

*I Decide for my health not to use tobacco.  
I Decide it's my life.  
I Decide for my family, my friends and people that care about me.  
I Decide to listen to myself.  
I Decide not to waste my money.  
I Decide to reach my goals by not smoking.*



**Illinois Department of  
Public Health**

*The First Year  
2000-2001*



Greetings:

I commend the Illinois Department of Public Health's efforts this past year to collaborate with local public and private entities to introduce this innovative smoking prevention program targeting Illinois teens. The "I Decide" campaign is off to a strong start and is already showing signs of achieving its goals – to convince Illinois teens to not start smoking or, if they do smoke, to quit. The campaign's emphasis on choice, which mirrors similar programs in California and Florida, is key to successfully lowering the number of teens who smoke. Because of these proven results, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention strongly supports states implementing more comprehensive prevention programs like "I Decide."

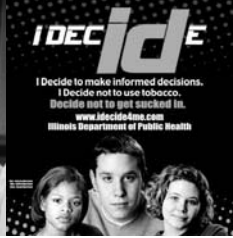
During the past two fiscal years of my administration, we have allocated approximately \$80 million of the state's share of tobacco settlement proceeds to tobacco prevention and cessation efforts in Illinois. The "I Decide" initiative is one of numerous programs funded through tobacco settlement proceeds in which the Department of Public Health is collaborating with other state agencies, local departments of public health, local school districts, and other organizations to successfully reach out to various populations throughout the state to promote healthier ways of life.

Although this report focuses on the first steps of this innovative program, it is apparent they have established a strong base for future success. I compliment the Department of Public Health for its work and look forward to seeing positive results not only from this project, but from other tobacco prevention and cessation programs slated for the coming year.



A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "George H. Ryan".

George H. Ryan  
Governor of Illinois



## Background

Although most people are aware that tobacco is a powerfully addictive and deadly substance, many underestimate both the social and economic costs of the tobacco epidemic in America.

Tobacco use kills more than 430,000 Americans each year in the United States. Here in Illinois, many families and friends feel the impact of the 19,000 deaths that occur each year in the state due to tobacco-related illnesses.

What is most shocking is how much money tobacco companies put behind their products. Tobacco is the second most heavily advertised product in the country. Companies spend \$8.24 billion a year nationally to market tobacco products and \$284 million here in Illinois. Most of that advertising is aimed at teens. Each year in Illinois, 60,000 kids (under 18) become new daily smokers. If current trends continue, 260,000 Illinois kids now under 18 will eventually die from smoking.

Studies show that tobacco advertising is working. Not only do nearly 35 percent of high school students use tobacco, but research suggests that one-third of underage tobacco use is directly attributable to tobacco company advertising.

In November 1998, the tobacco companies reached an agreement with the attorneys general of 46 states, including Illinois, settling the states' Medicaid lawsuits to recover tobacco-related disease treatment costs. Under the terms of this deal, called the Master Settlement Agreement, Illinois will receive \$9.1 billion over 25 years, which averages out to between \$298 and \$391 million annually.

## Reaching out to Teens

Illinois legislators allocated \$3.85 million of the state's settlement to the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) in fiscal year 2001 to help develop and execute a youth-focused anti-tobacco campaign.

The campaign has two major goals:

- *To reduce rates of tobacco use among teens in a one-county pilot program (Winnebago County was selected)*
- *To demonstrate that a comprehensive social marketing campaign aimed at lowering teen tobacco use can be successful*



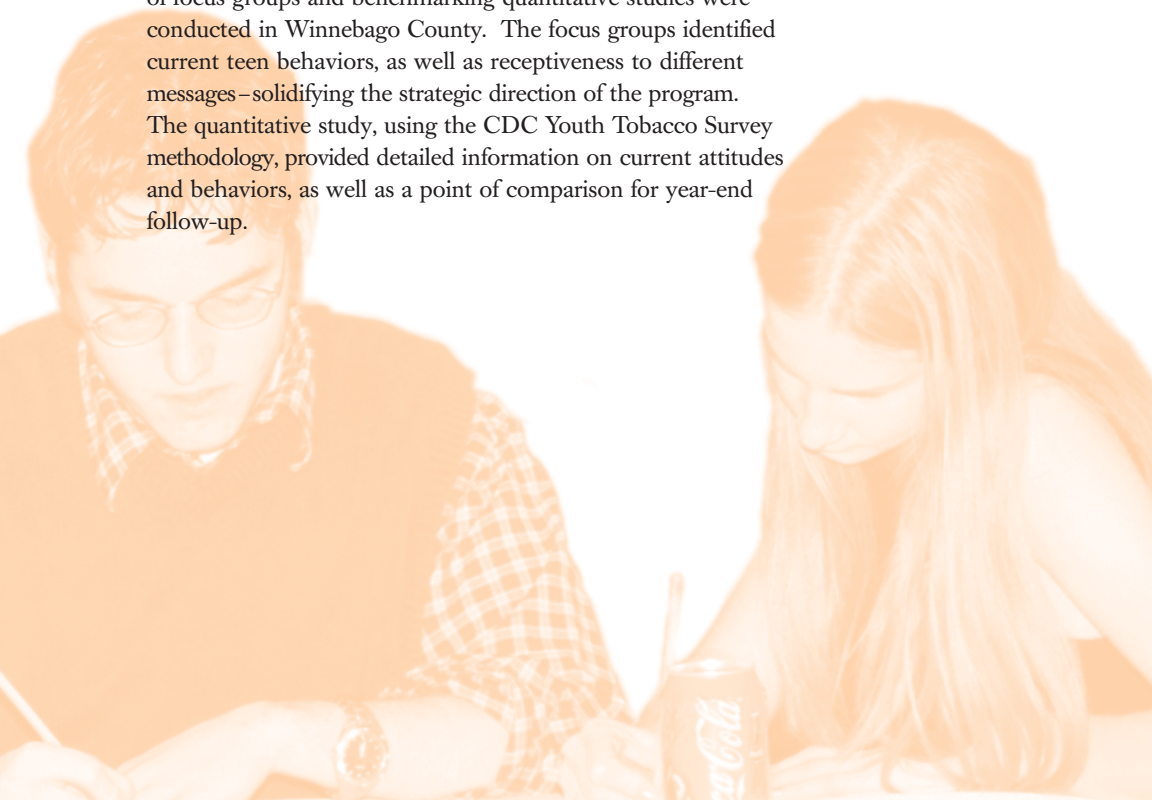
## Research

At the outset of the campaign, IDPH thoroughly reviewed the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs as well as other states' anti-tobacco programs. This research identified the following critical success factors:

- *Make teens the driving force of the campaign.*
- *Create a "brand" identity that is hip and popular.*
- *Make it cool not to smoke.*
- *Be where they are (e.g., TV, movies, online, concerts, malls and sporting events).*

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In addition to the literature review, primary research in the form of focus groups and benchmarking quantitative studies were conducted in Winnebago County. The focus groups identified current teen behaviors, as well as receptiveness to different messages—solidifying the strategic direction of the program. The quantitative study, using the CDC Youth Tobacco Survey methodology, provided detailed information on current attitudes and behaviors, as well as a point of comparison for year-end follow-up.





An initial quantitative study found rates of teen tobacco use in Winnebago County followed national averages with 35 percent of high school and 15 percent of middle school students currently using tobacco. Furthermore, only 32 percent of high school and 40 percent of middle school students reported being taught in their classes about the dangers of tobacco use. Overall, 30 percent of students indicated that neither parent had discussed the dangers of tobacco use.

These studies demonstrate that knowledge of tobacco's negative health effects were not well established and awareness of tobacco manufacturers' manipulative practices is limited. A comprehensive program that would incorporate the critical success factors was needed to reverse this trend.

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***"Ever since I have been involved in I Decide, I feel that we have helped teens quit smoking and helped them realize that they are the main ones getting targeted."***

**Kelly Morrison  
Teen Advisory Panel Member  
RESA Middle School, 8th grade**





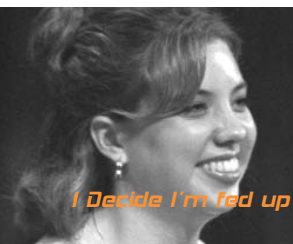
## *Strategy*

As IDPH began to develop its marketing and communications strategy, the CDC guidelines indicated the \$3.85 million that had been appropriated was not enough for a comprehensive statewide effort. Instead IDPH decided it would be best spent on a one-county pilot program. While this may appear to be a large sum of money, it pales in comparison to the \$5.5 million tobacco companies spend in Illinois each week to market their products.

4 IDPH developed a multi-faceted communications program to empower teenagers to make an informed decision by educating them on the negative health effects of tobacco use and tobacco companies' manipulative advertising and marketing practices. The campaign used the energy and tactics of a large-scale, mass marketing campaign and applied them to the one-county youth anti-tobacco movement. This strategy differed from traditional public health campaigns.

*"Their enthusiasm, their commitment is contagious...and that's what it takes to make a meaningful project...a campaign that's going to make a difference."*

**J. Maichle Bacon**  
**Public Health Administrator**  
**Winnebago County Health Department**



*I Decide I'm fed up so I'll fight back.*



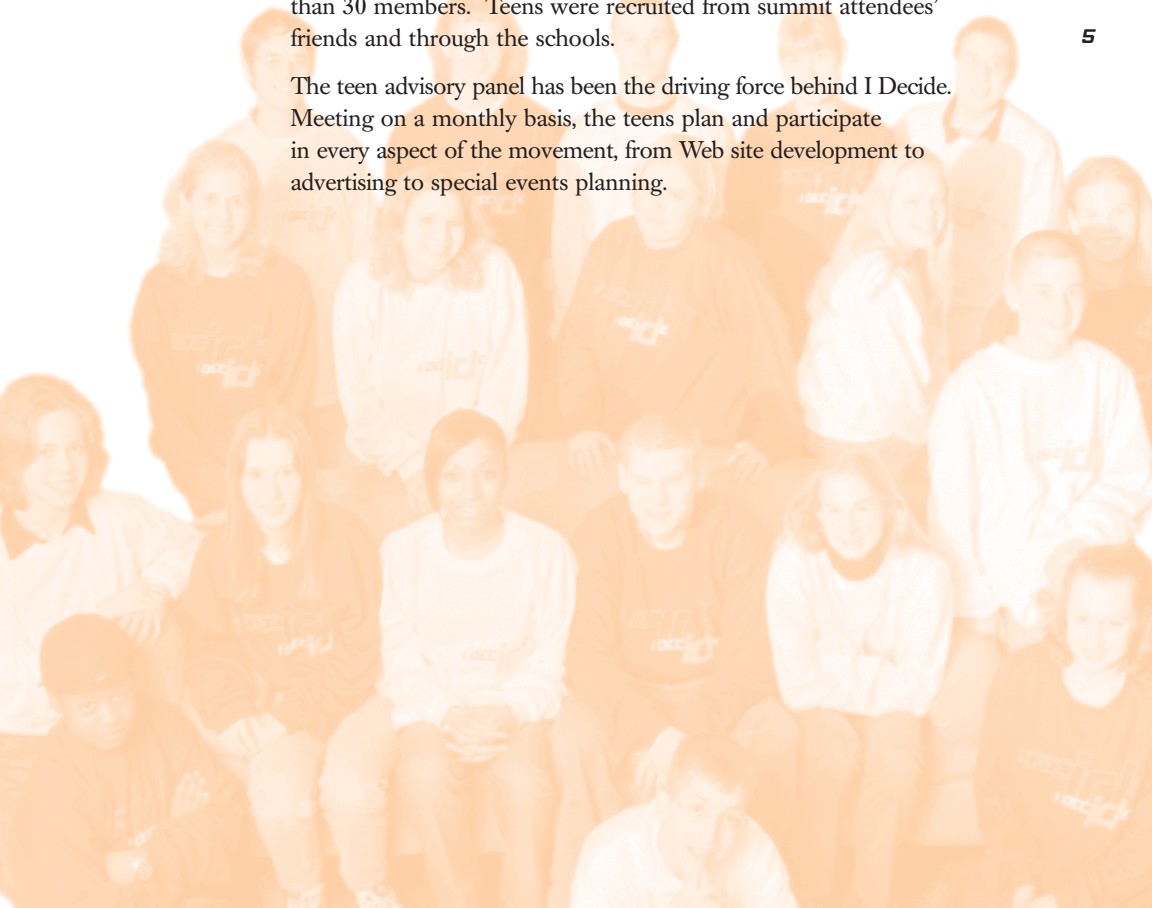
## *Teen Advisory Panel*

Knowing it was critical that local teens are empowered, 16 students initially were enlisted for an advisory panel to lead the campaign. The teens participated as program advisers and as an in-house focus group for advertising, marketing and public relations.

The panel also helped to plan an anti-tobacco youth summit to kick off the campaign. They led the summit sessions, brainstormed with teens from around the county and helped to create what is now the I Decide movement.

Following the summit, the teen panel was expanded to more than 30 members. Teens were recruited from summit attendees' friends and through the schools.

The teen advisory panel has been the driving force behind I Decide. Meeting on a monthly basis, the teens plan and participate in every aspect of the movement, from Web site development to advertising to special events planning.





## Teen Summit

In October 2000, more than 230 teens from Winnebago County came together at the appropriately named **Kick Ash Bash: Make Some Noise Youth Summit**. During the two-day event, teens were educated by youth advocacy leaders on the deceptive tactics tobacco companies use to target them, learned the components of an effective countermarketing program and “made some noise” about fighting tobacco in their community.

In addition to the educational elements, celebrity guests from MTV’s “The Real World: New Orleans” shared their opinions about tobacco use and signed autographs, a band called “Sticks of Thunder” entertained the teens and local community leaders stopped by to show their support. In a survey after the event, the majority of teens thought all aspects of the summit were either “Kick Ash” or “Cool,” the two highest ratings. More than 90 percent responded favorably to the youth advocacy leaders’ presentations.

Out of the event came I Decide, the name selected by teens for the movement.







## *The Campaign*

I Decide is an anti-tobacco campaign developed by teens for teens with support and guidance from IDPH. Its goal is to empower teens to educate their peers and the community about the effects of tobacco use and the manipulative advertising and marketing practices of the tobacco companies – encouraging others to “decide” not to use tobacco products.

The I Decide teen panel embarked on an extensive effort to introduce and familiarize the community with the I Decide program and its objectives. Following the teen summit, the panel selected a campaign logo to brand the movement. I Decide developed six

posters, all with unique messages—five are health related and one features statements from panel members telling the community why they decide to be tobacco free. To ensure that the teen-driven focus of the campaign was prominent, the posters featured teen panel members and some were distributed to area schools, churches and local businesses that teens visit.

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*“I like the idea that we reach out to get the community involved and that it’s us – ‘the teens’– who are reaching them. Being in I D opened my eyes to just how important it is to let people know what’s really going on.”*

*Jessica Pratt*

*Teen Advisory Panel Member  
Durand High School, 10th grade*



*I Decide not to smell like an ashtray.*



## Advertising

### All Smoke High

Imagine...you walk into what seems like a normal high school; yet, it's filled with smoke, it smells, all the students have cigarettes in their mouths and oxygen tanks are as common as backpacks. Welcome to All Smoke High!

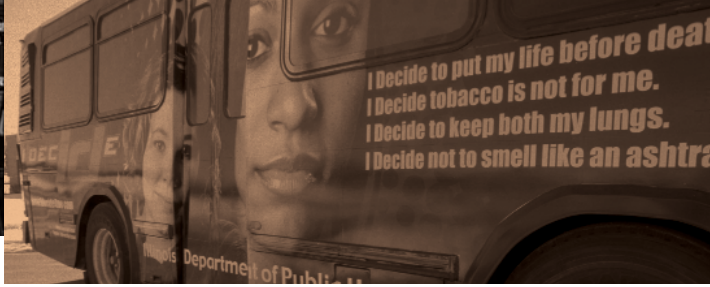
The I Decide teens developed television and radio ads centered on All Smoke High, a fictional high school where everyone is required to smoke. The commercials are based on teens' misguided notion that most or all of their peers smoke. Filmed in Winnebago County with local teens as stars and extras, All Smoke High shows the absurdity of a world where everyone does smoke.

The ads reached 90 percent of the population and research showed 72 percent of Winnebago County teens were aware of the commercials. Two-thirds of teens said the All Smoke High ads deterred them from using tobacco. One student said the commercials *"catch you with humor and then they actually show the long-term effects of smoking."*

*"Being a part of I Decide has been a major thing for me. Because of I Decide, some of my friends have quit smoking and that's a good feeling. The bus wrap has also made me well known throughout my school. That makes me feel important and involved."*

**Arthur Surratt**  
Teen Advisory Panel Member  
West Middle School, 8th grade





### I Decide Radio Ads

"This is El and I'm around town with I Decide..." During the winter of 2000-2001, this was a familiar sound on the local top 40 radio station. The I Decide teens created nine radio ads, featuring themselves in real life situations they face when making decisions about tobacco use. The imaginative, humorous and simultaneously hard-hitting spots focused on communicating anti-tobacco messages to the target audience—teens.

### Bus Ads

I Decide traveled all over Rockford...literally. In February 2001, I Decide unveiled a series of bus ads featuring area teens, health messages and direct quotes from tobacco industry documents. Research found 46 percent of teens were aware of the bus ads.

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*" I want to congratulate you on your All Smoke High commercials. As a vocal music education major, I frequently run into fellow students who smoke, and they don't realize how bad it is not only for them, but those around them. I hope that by hearing that commercial, it will make them and others think twice about smoking."*

**Elizabeth Nystedt**  
Senior, Illinois State University

### Billboards

In May 2001, a series of I Decide billboards appeared in eight locations around the county. With the I Decide teens front and center, the billboards hit hard at the fact that teens aren't letting the tobacco industry get to them or their money. The billboards reached an estimated 79 percent of the overall population.



## Web site

Since launching in December 2000, [www.idecide4me.com](http://www.idecide4me.com) has become a popular Web site for Winnebago County teens. The I Decide Web site provides the information teens need to make the right decision about tobacco use. By visiting [idecide4me.com](http://idecide4me.com), teens can join the movement, learn about the tobacco industry's manipulative tactics and the latest I Decide activities. Teens also can check out tobacco movements across the country to get new ideas. The site averages 2,400 hits per month.

*"By participation alone, the campaign was a success...Media exposure was impressive, too. The students helped create radio, television, mass transit and billboard advertising urging teens not to smoke. The highlight of the anti-tobacco campaign was a slick commercial that aired on network and cable television called 'All Smoke High'...the piece had Hollywood polish."*

*Rockford Register Star  
June 16, 2001*

The Tobacco Industry  
...Decide Not to be  
Manipulated

**TOBACCO IS THE ONLY PRODUCT THAT  
ACTUALLY KILLS ONE OUT OF EVERY  
THREE PEOPLE WHO USE IT.**



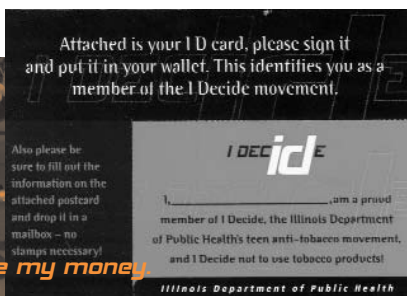
## Education

I Decide teens began recruitment efforts by holding membership drives and sending out recruitment kits to area teens and educators. The kits include information on the movement, stickers, membership cards, a T-shirt and a copy of *IDentity*, the campaign newsletter. The newsletter is published bi-monthly and includes articles written by teen panel members. More than 3,000 copies of the newsletter were distributed in the first year. An educator's version of the kit was distributed to more than 60 area schools.

In addition, I Decide visited Winnebago County schools in May and June 2001 with interactive school presentations. Conducted by I Decide teen panel members, the presentations educated teens on how and why they are targeted by big tobacco. The 10 teen presenters went through an intense, one-day training session in preparation for this program.

The presentation consisted of shocking tobacco-related statistics, video highlights from the youth summit and interactive elements such as a pizza demonstration during which the teens added toppings to a pizza using samples of the more than 4,000 chemicals found in cigarettes, such as nail polish remover, moth balls, vinegar and rat poison.

In less than two months, I Decide presentations reached approximately 1,800 Winnebago County teens.





## Advocacy

To make some long-lasting changes in the community, I Decide has contacted local restaurants and parks to ask them to voluntarily go smoke-free. The teens, in conjunction with the Winnebago County Health Department, promoted the Illinois Smoke-Free Restaurant Recognition Program by meeting with area restaurant owners and managers. The total number of participating county restaurants rose from about a dozen to nearly 70 thanks to the teens' efforts. The teens also secured the support of Rockford Mayor Doug Scott.

I Decide has been working with the Winnebago County Forest Preserve District and the Rockford Park District to identify ways to make the parks healthier for community members. The teens are developing signage for the forest preserve district designating smoke-free areas.

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*Decide to listen to myself*





## **Minority Outreach**

In addition to having an ethnically representative teen panel, the program reached out to both the Hispanic and African-American communities with targeted efforts. I Decide was featured in the local Hispanic newspaper, *El Hispano*, and was the focus of an episode of “La Vida Buena,” a half-hour talk show for the Hispanic community. Additionally, members of the teen panel presented an educational seminar at “Take Charge of Your Health,” a local minority health fair and painted a multi-cultural mural titled “Dance and Enjoy Life Without Smoking.”

***“I Decide addresses what smoking does to the body, and it affects all racial groups. I thought it was important to get out the message to the Spanish-speaking public. The young people did a super job and we received great results and feedback from the community.”***

***Gloria Cardenas Cudia  
President, Rockford Public School Board  
Co-host, “La Vida Buena”***





## Events

I Decide teens have been recruiting their peers bringing events to locations frequented by teens and talking to them about the movement. The result has been a dramatic increase in membership since October 2000. I Decide's membership has grown from 16 to more than 1,500.

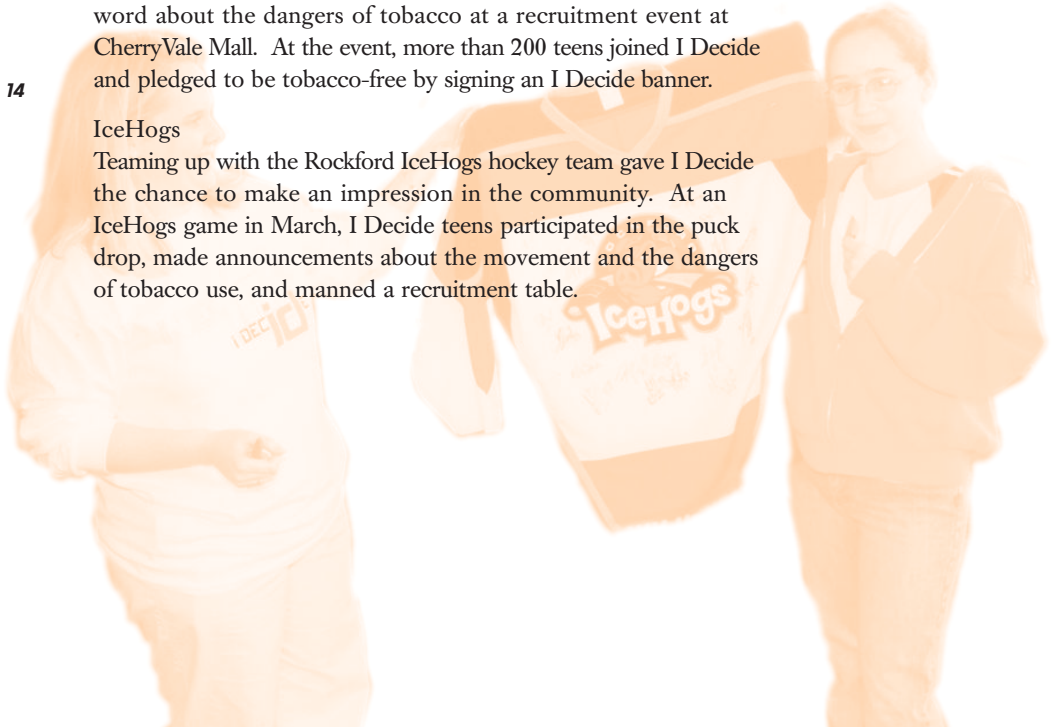
### CherryVale Mall

In February and March, I Decide joined forces with the Rockford IceHogs and local radio station WZOK-FM to spread the word about the dangers of tobacco at a recruitment event at CherryVale Mall. At the event, more than 200 teens joined I Decide and pledged to be tobacco-free by signing an I Decide banner.

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### IceHogs

Teaming up with the Rockford IceHogs hockey team gave I Decide the chance to make an impression in the community. At an IceHogs game in March, I Decide teens participated in the puck drop, made announcements about the movement and the dangers of tobacco use, and manned a recruitment table.







### Golf & Games

More than 350 Winnebago County teens came out to Golf & Games in May and June for mini-golf, bumper boats and video games. Current members and those who signed up on-site answered trivia questions posted at each hole and learned the devastating effects of tobacco.

### Memorial Day Parade

Strolling down the streets of Rockford, I Decide teens made some noise with WZOK-FM at the annual Memorial Day Parade. Lollipops that said “I Decide not to get sucked in” were handed out as part of the campaign’s community outreach. The teens also were interviewed by WZOK about tobacco use and the I Decide movement.

*“I Decide has opened my eyes to new information. I Decide has helped me realize that I should try harder to get my family and friends to quit smoking. I am really happy I joined I Decide.”*

**Kathleen Koelbl**  
**Teen Advisory Panel Member**  
**Hononegah High School, 11th grade**





## Results

Although still in its infancy, I Decide has produced tremendous results. In less than eight months, the campaign has recruited 1,500 Winnebago County teens for the I Decide movement and close to 500 community supporters of all ages. Fifty-nine percent of students surveyed in grades 8 - 12 know of the movement; 86 percent rated I Decide as “excellent” or “good.” The media also have supported the movement. I Decide secured 1.5 million print impressions and 13 television stories.

Since the inception of I Decide, awareness of the dangers of tobacco and the goals and messages of the movement have left a favorable impression among Winnebago County youth, indicating that, when it comes to spreading the word on tobacco, I Decide is on the right track. In less than one year -

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- *Seventy-two percent of students said they are aware of the “All Smoke High” commercials;*
- *Fifty percent of students reported having seen or heard an anti-tobacco commercial at least once a day; and*
- *Two-thirds of non-smokers reported that the television commercials deter them from using tobacco.*

Perhaps one of the most encouraging results of the campaign to-date is that two-thirds of high school smokers have since tried to quit - an increase of 33 percent. Similarly, two-thirds of teen smokers say they want to quit, a 50 percent increase since October 2000.

Wisconsin Department of Public Health  
www.idecide.wisconsin.gov

**TOBACCO SMOKE HAS  
401 POISONS  
AND 43 CARCINOGENIC COMPOUNDS**

**TOBACCO IS THE  
ONLY PRODUCT THAT  
ACTUALLY KILLS  
ONE OUT OF EVERY  
THREE PEOPLE  
WHO USE IT**

I Decide not to become another statistic from smoking tobacco (Ellen, 10, Jefferson High School). I Decide not to use tobacco because I don't want to smell bad (Katie, 10, Auburn High School). I Decide for my health not to use tobacco (Kendryn, 10, Jefferson High School). I Decide to my life (Caitlin, 10, Guilford High School). I Decide my path for my life (Dana, 10, South Dakota High School). I Decide to reach my goals by not smoking (Kathleen, 10, Hennepin High School). I Decide to put my life before my dad (Justin, 14, West Middle School). I Decide tobacco is not for me. I Decide to care for my life and health (Brittany, 10, Auburn High School). I Decide not to smell like an ashtray (Della, 10, Jefferson High School). I Decide for better health and a longer life (Ellen, 10, Durand High School). I Decide not to poison my lungs with tobacco. I Decide for my family, my friends and people that care about me (Devan, 10, Hennepin High School). I Decide to make the unpopular choice (Robyn, 10, Durand High School). I Decide not to smell bad. (Brendan) I will not smoke (Dyane, 10, Durand High School). I Decide for my life and my future (Betsy, 14, West Middle School). I Decide to be bath my lungs (Jessica, 10, Durand High School). I Decide not to get asked all over my sandwich (Arthur, 10, West Middle School). I Decide not to have wrinkles (Eric, 10, Guilford High School). I Decide for my future. I Decide because tobacco is weed (Steven, 10, Auburn High School). I Decide because my body odor is important to me (Smokey, 14, Holy Family Catholic School). I Decide for my future (Jill, 10, Jefferson High School). I Decide to save my life (Joseph, 10, Hennepin High School). I Decide that one bad myself can change what I do (Doreen, 10, Auburn High School). I Decide I not to get caught back (Eric, 10, Durand High School). I Decide because I... I Decide

**I Decide for my future**



## ***The Road Ahead...***

I Decide has enjoyed a memorable first year, yet there is still more work to be done. The success of the movement in Winnebago County has paved the way for IDPH to extend the I Decide movement into six additional Illinois counties. Through additional support and funding from Governor Ryan and Illinois state legislators, I Decide will expand into Champaign, Macon, McLean, Peoria, Sangamon and Tazewell counties during the 2001-2002 school year.

***"My mind keeps telling me to take one of those cigarettes, but I can't do it. I want to fit in with my friends. But ever since you guys came to our school I am a whole new person. I've changed. I don't smoke...Thank you, I Decide program. You made a difference in my life."***

***Winnebago County student***

*"I was immediately attracted to the program because young people would be determining the messages used to impact other teens. I think some fantastic, powerful ads have been created by the teen advisory panel..."*

*Kris Cohn*

*Winnebago County Board Chairman*

A composite image featuring two young women's faces on the left, a black background with orange polka dots in the center, and the "I DECIDE" logo on the right. The logo includes the website address "www.ideo4me.com".

Most 90 percent  
adult smokers  
in at or before  
age 18.

ot to get sucked in.

**I DECIDE**  
www.ideo4me.com

Illinois Department of Public Health

