

Cigarettes Threaten the Future of Students

Despite laws and education, too many teens are endangering their health

By ANDREW SMITH

The year is 1970. Every commercial seen on television seems to be for a certain brand of cigarettes, a Newport add here, a Marlboro add there. There are no warnings on a pack of cigarettes noting that the product may kill whoever breathes in its harmful contents. Cigarette smoking is the popular thing to do, and regulations on the age limit are rarely enforced. Young teenagers have no trouble going to a corner store and buying a fresh pack of Winston brand cigarettes.

Fast forward to the year of 2006, a new century, and a new view on cigarettes.

Now, because of lawsuits, cigarettes have been removed from television since the year 1971. The Surgeon General now has a warning placed on every type of cigarette product telling the consumer that this product may kill the smoker, in the kindest wording possible. Now, the corner stores, Seven-Eleven's, and Wawa's everywhere, must card anyone who appears to be under the age of thirty.

But this does not mean everything is resolved on the topic of cigarettes. Kids still find ways to buy cigarettes. Many kids in what seem to be nice, ordinary neighborhoods are smoking.

Quakertown students on the school bus

can often see their very own classmates smoking a cigarette only a block away from school. Cigarette at 7:25, first period class at 7:35. It is like this in schools all around the nation, not just in urban settings, as many people think.

The Anti-Smoking Team at Quakertown High School tries to discourage kids from smoking by enlightening them with the facts about cigarettes. Many times, it seems as though kids do not know that they are writing their own suicide note. Cigarettes contain 69 chemicals known to cause cancer. Furthermore, in America, 8.6 million people have at least one serious illness that was caused by cigarettes.

Some people say that children need to talk to their parents about the hazards of smoking, but how are children supposed to listen to parents who have smoked in the past or who still smoke?

In retrospect, education of about the dangers of smoking has greatly increased over the past 35 years. The Anti-Smoking Team at Quakertown High School tries to spread the knowledge about the negatives of smoking, and there are only negatives. Millions of children all over the country smoke cigarettes not knowing what is at stake when they smoke: their futures.