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HELENA TEENS COME TOGETHER TO EXPOSE BIG TOBACCO **reACT Against Corporate Tobacco Regional Summit empowers teens to become advocates for healthy living**

HELENA – It is illegal for youth under the age of 18 to use corporate tobacco products, but the tobacco industry spends millions of dollars each year targeting Montana Teens. On Friday, May 1st, local teens will come together to respond to corporate tobacco’s tactics, using advocacy, education and art at the first annual *reACT* Against Corporate Tobacco Regional Summit.

What: Regional reACT Teen Summit
When: May 1, 2009
Where: The summit begins at 7:45 AM at St. Paul’s Methodist Church (downtown Helena) and continues until 3:10 PM across the street at the Holter Museum of Art.

reACT is Montana’s teen-led movement against Big Tobacco. *reACT* joins statewide youth empowerment movements across the country in recognizing the power of young people to effectively take on one of our leading preventable causes of death—commercial tobacco use. May 1st marks the first regional Leadership Summit where youth from across Lewis and Clark County gather to develop strategies to have their voice heard. Participants in the May 1st summit will hear from community speakers on topics like the sacred use of tobacco and the Clean Indoor Air Act.

“*reACT* is not against those who use tobacco“ says Capital HS Senior Kendra Loomis, who has worked hard to plan the regional summit, “but we *are* against the industry that promotes, addicts and profits from the sale of tobacco products.“

In addition to informative presentations, students will also have the opportunity to use art activism to get their point across. In the afternoon, students will create their message using batik processes. Led by local art educator Katie Knight, teens will use wax and dye on cotton to share their messages that deglamorize tobacco use and tell the truth about corporate tobacco.

“The batik is a very organic medium which the kids are excited to experiment with,” says tobacco use prevention specialist, Darby Bramble. Look for the finished products to be displayed in outdoor venues around Helena this summer.

For more information on tobacco use prevention and youth advocacy in Lewis & Clark/Broadwater County Tobacco Use Prevention Program at 457-8924.

The Lewis & Clark City-County Health Department’s mission is to improve and protect the health of all Lewis & Clark County residents.

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