

# Healthy Cabarrus *Teen Task Force* 2005– 2006 Accomplishments

## \* **“Be EMPOWERED!” campaign**



The Teen Task Force completed a yearlong project of creating and implementing “Be EMPOWERED” campaigns in the high schools. The campaigns encouraged teens to make the right choices in life, particularly as they relate to alcohol, drugs, tobacco, and respecting themselves and others. Giant banners were hung in the schools and were filled with pictures, pledge cards, and signatures of students who pledged



to be “Be EMPOWERED to make the right choices in everyday life.” Red EMPOWERED wristbands were distributed to the students. Signs were posted throughout the schools and daily announcements were made encouraging students: To set goals and reach them; To say NO to drugs; To respect yourself and others; To pass on grass; To not smoke or use tobacco; To not bully or be bullied; To think for yourself; To not drink alcohol; and To stick to what you believe. The campaigns were hosted prior to the school proms. The campaign received media coverage from Cabarrus Health Alliance’s TV show and in local newspapers including the Independent Tribune and Cabarrus Neighbors.

## \* **Met with Concord Police**

The Teen Task Force met with Concord Police Chief of Police, Merle Hamilton, and Sgt. O’Donnell from the narcotics division, to learn about drug and alcohol use among teens in our community.

## \* **Video – “SMASHED: Toxic Tales of Teens & Alcohol**

The Teen Task Force viewed this documentary video that was filmed at the University of Maryland’s Shock Trauma Center. The video features teens that were involved in accidents due to drinking alcohol and follows their progress as they work to recover from their injuries. Task force members became aware that even when not fatal, many injuries result in permanent brain damage, paralysis, and other lifelong disabilities that have profound effects on the teens as well as their families and friends.

## \* **The Teen Tobacco Use Prevention Grant Award**

At the March 2005 meeting, task force members participated in a focus group discussing teen tobacco use and ideas for teen tobacco use prevention and cessation. The purpose was to assist Cabarrus Health Alliance in applying for a grant to begin a Teen Tobacco Use Prevention and Cessation program in our schools. The grant award was announced in December 2005 and the Cabarrus Health Alliance began the program in the 2006-2007 school year.

## \* **Teen Talk – telephone health information service – 1-800-650-TEEN**

Teen Talk brochures were distributed this school year for all 16,000 middle and high school students. Teen Talk is available 24 hours a day seven days a week and provides confidential and anonymous access to recorded health messages or to a nurse for questions. The list of topics and directions for calling can be accessed at [www.callteentalk.com](http://www.callteentalk.com).