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TO: DeKalb County News Media

FROM: Jane Lux
Public Health Administrator

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Clinton Rosette Middle School (CRMS) Students Promote Smoke Free Parks in their Town!

Seventh Grade Ambassador Students presented to local community members on Wednesday, May 11, encouraging DeKalb and other community park districts to adopt 100 percent smoke free park policies. Reality Illinois is a grant program funded by the Illinois Department of Public Health that empowers young people to work with local governing bodies to adopt policies that create healthier communities related to tobacco policy and prevention.

Working with staff from the DeKalb County Health Department, seventh grade middle school students spent five months researching tobacco and its harmful effects, discovering data to support smoke free parks, surveying peers, as well as picking up cigarette butts to make their communities healthier. With support from CRMS Counselor Jennifer Gammelgaard and Principal, Tim Vincent, Reality students also participated in *Kick Butts Day*, encouraging their peers to sign pledges to live smoke free lives.

During Wednesday's presentation, fourteen of the seventh graders presented their findings and recommendations for 100 percent smoke free parks. Students applauded the DeKalb Park District for taking a major step with their newly adopted ordinance. The ordinance prohibits smoking within 50 feet of playgrounds, athletic fields, bleachers, swimming pools, shelters, and dog parks. Students then allowed for questions by the community members who attended the presentation. The audience included nineteen community members including the school principal, teachers, school counselors, the Health Department Administrator, Board of Health

P. 2 Clinton Rosette Middle School (CRMS) Students Promote Smoke Free Parks in their Town!

members, the Executive Director of the DeKalb Park District, the President of the Park Board and Commissioners of the Park Board.

All of the students who participated in the CRMS chapter of Reality Illinois have shown dedication and advocacy efforts to improve the health of our community!

