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**REALITY CHECK IS ONE STEP CLOSER TO ITS GOAL—  
TO REMOVE SMOKING FROM YOUTH-RATED MOVIES**

Syracuse, NY—Reality Check of Onondaga and Cayuga Counties, a program of Prevention Network, is thrilled to be one step closer to the goal of removing smoking from youth-rated movies. The MPAA (Motion Picture Association of America) recently announced that it will “now consider smoking in the rating of films.” While the MPAA’s new consideration falls short of the goal of the National Campaign for Smoke-free Movies—which calls for mandating an R rating for all youth films (G, PG, and PG-13)—Reality Check considers this a positive step in the right direction.

“The MPAA’s announcement is encouraging, but it is inadequate and children will remain unprotected from the influence of on-screen tobacco use,” stated Elizabeth Toomey, program coordinator for Reality Check in Onondaga County. Karen Darling, program coordinator in Cayuga County, warned that 80% of smokers start before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. They join Reality Check programs throughout New York State in urging the MPAA to go one step further by assigning an R rating to all new movies with smoking in an effort to reduce youth exposure to film smoking. “Any tobacco use in films only normalizes and glamorizes the use of a product that only 20% of New Yorkers use,” they added.

Reality Check is a youth-led movement aimed at exposing the manipulative marketing practices of the tobacco industry. Created in 2000, Reality Check is funded by the New York State Department of Health *Tobacco Use Prevention and Control Program*. For more information, in Onondaga County, contact Elizabeth Toomey at 471-1359, [btomey@PreventionNetwork.info](mailto:btomey@PreventionNetwork.info). In Cayuga County, contact Karen Darling at 252-4212, [kdarling@PreventionNetwork.info](mailto:kdarling@PreventionNetwork.info).

