

“The buck stops in Lee’s Summit for underage tobacco users.”



Lee’s Summit CARES Executive Director Roby Little explains how one prominent Missouri community branded as a ‘City of Character’ is making a real difference in the Show-Me state:

“We are making sure our youth understand that tobacco laws truly extend past the cash register. Most people know it’s against Missouri state law for boys and girls under 18 to buy cigarettes and tobacco; but many people do not realize that it’s also against the law for children to possess and use tobacco products.”

Little says, “Lee’s Summit is taking steps to protect our youth by making sure they understand that tobacco kills. We hope other cities across the state will follow our lead and close the gap between state and city statutes.”

Tobacco use continues to be the leading cause of preventable death in the United States.

From melt-in-your-mouth tobacco candy to bright pink cigarettes dubbed ‘Barbie’ smokes, outrageous new marketing tactics are hooking a new generation of children on deadly tobacco.

According to Little, “Lee’s Summit CARES is focused on underage tobacco users for a reason. Research shows that 60% of adult smokers began using tobacco before the age of 13 and 90% begin using tobacco before age 20. Tragically, many children form lifelong addictions before they can legally purchase or possess the tobacco products.”

In June 2009, President Barack Obama warned the nation of the tobacco crisis harming today’s children. “Kids today don’t just start smoking for no reason. They’re aggressively targeted as customers by the tobacco industry. They’re exposed to a constant and insidious barrage of advertising where they live, where they learn, and where they play. Most insidiously, they are offered products with flavorings that mask the taste of tobacco and make it even more tempting.”

The national crisis is also a local crisis. Based on the McCluth Missouri Student Survey used by the Lee’s Summit School District, the 2010 senior class cohort reported 38.8% of teens surveyed smoked.

Little explains, “This is an alarming 10.8% increase from when these teens were sophomores. The good news is our community is responding to this statistic and we are willing to help our youth kick the tobacco habit. This year Lee’s Summit is proud to again be named one of the best places to live in America by CNN Money Magazine. We ranked 27th in the US out of 100 cities. One reason is because our community is focused on good health and we’re a city that is determined to protect the health of our youth.”



Lee’s Summit CARES Offers Youth Free Help To Kick The Tobacco Habit.

- We educate young tobacco users about tobacco laws, health risks, and financial realities of tobacco use.
- We help young tobacco users stop using cigarettes or other forms of tobacco.

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