

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
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CONTACT: Sharon P. Sheldon, MPH  
(734-544-6781)

### Former Tobacco Research Scientist comes to Washtenaw County Schools

Victor DeNoble will be presenting *Inside the Darkside: An Insider's Look at the Truth About Tobacco Addiction* on Tuesday, April 12, 2005 at two community locations:

West Middle School, Ypsilanti 1:00 – 2:30 pm (closed event)  
Ypsilanti District Library, 5577 Whittaker Road 7:00 – 8:30 pm (community event)

Victor DeNoble, former research scientist, whistleblower and health advocate, will be sharing with 6th, 7th and 8th grade students and the community a first hand account of how the tobacco companies tried to hide the negative health effects of cigarette use and the addictive properties of tobacco.

Because 90 percent of smokers begin before the age of 20 and 60 percent of smokers begin before the age of 16, it is important to prevent as many youth as possible from starting this deadly addiction. Through Reality Check, a grant project between the Washtenaw County Public Department and Livingston County Community Alliance funded by the Michigan Department of Community Health Office of Drug Control Policy, Dr. DeNoble's presentations will increase awareness of the dangers of tobacco use among youth and adults Washtenaw and Livingston County.

Reality Check is a collaborative substance abuse prevention project with the goal of reducing favorable attitudes among youth towards alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (ATOD). There are currently five communities that have been targeted for the initial launch of the Reality Check campaign: Ypsilanti, Willow Run, Milan, Pinckney, and Howell. Reality Check is working with the middle and high school students in each of these communities to ensure that the project reflects local concerns and needs around ATOD. [Myrealitycheck.org](http://Myrealitycheck.org) is a youth directed website that speaks about ATOD in the language, jargon and attitude with which young people are most comfortable. The website is flashy, witty, colorful, briskly paced and informative. It even rewards the users with merchandise from the Reality Check Stuff Store that users earn by using the website.

Youth have said it best . . . substance abuse is not just a teen issue - it's a community issue. Youth have spoken and they want clearer messages and better direction on ATOD in their community. They want adults to take a stronger stance on ATOD use. Through Reality Check, youth, parents, businesses and the community can come together to strengthen and change community norms and reduce favorable attitudes towards ATOD. Tobacco-Free Livingston also encourages the community to pull together to reduce the use and favorable attitudes towards tobacco.