

# children's HEALTH

## New Approach Targets Underlying Causes Of Teen Smoking

(NAPSA)—A sophisticated, high-tech twist on the old saying, “where there’s smoke, there’s fire,” may prove to be a promising new weapon in the battle to stop teen smoking, as well as other dangerous risks faced by America’s children. Rather than focusing on the health risks or the physical aspects of nicotine addiction, this new approach focuses on helping teens work through the underlying anxieties, depression, peer issues and personal problems that lead to their smoking in the first place.

Based on 120 years of work with kids, the national children’s crisis charity KidsPeace developed a Web site, [www.TeenCentral.net](http://www.TeenCentral.net), which helps older children and teens to deal with the pressures and crises of growing up. The new Quit Smoking section of the site gives practical, step-by-step guidelines and activities to help teens break the emotional and psychological bonds that tie them to smoking, such as depression or the failure to fit in. This is a key aspect that warnings, nicotine patches or gum simply can’t address.

“This new approach holds tremendous promise because it works on the total child,” said KidsPeace President and CEO C.T. O’Donnell II. “Because it offers concrete methods to physically quit smoking, along with clinical advice that addresses the emotional need to smoke, the new Quit Smoking section of TeenCentral.net will work to save the minds and bodies of today’s children.”

The Quit Smoking section of TeenCentral.net provides practical information and activities to help



**Rather than addressing health issues, a new program is focusing on why teens start smoking.**

teens identify what may have led to smoking, such as peer pressure, depression or low self-esteem. These issues can then be tackled in TeenCentral.net’s main pages.

This new and more complete approach to stopping smoking includes many interactive and enjoyable activities for teens. From a special calculator that helps teens compute how much money they waste buying cigarettes to daily activities and exercises to personal progress journals to facts about smoking and nicotine addiction, the site offers help and reinforcement to break the habit.

The site even allows teens to take a survey about their smoking habits and compare their results with others from across the globe. The survey has revealed that rebellion is the number-one motivator for starting smoking, followed by curiosity and peer pressure. Teens revealed that health is the prime reason for wanting to stop smoking, followed by the high cost of cigarettes and wanting to perform bet-

ter in physical activities.

One of the most helpful sections of the site is the story-sharing component. Teens can enter stories of their daily struggles and successes and read the similar stories of others. Trained KidsPeace clinicians respond with advice for the writer.

“TeenCentral.net’s Quit Smoking initiative, coupled with its general advice on issues teens face every day, ensures we are helping teens face their issues comprehensively,” said Ginger Papp and Julius Licata, co-managers of TeenCentral.net.

TeenCentral.net, which is receiving some two million hits a month and has helped teens from 70 countries, every state in America and U.S. military bases overseas, focuses on providing teens with an individualized, safe resource while maintaining their anonymity. Through a revolutionary “profile builder,” the site identifies kids’ demographics and problem issues and associates them with a nontraceable code name. The site then identifies appropriate resources, information and stories to help kids with their unique issues. Helpful information is provided on topics including parents’ divorce, family problems, violence and losing someone close, depression, alcohol and drugs, peer pressure and personal problems.

*KidsPeace is a 120-year-old charity dedicated to giving help, hope and healing to children facing crises such as traumas, depression and the stresses of modern life. For information, visit [www.kidspeace.org](http://www.kidspeace.org).*