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## *For Immediate Release*

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# Alden High School Students Participate in Anti-Tobacco Youth Summit

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## ***Vow to Help Make Their Generation Tobacco Free***

Buffalo, NY August 4 -- Alden High School students participated in a New York State (NYS) summit in July to learn ways they can make their school and community tobacco free. The conference was sponsored by Reality Check, a teen-led, adult-run program which seeks to decrease tobacco use among young people throughout New York State.

"The tobacco industry uses tactics like in-store placement and smoking in movies to target teens and get them to start smoking. 90% of people who become long-term smokers start before their 18th birthday," said Lindsay Amico, the Reality Check Coordinator for Tobacco-Free Erie-Niagara.<sup>1</sup> "The Youth Summit really drove this point home for kids, and reinforced the idea that they can make a difference in creating a tobacco-free generation."

The conference was held at Colgate University in Hamilton, NY, an area surrounded by rolling hills and natural beauty. By day, teens participated in seminars on public speaking, enforcing tobacco-free policies, and planning anti-tobacco campaigns. Evening activities, as well as a 200-person-long selfie chain demanding mandatory R-ratings for movies with smoking, topped off the event.

"I want to be a part of creating a tobacco-free generation because it's killing young people. I don't see a way for us to move forward if things keep going on like this," said Grace Bailey, an Alden High School student.

Bailey and her Reality Check group have their work cut out for them. Although NYS youth smoking rates are at their lowest recorded rates, 12,900 youth under 18 become new daily smokers each year and 107,000 NYS high school students currently smoke.<sup>2</sup>

***Contact Lindsay Amico ([lindsay.amico@roswellpark.org](mailto:lindsay.amico@roswellpark.org) or 845-2920) to start a Reality Check program at your school.***

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1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Preventing Tobacco Use

Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2012 [accessed 2015 Jul 30].

## 2. New York State Department of Health

### ***About Tobacco-Free Western New York***

Tobacco-Free Western New York, funded by the New York Tobacco Control Program, engages community stakeholders and youth to change policies and norms about tobacco and tobacco use. Community Engagement and Reality Check Youth Engagement Coordinators offer tobacco prevention and control programs in Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Livingston, Niagara, Orleans and Wyoming counties. Get more information at [wnytobaccofree.com](http://wnytobaccofree.com) or by calling 845-1300, X4207.

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