

STUDENTS TAKE ACTION

Establishing Smoke-Free Zones

In Mexico, Missouri, teacher Diana Henage's Project Citizen students are thinking ahead. They know that secondhand cigarette smoke can cause many health problems. Because they don't want people in their community to get sick, these students are working to make all restaurants in the city smoke-free.

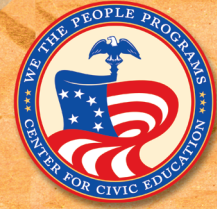
Community Connection While researching the effects of secondhand smoke, students learned that it can cause serious health problems. The students also learned that smoke-free restaurants pay less in maintenance and cleaning costs and that chain restaurants that become smoke-free do not lose business. This was good marketing news for the restaurant managers with whom students spoke.

Taking Action The students next partnered with the Audrain County Team, a group that works against substance abuse, to help get their message out to the community. In a brochure that they wrote and distributed to medical offices, they included some of these facts, such as, "If you sit in a restaurant for two hours that allows smoking, you have smoked two cigarettes!" and information about cancer risks. In addition to their brochure, the students recorded radio announcements, wrote articles for the local newspaper, created anti-smoking stickers for restaurants to put on customers' bills, and visited smoke-free restaurants to award "thank you" certificates. The students' work continues; they hope that the City Council will pass a law banning smoking in all city restaurants. As they work toward that goal, the teens are collecting signatures in support of the law, drafting a sample law for the council, and informing local company owners that smoking may be bad for business.



Students in Mexico, Missouri, are fighting secondhand smoke.

PROJECT Citizen



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Project Citizen

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SERVICE LEARNING

1. How did students work with business owners to achieve their goals? Why was this cooperation important?
2. Is smoking allowed in public places in your community? How do you feel about this?