

Smoking Class

**How Schools and Channel One
Promote Tobacco to Students**



**by Gary Ruskin, executive director
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Commercial Alert

Protecting communities from commercialism

About Commercial Alert

Commercial Alert's mission is to keep the commercial culture within its proper sphere, and to prevent it from exploiting children and subverting the higher values of family, community, environmental integrity and democracy. We carry out four campaigns:

- The culture campaign seeks to stop the subversion of our culture by corporate huckstering and commercial values, and to strengthen noncommercial culture.
- The education campaign seeks to rid the nation's schools of corporate marketers, junk food peddlers and market researchers, and to banish their influence upon textbooks and curricula as well.
- The government campaign seeks to stop the commercialization of federal, state and local governments and the growth of corporate influence upon them.
- The health campaign seeks to reduce the incidence of marketing-related diseases -- such as obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and smoking-related illnesses--by promoting healthy messages and restricting the advertising of products such as tobacco, alcohol, junk food and soda pop, especially to children.

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Executive Summary

Channel One is a for-profit company that distributes a daily commercial television program to more than 30 percent of all American teenagers, or 7.7 million adolescents, in nearly 11,500 middle and high schools across the United States. In exchange for loans of TVs and other equipment, the schools agree to show the program to students nearly every school day, consuming an hour per week of school time.

Since January 1, 2000, Channel One has advertised at least 67 commercial motion pictures. Forty (59.7%) of these movies portray smoking. Such cinema portrayals of tobacco are highly effective in luring young people into the ranks of tobacco users – even more so than conventional advertising. Adolescents who see plenty of smoking on screen are nearly three times more likely to start smoking than those who see the least. It is estimated that each year smoking in movies recruits 390,000 new young smokers in the United States.

In effect, Channel One is a “Trojan Horse” for the tobacco industry inside our schools. Tobacco is the number one cause of preventable deaths in the United States, causing 435,000 fatalities each year. Yet school administrators and politicians have invited into our schools a commercial medium that promotes tobacco use, and then have arranged for captive audiences of young people to watch it.

Channel One’s airing of commercial messages promoting smoking contravenes the spirit and intention of many state laws that require schools to teach students a curriculum about the potential harms and legal ramifications of smoking.

Channel One should be expelled from every school in the country.

Introduction

Channel One is not really a channel; rather it is a television program shown to schoolchildren. The program typically lasts for at least twelve minutes, and contains news segments, quizzes, musical interludes and banter between hosts, along with at least two minutes of advertising and additional commercial material. Much of the advertising is for entertainment, such as movies, TV shows and video games, as well as foods and beverages, contact lenses and acne medications.

According to its advertising sales presentation, the Channel One Communications Corp. shows this program each school day to an average of 5.2 million students in nearly 11,500 middle and high schools across the country. Total enrollment in schools showing Channel One is 7.7 million, or more than 30 percent of American teenagers, including 3.2 million students in middle school and 4.5 million in high school.¹ Parents often are unaware that their children watch Channel One in school, because schools are not required to inform them about the show or its specific content.

“The day that I really understood the magnitude of what we were doing was when I visited a Channel One School, and I happened to walk in the building at the moment that the program was on, and you could hear the sound of the Channel One program reverberating through the hallways as every single classroom in this entire school was watching the program at the same time. And you begin to realize the power, the awesome power and the influence that Channel One has. Because that very same experience was happening in 12,000 places around the country.”

–Joel Babbit, President, Channel One³

¹ Channel One sales presentation, “Channel One News: Your Formula for Teen Connectivity,” <http://www.commercialalert.org/channelonesales.pdf>. See also Channel One’s promotional materials for its website, <http://www.commercialalert.org/channelonewebpromo.pdf>.

² Since 1990, Channel One has altered the terms in its contracts with schools. The most recent version of the Channel One contract is available at <http://www.channelonehelp.com/signup.html>.

³ Joel Babbit, “Channel One Vision,” paper presented at the On the Youth Market Conference, Boston, May 5–6, 1994. Quoted in “Children First: A Parent’s Guide to Fighting Corporate Predators.” Corporate Accountability Research Group, 1996, p. 63.

Channel One requires schools to sign a contract, which stipulates that in return for playing Channel One on at least 90 percent of school days, Channel One will loan schools a TV monitor for each classroom, a fixed-position satellite dish, two videocassette recorders, and wiring to create an in-school TV network. The contract is automatically renewed every three years; either party can abrogate the contract at any time. If a school wishes to withdraw from the contract, Channel One has the right but is not obligated to remove its equipment from the school.²

Channel One boasts to advertisers that it compels students to watch its programming. Channel One President Joel Babbit explained that: "The biggest selling point to advertisers [is]. . . we are forcing kids to watch two minutes of commercials. . . . [T]he advertiser gets a group of kids who cannot go to the bathroom, who cannot change the station, who cannot listen to their mother yell in the background, who cannot be playing Nintendo, who cannot have their headsets on."⁴

Even though Channel One operates in public schools (as well as in private and parochial schools), it does not make public a list of those schools. However, a 1993 study by Professor Michael Morgan found that Channel One's audience is skewed towards poorer and African-American students. By analyzing school data collected by Dun & Bradstreet, Morgan found that Channel One was shown in 38 percent of schools with more than 25 percent of students below the poverty line, but in only 17 percent of schools with fewer than 5 percent of students in poverty. "Also, Channel One is more often found in schools with larger proportions of African-American students," Morgan wrote.⁵

The Channel One Communications Corp. was founded by Chris Whittle and Whittle Communications in 1990. Whittle Communications sold it to K-III Communications in 1994. In 1997, K-III Communications was renamed Primedia. Primedia is majority-owned by the investment firm Kohlberg Kravis Roberts (KKR).

Over the years, Channel One has relied heavily on high-priced lobbyists to keep its programming in schools. Its most prominent Washington lobbyist has been Jack Abramoff,⁶ who was indicted in August 2005 for alleged wire fraud and conspiracy in connection with the purchase of Florida gambling boats.⁷ Abramoff and fellow Channel One lobbyist (and former Christian Coalition executive director) Ralph Reed⁸ have been subjects of countless news articles during the last year regarding the receipt of \$66 million in lobbying funds from six Native American tribes.⁹

Tobacco Use: Onset and Health Effects

Smoking is the #1 cause of preventable deaths in the United States. It is responsible for 435,000 premature deaths each year.¹⁰

Smoking is a social behavior learned in childhood or adolescence, mostly through observation and imitation of role models, friends and family. Nearly ninety percent of U.S. smokers begin at age eighteen or younger.¹¹

⁴ Joel Babbit, "Channel One Vision," paper presented at the On the Youth Market Conference, Boston, May 5-6, 1994. Quoted in "Children First: A Parent's Guide to Fighting Corporate Predators." Corporate Accountability Research Group, 1996, p. 64.

⁵ Michael Morgan, "Channel One in the Public Schools: Widening the Gaps." October, 1993. <http://www.cs.unm.edu/~refromsn/tv/One>. See also Gary Putka, "Whittle TV News, Poorer Districts Linked in Study," *Wall Street Journal*, October 19, 1993.

⁶ See, for example, Shawn Zeller, "When You Wish Upon a Star." *National Journal*, January 27, 2001.

⁷ James Grimaldi, "Abramoff Indicted in Casino Boat Purchase; Lobbyist, Associate Charged With Fraud." *Washington Post*, August 12, 2005.

⁸ See, for example, Matthew Continetti, "A Decade of Reed; One Republican's Long, Lucrative March Through the Institutions." *Weekly Standard*, June 27, 2005. Peter Stone, "Go-To Guy." *National Journal*, July 17, 2004.

⁹ See, for example, Susan Schmidt and James Grimaldi, "Panel Says Abramoff Laundered Tribal Funds; McCain Cites Possible Fraud by Lobbyist." *Washington Post*, June 23, 2005. David Brooks, "Masters of Sleaze," *New York Times*, March 22, 2005.

¹⁰ "Annual Smoking-Attributable Mortality, Years of Potential Life Lost, and Economic Costs --- United States, 1995-1999." *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, April 12, 2002, 51(14):300-3, <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5114a2.htm>.

¹¹ "Tobacco Use Among Youth," Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, based on data in the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, 2001, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Effect of movie smoking exposure on smoking initiation in all participants [aged 10-14 years], and the interaction between movie smoking exposure and parental smoking in relation to smoking initiation

Quartile of movie smoking exposure

	1	2	3	4
All participants	1.00	2.02 (1.27-3.20)	2.16 (1.38-3.40)	2.71 (1.73-4.25)
Parental smoking				
Non-smoker	1.00	2.32 (1.21-4.45)	2.64 (1.39-5.01)	4.08 (2.19-7.61)
Smoker	2.84 (1.28-6.29)	4.77 (2.41-9.44)	4.64 (2.43-8.87)	4.74 (2.49-9.02)

Values are relative risks (95% CI) adjusted for time between surveys and the following baseline characteristics: grade, sex, school, friend smoking, sibling smoking, parent smoking, receptivity to tobacco promotions, school performance, sensation-seeking propensity, rebelliousness, self esteem, parent education, authoritative parenting, and perception of parental disapproval of smoking. Reprinted with permission. Source: Madeline A. Dalton, James D. Sargent, Michael L. Beach, Linda Titus-Ernstoff, Jennifer J. Gibson, M. Bridget Ahrens, Jennifer J. Tickle, Todd F. Heatherton, "Effect of Viewing Smoking in Movies on Adolescent Smoking Initiation: A Cohort Study." *The Lancet*, July 26, 2003. 362(9380):281-5. <http://image.thelancet.com/extras/03art1353web.pdf>.

Smoking in Movies Is the Most Potent Way to Recruit New Smokers

It is estimated that smoking in movies recruits more than 390,000 adolescents to smoke cigarettes each year, and 120,000 will ultimately die from tobacco-related heart and lung disease or cancer.¹²

There is conclusive evidence that exposure to on-screen smoking in movies recruits more new young smokers than any other factor.¹³ The relationship between viewing smoking in movies and adolescent smoking displays a classic "dose-response" pattern: the more exposure adolescents receive, the more likely they are to start smoking.

The most productive, peer-reviewed research in this area has been conducted by a team at Dartmouth Medical School, which studied the effects of smoking in movies on adolescent smoking initiation. They found that young people aged 10-14 are more likely to start smoking as they experience more smoking in mainstream movies. "Viewing smoking in movies strongly predicts whether or not adolescents initiate smoking. . . . Adolescents who viewed the most smoking in movies were almost three times more likely to initiate smoking than those with the least amount of exposure," the Dartmouth team concluded.¹⁴

¹² Stanton A. Glantz, "Smoking in Movies, A Major Problem and a Real Solution." *The Lancet*, July 26, 2003;362(9380):258-9.

¹³ The best source for information about the public health effects of smoking in movies is the Smoke Free Movies website, at <http://smokefreemovies.ucsf.edu/>. Smoke Free Movies is a project of Stanton A. Glantz, PhD, professor of medicine at the University of California, San Francisco, and director of the UCSF Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education.

¹⁴ Madeline A. Dalton, James D. Sargent, Michael L. Beach, Linda Titus-Ernstoff, Jennifer J. Gibson, M. Bridget Ahrens, Jennifer J. Tickle, Todd F. Heatherton, "Effect of Viewing Smoking in Movies on Adolescent Smoking Initiation: A Cohort Study." *The Lancet*, July 26, 2003. 362(9380):281-5. <http://image.thelancet.com/extras/03art1353web.pdf>. See also Janet M. Distefan, Elizabeth A. Gilpin, James D. Sargent and John P. Pierce, "Do Movie Stars Encourage Adolescents to Start Smoking? Evidence from California." *Preventive Medicine*, January 1999, 28(1):1-11. Jennifer J. Tickle, James D. Sargent, Madeline A. Dalton, Michael L. Beach and Todd F. Heatherton, "Favourite Movie Stars, Their Tobacco Use in Contemporary Movies, and Its Association with Adolescent Smoking." *Tobacco Control*, March, 2001;10(1):16-22. Cornelia Pechmann and Chuan-Fong Shih, "Smoking Scenes in Movies and Anti-Smoking Ads before Movies: Effects on Youth." *Journal of Marketing*, 1999, 63: 1-13. Madeline A. Dalton, M. Bridget Ahrens, James D. Sargent, Leila A. Mott, Michael L. Beach, Jennifer J. Tickle, Todd F. Heatherton, "Relation Between Parental Restrictions on Movies and Adolescent Use of Tobacco and Alcohol." *Effective Clinical Practice*, January-February 2002, 5(1):1-10. James D. Sargent, Madeline A. Dalton, Michael L. Beach, Leila A. Mott, Jennifer J. Tickle, M. Bridget Ahrens, Todd F. Heatherton, "Viewing Tobacco Use in Movies: Does It Shape Attitudes That Mediate Adolescent Smoking?" *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, April, 2002, 22(3):137-45.

The effect is so powerful that it explains 52 percent of smoking initiation among U.S. adolescents. Indeed, a separate study also suggests that tobacco appearances in movies are more effective in recruiting new smokers than traditional tobacco advertising and promotions.¹⁵

Why Tobacco Product Appearances in Movies Have Such a Strong Effect on Adolescents

Tobacco advertising was banned on U.S. television and radio stations in 1971. Following the 1998 multi-state tobacco settlement, and other legal restrictions, tobacco companies have been constrained regarding how they can advertise to children. Sports sponsorships have been curtailed. Tobacco products can no longer be advertised in much of the so-called "environmental media" (billboards and transit) and advertising in magazines with significant youth readership is also restricted. While tobacco companies persist in challenging restrictions on their traditional advertising channels, tobacco appearances in movies remains a uniquely potent influence on the age group most susceptible to smoking initiation.

Market researchers have found that the effectiveness of product placements generally depends on which character uses the product, and how it is used. Adolescents often imitate the example of role models, and aspirational imagery is especially influential. For example, if a star uses a brand on screen, and the brand is shown in a positive light, this is best for promoting sales. Most famously, for example, sales for Reese's Pieces jumped 65% after the principal character used the candy in the movie, *E.T.*¹⁶ A study by the Dartmouth team found that adolescents whose favorite stars smoked in recent films were up to sixteen times more likely to take a positive attitude toward smoking, in turn a predictor that they would initiate smoking in the future.¹⁷

Tobacco Documents Emphasize the Importance of Tobacco Imagery in Movies

Scores of internal tobacco industry documents highlight the power of tobacco product appearances in movies. For example, in 1972, a movie production executive wrote to RJ Reynolds Tobacco: "Movies are better than any commercial that has been run on television or any magazine," he boasted, "because the audience *is totally unaware of any sponsor involvement.*"¹⁸ (Emphasis supplied). In the 1980's, a top Philip Morris executive told his marketing troops that keeping tobacco on screen was the key to keeping it socially acceptable and overcoming health concerns.¹⁹ A 1989 Philip Morris marketing plan stated: "We believe that most of the strong, positive images for cigarettes and smoking are created by cinema and television."²⁰ In fact, tobacco industry documents show that Philip Morris, RJ Reynolds and other tobacco companies invested millions of dollars

¹⁵ James D. Sargent, Michael L. Beach, Madeline A. Dalton, Leila A. Mott, Jennifer J. Tickle, M. Bridget Ahrens and Todd Heatherton, "Effect of Seeing Tobacco Use in Films on Trying Smoking Among Adolescents: Cross Sectional Study." *British Medical Journal*, December 15, 2001, 323:1-6, <http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/323/7326/1394>.

¹⁶ Vernon Scott, "E.T. Invades Five More Continents." *United Press International*, November 2, 1982.

¹⁷ Jennifer J. Tickle, James D. Sargent, Madeline A. Dalton, Michael L. Beach and Todd F. Heatherton, "Favourite Movie Stars, Their Tobacco Use in Contemporary Movies, and Its Association with Adolescent Smoking." *Tobacco Control*, March, 2001;10(1):16-22.

¹⁸ <http://legacy.library.ucsf.edu/cgi/getdoc?tid=y1m89d00&fmt=pdf&ref=results>. See also Stanton Glantz, "Smoking in Teenagers and Watching Films Showing Smoking." *British Medical Journal*, December 15, 2001. 323:1378-1379, <http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/323/7326/1378>.

¹⁹ In a speech to marketers, Hamish Maxwell, president of Philip Morris International, said: "Smoking is being positioned as an unfashionable, as well as unhealthy, custom. We must use every creative means at our disposal to reverse this destructive trend. I do feel heartened at the increasing number of occasions when I go to a movie and see a pack of cigarettes in the hands of the leading lady. This is in sharp contrast to the state of affairs just a few years ago when cigarettes rarely showed up on camera. We must continue to exploit new opportunities to get cigarettes on screen and into the hands of smokers."
<http://legacy.library.ucsf.edu/cgi/getdoc?tid=nyz24e00&fmt=gif&ref=results&title=DRAFT%20SPEECH%20FOR%20HAMISH%20MAXWELL,%20MARKETING%20MEETING,%20000624& Bates=2021285680/5697>

²⁰ Quoted in Curt Mekemson and Stanton Glantz, "How the Tobacco Industry Built Its Relationship With Hollywood." *Tobacco Control*, March 2002, 11 Suppl 1:181-91, http://tc.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/11/suppl_1/i81.

Movies Advertised on Channel One, January 2000-May 2005

Movie Name	Date Advertised	MPAA Rating	Tobacco	Screenit Rating
The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants	5/31/05	PG	Y	2
Robots	3/11/05	PG	Y	1
Coach Carter	1/14/05	PG-13	Y	2
The Phantom of the Opera	1/10/05	PG-13	Y	2
Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events	12/14/04	PG	N	0
Napoleon Dynamite	11/30/04	PG	N	0
Christmas With The Kranks	11/16/04	PG	Y	1
The Polar Express	11/15/04	G	N	0
New York Minute	5/3/04	PG	N	0
Harry Potter & The Prisoner of Azkaban	4/29/04	PG	N	0
Mean Girls	4/21/04	PG-13	N	0
13 Going On 30	4/19/04	PG-13	Y	1
Scooby-Doo 2: Monsters Unleashed	3/29/04	PG	Y	1
Starsky & Hutch	3/25/04	PG-13	Y	3
Ella Enchanted	3/23/04	PG	N	0
50 First Dates	2/12/04	PG-13	N	0
Miracle	2/6/04	PG	N	0
You Got Served	1/29/04	PG-13	Y	2
Secondhand Lions	9/8/03	PG	Y	2
X2	5/8/03	PG-13	Y	2
Holes	4/4/03	PG	Y	2
What A Girl Wants	3/25/03	PG	Y	1
Agent Cody Banks	2/27/03	PG	N	0
Kangaroo Jack	1/17/03	PG	N	0
Drumline	12/13/02	PG-13	N	0
Mr. Deeds	11/21/02	PG-13	Y	2
Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights	11/19/02	PG-13	N	0
Harry Potter And The Chamber of Secrets	10/14/02	PG	N	0
The Tuxedo	9/27/02	PG-13	Y	2
Stealing Harvard	9/13/02	PG-13	Y	3
Star Wars: Episode II - Attack Of The Clones	5/16/02	PG	N	0
The New Guy	5/9/02	PG-13	N	0
Spider-Man	5/3/02	PG-13	Y	1
The Rookie	3/29/02	G	Y	1
The Time Machine	3/7/02	PG-13	Y	1
Rollerball	2/6/02	PG-13	Y	2
A Walk To Remember	1/9/02	PG	N	0
Kate & Leopold	12/16/01	PG-13	Y	2
Harry Potter And The Sorcerer's Stone	11/8/01	PG	Y	1
K-Pax	10/26/01	PG-13	Y	1
Cats & Dogs	6/4/01	PG	N	0
Dr. Dolittle 2	5/30/01	PG	N	0
Pearl Harbor	5/24/01	PG-13	Y	2
The Animal	5/24/01	PG-13	Y	1
Planet Of The Apes	5/22/01	PG-13	Y	1
Lara Croft: Tomb Raider	5/21/01	PG-13	Y	1
A. I. -- Artificial Intelligence	5/1/01	PG-13	N	0
Joe Dirt	4/11/01	PG-13	Y	1
Josie And The Pussycats	4/5/01	PG-13	N	0
Spy Kids	3/29/01	PG	N	0
Get Over It	3/22/01	PG-13	Y	1
See Spot Run	3/2/01	PG	N	0
Monkeybone	2/22/01	PG-13	Y	1
Head Over Heels	2/1/01	PG-13	N	0
Antitrust	1/11/01	PG-13	N	0
Dude, Where's My Car?	12/13/00	PG-13	Y	1
102 Dalmatians	11/21/00	G	Y	1
Charlie's Angels	11/10/00	PG-13	Y	3
Pay It Forward	10/19/00	PG-13	Y	1
Remember The Titans	9/28/00	PG	N	0
Jaws (TV Version)	5/5/00	PG	Y	2
Nutty Professor II: The Klumps	5/1/00	PG-13	Y	1
Romy and Michele's High School Reunion (TV version)	4/1/00	R	Y	3
My Best Friend's Wedding (TV version)	4/1/00	PG-13	Y	2
Mission To Mars	3/10/00	PG	Y	1
Jungle 2 Jungle (TV version)	2/18/00	PG	Y	1
Supernova	1/14/00	PG-13	N	0

from the early 1970s to at least the mid-1990s to place specific brands and highlight smoking in Hollywood movies and the film-making community.²¹

Methodology

Jim Metrock, president of Obligation, Inc.,²² reviewed tapes of Channel One programs since January 1, 2000, and compiled a list of movies advertised on Channel One. He did not have access to tapes of every Channel One program shown in schools, so the list of movies advertised on Channel One may be incomplete. Some of the movies were advertised on several school days.

To confirm the list of movies advertised, Commercial Alert sent a letter to Channel One on May 25, 2005, requesting a list of movies advertised on Channel One since January 1, 2000.²³ We also enclosed our list of movies advertised on Channel One, and asked them to point out any errors. Channel One did not respond.

Smoking content in movies shown on Channel One was assessed using Screenit²⁴ ratings. Screenit is a website for parents that reviews new movies and rates them for a variety of content, including smoking. Screenit defines smoking content as "Any scenes where characters smoke (cigarettes, cigars, pipes) are noted." Screenit rates content of interest on a five-point scale:

EXTREME [5] – The movie is full of such scenes in the category. The "Die Hard" type action films (with lots of shooting and deaths) are usually extreme in the violence category.

HEAVY [4] – Many scenes in the category. Steady drinking and frequent drunken behavior throughout a movie would be rated this way, as would profanity with at least 1 use of the "f" word.

MODERATE [3] – More than just occasional scenes in the category. This rating may raise a warning flag for you.

MILD [2] – Many incidents such as 3 "s" words or students smoking several times during the movie.

MINOR [1] – Just a few incidents, or ones with little or no impact.

NONE [0] – No content at all in this category.²⁵

Tobacco Appearances in Movies Advertised on Channel One

Since January 1, 2000, Channel One has advertised at least 67 movies in schools. Forty (59.7%) of the films advertised by Channel One featured tobacco imagery.

Of the 67 movies Channel One has advertised to students since January 1, 2000, four movies (4/67 or 6%) had a Screenit rating of three for smoking content, fourteen movies (14/67 or 21%) had a Screenit rating of two, and twenty-two movies (22/67 or 33%) or had a Screenit rating of one.

Stars who used tobacco on screen in movies advertised on Channel One include Drew Barrymore (Charlie's Angels), Hugh Jackman (X2), LL Cool J (Rollerball), Eddie Murphy (Nuttu Professor II: The Klumps), Tim Robbins (Mission to Mars), Julia Roberts (My Best Friend's Wedding), Meg Ryan (Kate and Leopold), Adam Sandler (Mr. Deeds) and Kyra Sedgwick (Secondhand Lions).

²¹ A useful summary of these payments is available on the Smoke Free Movies website, at <http://smokefreemovies.ucsf.edu/problem/big-tobacco.html>.

²² Obligation Inc. is a nonprofit organization devoted to "reminding businesses and governments of their responsibility to children." For more information, see their website at <http://www.obligation.org/>.

²³ See Appendix #1.

²⁴ <http://www.screenit.com/>.

²⁵ <http://www.screenit.com/subscribers/help.asp>.

Discussion

Since January 1, 2000, schools and Channel One have repeatedly exposed captive audiences comprising 30 percent of America's teenagers to advertisements for movies featuring smoking imagery. Countless students have responded to the ads by attending the movies advertised, and have seen the tobacco use portrayed. It is likely that some of these students have become tobacco users because of the smoking imagery; in the future, nearly a third of them will die from tobacco-caused disease. In effect, Channel One is a "Trojan Horse" for the tobacco industry inside our schools.

There is no indication that Channel One has ever warned anyone – including school administrators, teachers, students, or parents – that it advertises movies with content that powerfully promotes smoking. This failure to warn is a breach of Channel One's obligations to students, parents and school board members.

Many states require schools to teach students about the health effects and legal implications of smoking.²⁶ For example, Illinois requires schools to teach students the "medical and legal ramifications of ...tobacco use;"²⁷ Pennsylvania requires that high school students must be instructed about the "prevention of ...tobacco abuse;"²⁸ Louisiana requires "Every secondary school" to "provide instruction in ...tobacco...abuse prevention and education;"²⁹ Indiana requires "Each school corporation" to "include in its curriculum...the effects of ...tobacco...on the human body;"³⁰ and New Jersey requires every school district board to establish a "comprehensive program of prevention" of student tobacco use.³¹ Channel One's commercial messages that promote smoking contravene the spirit and intention of these and other state laws requiring school-based health programs and anti-tobacco education.

It is a form of discrimination that Channel One's pro-tobacco commercial messages are targeted towards higher proportions of poorer and African-American children. This is plainly a civil rights issue. Poorer and African-American children already have worse health status and shorter life expectancies. These children do not need – and should not have to withstand – this discrimination, and its health jeopardy, as a condition of attending public schools.

The findings in this report make a strong case for expelling Channel One from all schools across the country. Commercial Alert and many other progressive, conservative and public health organizations have urged Members of Congress, state legislators and school board members to remove Channel One from our nation's schools because it misuses the compulsory attendance laws to force children to watch commercial advertising, wastes school time, promotes violent entertainment, wastes tax dollars spent on schools, transmits the wrong values to children, harms children's health, corrupts the integrity of public education, and substitutes television for reading. For more information, see Commercial Alert's web page on Channel One.³²

²⁶ For a useful review of state school health laws and policies, see the National Association of State Boards of Education website at: http://www.nasbe.org/HealthySchools/States/State_Policy.asp.

²⁷ § 105 Illinois Compiled Statutes 110/3.

²⁸ 22 Pennsylvania Administrative Code § 4.23.

²⁹ Louisiana Revised Statutes § 17:154.

³⁰ Indiana Code § 20-10.1-4-5.

³¹ New Jersey Administrative Code § 6A:16-3.1.

³² http://www.commercialalert.org/issues-landing.php?subcategory_id=32&category=2.

How to Remove Channel One from Your Children's Schools, and Schools in Your State

There's plenty you can do to make sure that Channel One and its pro-smoking messages are not shown to your children in school:

Step #1: Find out if Channel One is in your children's schools.

Contact your children's teachers or school administrators. Ask them if your children's school shows Channel One.

Step #2: Learn more about Channel One.

If Channel One is in your children's school, find out more about Channel One. Two great resources are the websites for Commercial Alert (www.commercialalert.org) and Obligation Inc. (www.obligation.org).³³

Step #3: Tell your elected officials to remove Channel One from your schools.

Send copies of this report to your local school board members and state legislators. Explain to them that Channel One is showing commercial messages that promote smoking to captive audiences of schoolchildren, and ask them to remove Channel One from all the schools in your school district and state.

Step #4: Build a local coalition against Channel One.

Talk to other parents in your children's school and school district. Get your local pediatricians, doctors, nurses and other health officials involved. Set up meetings between your local coalition and your school board members and state legislators.

Step #5: Get help and advice if you need it.

We want to help you. If you need advice or assistance in removing Channel One from your child's school district or from your state, give Commercial Alert a call at (503) 235-8012.

³³ See especially http://www.commercialalert.org/issuesarticle.php?article_id=36&subcategory_id=32&category=2 and http://www.commercialalert.org/issues-landing.php?subcategory_id=32&category=2.



protecting communities
from commercialism

4110 SE Hawthorne Blvd. #123
Portland, OR 97214-5246

TEL 503.235.8012
FAX 503.235.5073

May 25, 2005

info@commercialalert.org
www.commercialalert.org

Ms. Judy L. Harris
President and CEO
Channel One Communications Corp.
1440 Broadway, 17th Fl.
New York, NY 10018

RE: Movies advertised on Channel One

Dear Ms. Harris:

Congratulations on your appointment as president and chief executive officer of Channel One Communications Corp.

As you know, Channel One shows its programming and advertisements in thousands of public schools across the country. As such, it has a responsibility to those schools and to millions of parents to be open and transparent about its activities in taxpayer-funded school classrooms. We hope and expect that you will take this responsibility seriously.

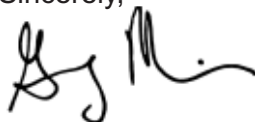
In light of your responsibility to public schools and parents, we request a complete list of movies that Channel One has advertised since January 1, 2000. If you are unwilling to provide such a list, then at a minimum please confirm that Channel One has advertised the following movies since January 1, 2000. If Channel One did not advertise any particular movie on the list below, please notify us in writing by June 10, 2005.

50 First Dates
102 Dalmatians
Adam Sandler's 8 Crazy Nights
Agent Cody Banks
A. I.
The Animal
Antitrust
A Walk To Remember

Charlie's Angels
Christmas with the Kranks
The Core
Dodgeball (advertised on channelone.com)
Drumline
Dude, Where's My Car?
Ella Enchanted
Get Over It
Harry Potter I
Jaws (TV movie)
Joe Dirt
Josie And The Pussycats
Jungle 2 Jungle (TV movie)
Kangaroo Jack
Lara Croft – Tomb Raider
The Loser (advertised on channelone.com)
Max Keeble's Big Move
The Medallion
Mission To Mars
Monkeybone
Mulan (TV movie)
My Best Friend's Wedding (TV movie)
The New Guy
Pay It Forward
Pearl Harbor
Planet Of The Apes
Polar Express
Remember The Titans
Robots
Rollerball
Romy and Michele's High School Reunion (TV movie)
Scooby Doo 2
See Spot Run
The Sisterhood Of The Traveling Pants
Spiderman
Spy Kids
Starsky and Hutch
Star Wars – Attack Of The Clones
Stealing Harvard
Supernova
The Time Machine
The Tuxedo
Windtalkers
X2: X-Men United

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary Ruskin". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Gary Ruskin
Executive Director