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truth® Partners with Epiphone to Donate Custom Guitars to High Schools in Regions Most Heavily Impacted by Tobacco

truth x Epiphone Aims to Inspire High School Students to use Music as a Powerful Force for Change Against Big Tobacco's Exploitation

WASHINGTON, D.C. (April 9, 2018) – **truth**, one of the largest and most effective youth tobacco prevention campaigns, and Epiphone are partnering to donate more than 100 custom-designed guitars to select high schools in communities most heavily impacted by tobacco, where 72 percent of remaining smokers reside. The **truth x Epiphone** partnership aims to inspire teenagers to use their creativity as a force for change and speak up against Big Tobacco.

The **truth x Epiphone** custom guitars were first showcased at this year's Grammys gift lounge, where celebrities including Zac Brown Band, BeBe Rexha, Little Big Town and Daddy Yankee signed guitars for donation.

This project also comes on the heels of the latest campaign from **truth**, which launched during the 60th annual Grammy Awards. The ads, titled 'Worth More', call out Big Tobacco for preying on the nation's most vulnerable within lower-income communities with the help of Grammy-nominated Imagine Dragons' lead vocalist Dan Reynolds and award-winning country music singer Jon Pardi.

Big Tobacco not only targets lower-income communities to start smoking, but makes it harder for them to quit. It genetically engineered their products to have two times the natural levels of nicotine and lowered the cost of cigarettes. Manipulation tactics particularly impact several states from the upper Midwest to the South, which have smoking numbers on par or higher than the least developed countries in the world.

"Unfortunately, youth are especially susceptible to this exploitation, with more than 3,200 people under 18 smoking their first cigarette every day in the U.S.," said Eric Asche, chief marketing and strategy officer at Truth Initiative, the organization that directs and funds the **truth** campaign. "That is why we are empowering young people in the states most heavily impacted by tobacco with the facts, so that they can make their own informed choices."

"There is a lot of tobacco use around here and I can see why, but I think we can change that" said Aleah, a student at Logan County High School, Russellville, Kentucky. "I am using these facts and music to spread the word."

High schools receiving guitars include:

- Irvington Preparatory Academy - Indianapolis, Indiana
- Warren Central High School - Indianapolis, Indiana
- East Technical High School - Cleveland, Ohio
- Coretta Scott King Women's Leadership Academy - Atlanta, Georgia
- Pearl-Cohn Entertainment Magnet High School - Nashville, Tennessee
- Hunters Lane High School - Nashville, Tennessee
- McGavock High School - Nashville, Tennessee
- Logan County High School - Logan County, Kentucky

Greenbrier East High School - Lewisburg, West Virginia
Lincoln County High School - Hamlin, West Virginia
Murphy High School - Mobile, Alabama
U.S. Grant High School - Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

truth x Epiphone will continue to donate guitars throughout the summer as part of the partnership.

About truth

truth is one of the largest and most successful youth tobacco prevention campaigns. The campaign exposes the tactics of the tobacco industry, the truth about addiction and the health effects and social consequences of smoking. **truth** gives teens facts to make their own informed choices about tobacco use and inspires them to use their social and creativity in the fight against tobacco. The campaign is credited with preventing hundreds of thousands of teens from starting to smoke and is empowering this generation to end smoking for good. To learn more, visit thetruth.com.

truth is part of Truth Initiative, a national public health organization dedicated to achieving a culture where all youth and young adults reject tobacco. To learn more about Truth Initiative, visit truthinitiative.org.

About Epiphone

For over 140 years, Epiphone has been a leading innovator in instrument design with models like the Casino, the Texan, and the new Masterbilt Century Archtop Collection. Epiphone is also home to the PRO-1 Collection and is the official instrument of Rocksmith® Remastered, the acclaimed video experience that's teaching millions around the world how to play guitar and bass. Epiphone began as the "House of Stathopoulos" family business in Sparta in the 1870s and rose to fame in Manhattan during the jazz age before joining Gibson brands in 1957. Today, Epiphone continues to make history from its headquarters in Nashville, TN. Epiphones have powered classic recordings by Les Paul, The Beatles, and The Rolling Stones along with today's top artists like Gary Clark Jr., Slash, Tommy Thayer of KISS, Radiohead, Paul McCartney, Matt Heafy, Joe Bonamassa, and James Bay. Epiphone offers innovation, history, and a lifetime guarantee. At Epiphone, we're designers, we're players, and we're mavericks. And, we're passionate about everything we do.