PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Sharon Kayne, Communications Director, New Mexico Voices for Children
505-244-9505 ext. 30 (p), 505-401-8709 (c), skayne@nmvoices.org

OR Kesi Perea, Youth Link Program Manager, New Mexico Voices for Children
505-244-9505 ext. 20 (p), kperea@nmvoices.org

Local Youth Educate Peers About Tobacco Prevention

ALBUQUERQUE— You don’t have to look far on RJ Reynold’s website to see that the tobacco giants is targeting minority youth populations by associating hip-hop culture with their "KOOL" brand cigarettes. The website’s splash page includes images of hip-hop DJs, sound mixing equipment, and the like.

Such advertising manipulation is just one of the things some 200 Albuquerque mid-schoolers learned before they took off for their summer break. And they learned it from a group of their peers. FACT (Fighting Against Corporate Tobacco), an Albuquerque-based youth tobacco prevention group, recently conducted ten presentations to students at APS middle schools regarding the physiological and social consequences of tobacco use. The group presented to health and physical education classes at Taylor and James Monroe Middle Schools with approximately 200 students in attendance. FACT will continue their tobacco prevention efforts in the upcoming school year and will be recruiting new members throughout the summer break.

FACT consists of a diverse group of approximately 10 students ranging in age from 15 to 18. These young tobacco prevention advocates are committed to exposing the tobacco industry's lies and attempts to manipulate our communities. FACT participates in initiatives to educate their peers about the dangers of commercial tobacco, while advocating for and supporting policies that will enhance the health and well being of the community.

FACT members are trained in tobacco prevention issues to prepare them for their peer education initiative through the Youth Link program, a project of New Mexico Voices For Children. The youth advocates met once a month over the course of the school year to learn about issues relating to tobacco, plan events and prepare for their peer-education presentations. New Mexico Voices for Children uses youth empowerment strategies to develop leadership and advocacy skills, build strategic relationships with other youth and with adults, and have an impact on public policy through coalitions such as FACT.
The New Mexico Department of Health’s Tobacco Use Prevention and Control (TUPAC) program funds the youth tobacco prevention coalitions at APS and other community organizations. There are also coalitions at Albuquerque, Cibola and La Cueva High Schools, and the University of New Mexico. For more information, please contact Youth Link Program Manager Kesi Perea at kperea@nmvoices.org

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New Mexico Voices for Children is a progressive nonprofit organization advocating for policies to improve the health and well-being of New Mexico’s children, families and communities.
2340 Alamo SE, Suite 120, Albuquerque, NM 97106; 505-244-9505 (p), 505-244-9509 (f)
www.nmvoices.org