

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DEC. 16, 2004

AND THE WINNER IS...

KIDS GET CREATIVE FOR NC'S FIRST-EVER TOBACCO-FREE TEEN AWARDS

VISIT WWW.REALITYUNFILTERED.COM AND CAST YOUR BALLOT!

Raleigh, NC – Move over American Idol. Get back Golden Globes. North Carolina's teen tobacco prevention advocates are fielding their own superstar awards. Right now, teens across the state are visiting the Tobacco. Reality. Unfiltered. (**TRU**) Web site at www.realityunfiltered.com to cast their votes in the *first-ever* Tobacco-Free Teen Awards.

Young people submitted original entries to compete in an online talent show explaining, "**Why I Want To Be Tobacco Free.**" Entrants included teens from Ahoskie, Apex, Asheville, Burlington, Charlotte, Clayton, Drake, Durham, Franklin, Gatesville, Greensboro, Hillsborough, Hobbsville, Marion, Mebane, Newton Grove, Otto, Raleigh, Reidsville, Rockingham, Southport, Tyler and Winston-Salem.

At the **TRU** Web site, funded by the NC Health and Wellness Fund (HWTF), teens can cast their votes for top performers in the following categories – Best Original Video, Art, Photo, Essay and Rap. Voting is currently underway in the video contest and will conclude December 27, 2004. Check back on **TRU's** Web site for the additional contest voting periods.

Art Contest/Photo Contest – Voting: Wednesday, December 29 - Wednesday, January 12

Essay Contest – Voting: Wednesday, January 12 - Wednesday, January 26

Rap Contest – Voting: Wednesday, January 26 - Wednesday, February 9

Winners will be announced the week of February 14th - 18th 2005; so don't forget to go online and cast your ballot for the best of the best. Your vote counts!

Tobacco-Free Teen Award recipients will receive:

- Cash prizes for each category: First Place \$100, Second Place \$50, and Third Place \$25.
- *Overall First Place prize* - X-Box with Halo 2 Game
- *Overall Second Place prize* - \$200 gift certificate to Harry's Guitar Shop
- *Overall Third Place prize* - \$100 cash
- *Judges' Award* -- \$200 cash.

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, 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.hwtf.org.

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