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Truth Initiative® Launches 2019 Youth Ambassadors Program to Build Tobacco- and Smoke-Free Communities

Twelve Young Change-Makers Educate About Tobacco's Impact; Save Lives

WASHINGTON, D.C. (April 10, 2019) – Truth Initiative, the nonprofit organization behind **truth**®, the national award winning youth tobacco prevention campaign, today announced its 2019 class of **truth** Ambassadors, a group of youth and young adults that are creating and promoting projects that inspire tobacco- and smoke-free communities around the country.

The 2019 class of **truth** Ambassadors will spend the next year in an immersive leadership program, which will educate and train them on the public health impact of tobacco and e-cigarettes, the importance of community and youth engagement, as well as tobacco policy and advocacy. They will also learn from peers and mentors who will help them execute local advocacy projects. These projects will work to address some of today's most critical smoke- and tobacco-related topics including social justice, initiation, the environment, smoke-free places and more.

"Youth change-makers are important voices that impact the success of their communities," said Amy Taylor, senior vice president, community and youth engagement at Truth Initiative. "From saving thousands of lives by making their campuses tobacco-free to sharing their personal stories of e-cigarette addiction and quitting with students, these ambassadors are directly saving lives."

Launched in 2001 as the Truth Initiative Youth Activism Fellowship program, the 2019 class of **truth** Ambassadors includes 12 youth and young adults from ages 19 to 25, representing 11 states including:

- Brooklyn Larimore (Nebraska)
- Pa Houa Moua (Minnesota)
- Jack Waxman (New York)
- Kennedy Chartier (Rhode Island)
- Sarah Ryan (Massachusetts)
- Matt Murphy (Massachusetts)
- Giana Darville (Tennessee)
- Tamarra Thal (Florida)
- Sheryl Mcfadden (New York)
- Eddie Foster (South Carolina)
- Alex Sanchez (Texas)
- Kacey Philbrick (New York)

The program will help them develop leadership and community activism skills while providing financial support to create and promote their own local tobacco-prevention projects. Ambassador projects include an interactive web series on the dangers of e-cigarettes and

flavored tobacco, a state-wide tobacco clean up and an immersive educational program on how Big Tobacco has historically targeted minority populations.

“I have witnessed — and personally experienced — the dangers of nicotine addiction, especially from e-cigarette use,” said Matt Murphy, a 2019 ambassador. “Through the Ambassador program, I hope to speak about my own experiences as a way to help decrease cigarette and e-cigarette use within my community and empower others to quit while learning new skills that will help me to become a more successful tobacco control advocate.”

Previous classes of the **truth** Ambassador program have helped make significant progress in tobacco control and prevention. Past projects have included meeting with members of Congress to discuss tobacco control issues, helping to drive initiatives to address the disproportionate effect that tobacco use has on the homeless population and coordinating events to raise awareness and build support for tobacco-free policies on college campuses.

For more information on the **truth** Ambassadors program, visit truthinitiative.org/youth-leadership.

About Truth Initiative:

Truth Initiative is a national public health organization that is inspiring tobacco-free lives and building a culture where all youth and young adults reject tobacco. The truth about tobacco and the tobacco industry are at the heart of our proven-effective and nationally recognized truth public-education campaign, our rigorous and scientific research and policy studies, and our innovative community and youth engagement programs supporting populations at high risk of using tobacco. The Washington, D.C. -based organization, formerly known as Legacy, was established and funded through the 1998 Master Settlement Agreement between attorneys general from 46 states, five U.S. territories and the tobacco industry. To learn more about how Truth Initiative speaks, seeks and spreads the truth about tobacco, visit truthinitiative.org.

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