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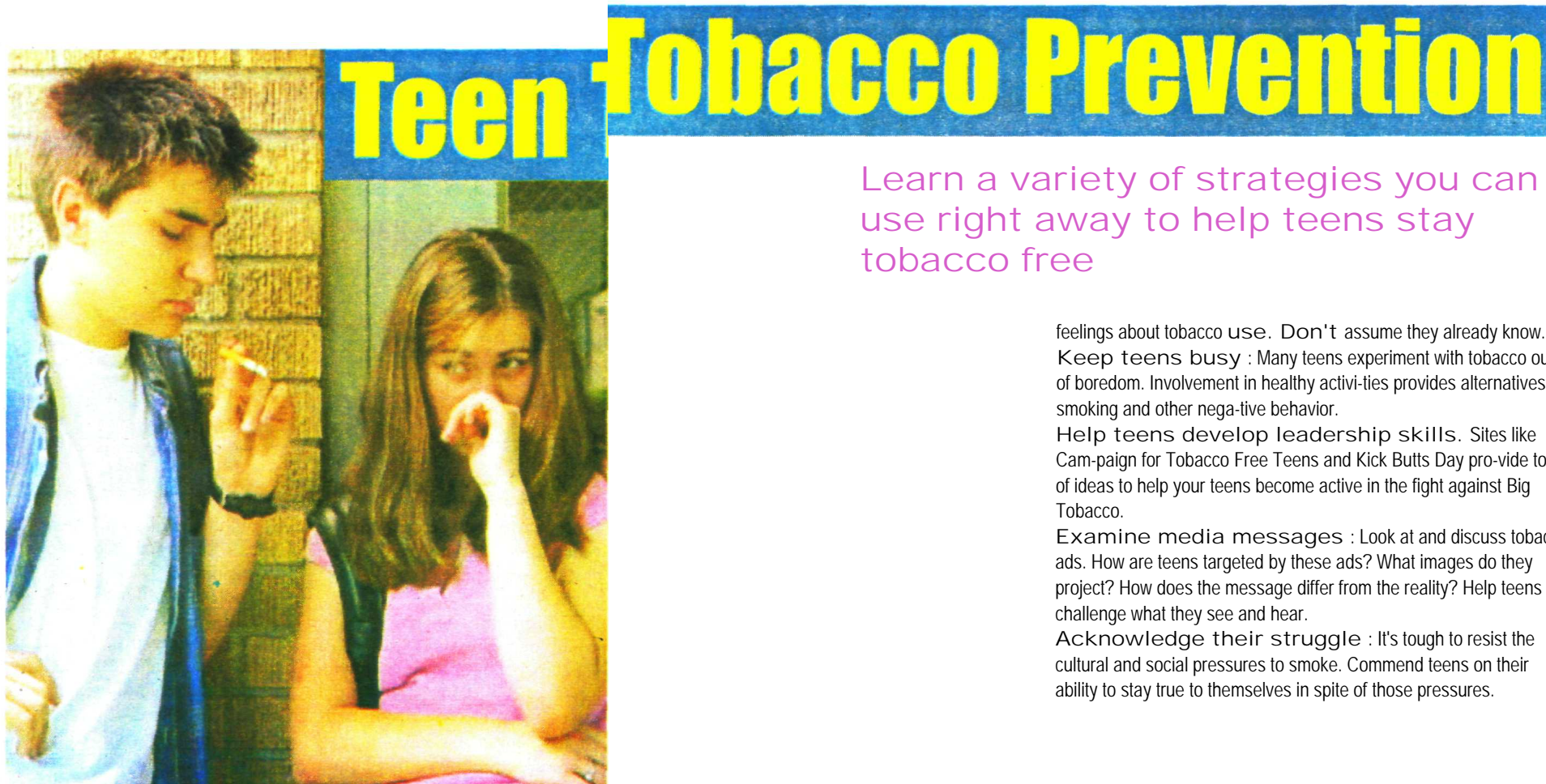
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Thursday, September 02, 2010

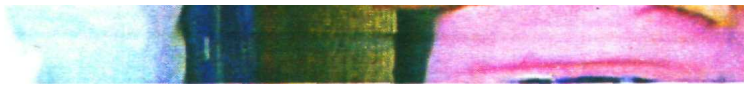
Teen Tobacco Prevention

Publication: [Afternoon Voice](#), Edition: [Mumbai](#), Journalist: [Bureau](#), Page No: 8, Location: [Top-Center](#), Width(cms): 20, Height(cms): 20, Size(sq.cms): 400



Learn a variety of strategies you can use right away to help teens stay tobacco free

- feelings about tobacco use. Don't assume they already know.
- Keep teens busy :** Many teens experiment with tobacco out of boredom. Involvement in healthy activities provides alternatives to smoking and other negative behavior.
- Help teens develop leadership skills.** Sites like Campaign for Tobacco Free Teens and Kick Butts Day provide tons of ideas to help your teens become active in the fight against Big Tobacco.
- Examine media messages :** Look at and discuss tobacco ads. How are teens targeted by these ads? What images do they project? How does the message differ from the reality? Help teens challenge what they see and hear.
- Acknowledge their struggle :** It's tough to resist the cultural and social pressures to smoke. Commend teens on their ability to stay true to themselves in spite of those pressures.



Many teens experiment with tobacco in their early teens,

sometimes even younger. Tobacco advertising, peer pressure, and poor coping skills often contribute to the likelihood that a teen will pick up that first cigarette. This experimentation, however, can turn into a nicotine addiction that a child could battle for the rest of his life. Drug and alcohol use among teens gets a lot of attention and press, while tobacco use is often presented as less serious or important. But the reality is quite different.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, almost four thousand teens start smoking every day. More than 6 million teens under 18 will have their lives cut short by a smoking-related illness.

How can you prevent the teens you work with from becoming part of these chilling statistics?

Here are several suggestions for developing healthy lifestyles and opening a dialogue about tobacco:

Practice refusal skills : Teach teens how to offer alternatives, give reasons, or leave the situation. Help them practice being assertive. Role-play different situations so they can be ready with a variety of responses when cigarettes enter the picture.

Promote positive coping skills : Many smokers use cigarettes as a way to deal with unpleasant feelings. Instead, help teens discover more healthful stress relievers, such as walking, painting, writing, etc.

Promote healthy lifestyles : Encourage teens to maintain a sensible diet and exercise regularly. Let them see you doing the same. Involvement in a sport can also be a strong motivator to stay tobacco-free.

Set a good example : If you smoke, try to quit. Talk to teens often about the dangers of smoking and your