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English 10

Tobacco Advertising and its Effects on Young People.

In this world there are many injustices that deal with our children. A main injustice is the advertising of tobacco directed to our youths. Every day 3,000 children start smoking, most of them between the ages of 10 and 18. These kids account for 90 percent of all new smokers. In fact, 90 percent of all adults state that they first start smoking as a teenager. The statistics clearly show that young people are the prime targets of tobacco sales.

The head of these media companies are Marlboro and Camel. Marlboro uses a western character known as The Marlboro Man, and Camel uses the "smooth character" Joe Camel. Joe Camel who is shown as a camel with complete style has been attacked by many Tobacco-Free Kids organizations as a major influence on the children of America. Researchers at the Medical College of Georgia report that almost as many 6-year olds recognize Joe Camel as they do Mickey Mouse. That is very shocking information for any parent to hear. Children are attracted by these advertisements because they like cartoons, and they think that a cartoon is harmless and what the cartoon does is harmless too. There is so much cigarette advertising out there a child is sure to be struck by its attention.

The companies deny that these symbols target people under 21 and claim that their advertising goal is simply to promote brand switching. Illinois Rep. Richard Durbin disagrees with this statement stating "If we can reduce the number of young smokers, the tobacco companies will be in trouble and they know it". The companies go toward a market that is not fully aware of the harm that cigarettes are capable of to keep their industry alive and well.

When kids were asked why they started smoking, they gave two contradictory reasons: They wanted to be a part of the crowd. Children don't want to be left out, they want to be wanted. If their peers are smoking then they will want to smoke too. They also wanted to reach out and rebel at the same time. When children are told over and over by more authoritative people not to do something, then they are going to do it. They do this just to get back at the authorities or to satisfy their curiosity. Teens also think of smoking as a sign of independence. The surprising thing is that these kids know that they are being influenced by cigarette advertising.

Here are three things on how to stop the future of America from smoking. Try to convince your children that smoking is not cool. If a child is talked to by there parents then they will listen to what they have to say. Talk to your kids at a young age about the dangers of smoking. If children are informed of the dangers cigarettes provide then they will prevent themselves from smoking. Identify family members who smoke and ask them to quit. If children are not around the habit then they won't have a reason to pick it up.

Children are the most valuable assets we are given in life. Let's try to educate them while they're young to be independent thinkers and to not be swayed by the tobacco companies who are trying to take advantage of their mind and body.

