."

Highlights of the PEACE Summit include a number of breakout sessions that will explore the effects of tobacco's persisting presence in the media and touch on ways that teens can help mediate these effects.

"Research has shown that teens respond better to advice given by other teens," said Alison K. McLaurin, HWTF's director of marketing and public affairs. "We believe that through the PEACE Summit, we can effectively reach out to teens across the state, equipping them with the tools they need to encourage their peers not to use tobacco products."

The PEACE Summit also will feature prominent keynote speaker Dr. Peter DeBenedittis, a former consultant to the White House Office on Drug Control Policy, the Centers for Disease Control, the American Medical Association and the National Cancer Institute. Dr. DeBenedittis has been featured on the CBS television program, "48 Hours".

According to the state's 2003 Youth Tobacco Survey, more than 200,000 people under the age of 18 in North Carolina will die prematurely due to tobacco-related illnesses.

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ABOUT QUESTION WHY:

Question Why is a statewide education, advocacy and training movement funded by the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund. The Question Why movement began in January 2001, with funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the vision of committed adults from the NC Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch and local agencies. It is named "Question Why" because "Every change starts with a question." Three Question Why Youth Empowerment Centers reach North Carolinians statewide – Asheville, serving 26 western counties; Durham, serving 37 central counties and Wilmington, serving 37 eastern counties. Each center has adult staff and up to nine youth staff. To learn more about Question Why, visit www.questionwhy.org.

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 (HWTF) 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, four 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 \$127 million to support preventive health initiatives and \$78 million to fund a prescription drug assistance program. For more information, please visit www.hwtfc.org.

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