

Truth Initiative® Awards First-Ever truth IMPACT Scholarships for Speaking Out About the Youth Vaping Epidemic

Winners confront e-cigarette manufacturers in D.C.

November 14, 2019 (WASHINGTON, D.C.) – [Truth Initiative](#), the organization behind the highly effective [truth](#)® youth smoking prevention campaign, announced today that Ally Harrison of Baytown, Texas and Carlos Magdaleno of Santa Ana, California are the inaugural winners of the **truth** Impact Scholarship. The two scholarships, one \$10,000 and one \$5,000 scholarship, respectively, were given to the students for speaking out about the harms of e-cigarettes.

Ally Harrison, 18, from Baytown, Texas, is a former vaper-turned-activist. She started using e-cigarettes when she was a freshman in high school. After over four years of vaping, Ally is now nicotine-free, and she hopes that by telling her personal story about her experience with the e-cigarettes, she'll be able to help others quit or not start vaping at all.

Carlos Magdaleno, 18, from Santa Ana, California, first became interested in tobacco control after seeing many of his peers become addicted to the nicotine in e-cigarettes. He has an avid interest in film making and wants to change the world one video at a time. He hopes that through his work, he will encourage his peers to find the strength within themselves to avoid substance abuse of all kinds.

“The inaugural **truth** IMPACT scholarship is a great example of how the **truth** campaign empowers young people and lifts up their voices. This year’s scholarship recipients, along with their peers across the country, are making it clear that they’ll no longer allow e-cigarette manufacturers like JUUL to treat their generation like lab rats for unregulated products,” said Robin Koval CEO and president of Truth Initiative. “No one knows all of the short or long-term health effects of vaping. This giant chemistry experiment being conducted on our nation’s youth has got to stop. The FDA must do its job and remove all flavored e-cigarettes from the market, including menthol, to safeguard America’s youth.”

In October, Ally and Carlos protested outside Washington, D.C. offices of JUUL, the most popular e-cigarette manufacturer, as part of the [truth National Day of Action](#). They joined around 68,000 young people nationwide in speaking out about their own experiences with vaping and called on the FDA to regulate e-cigarette products and remove all flavored e-cigarettes, including menthol. They also encouraged other young people to [#DITCHJUUL](#), alluding to the leading role JUUL has played in the youth vaping epidemic, as well as other similar vaping products.

“Their marketing skills got me. But now I’ve stopped after more than four years of vaping,” said Ally while speaking to a crowd of her peers outside JUUL’s office on October 9th. “Standing here, they’ve only fueled the new fire I have burning inside me to get justice for all the little girls like

me and older ones as well. Now, I want to hold them accountable for the damages they've done to me and my friends. And it will happen."

"I've witnessed my peers thrive and pursue a higher education, yet at the same time, I've seen my peers fall down the opposite path," said Carlos. "It got to the point that I would come out of my class and walk into my school restroom blanketed with smoke clouds. What can start off as one hit can end up being a deterrent to your life."

Data from the [2019 National Youth Tobacco Survey](#) show that more than a quarter of high schoolers — 27.5% — are now vaping, up from 20.8% in 2018. Data from [another national survey](#) find that youth e-cigarette use has more than doubled since 2017 in every grade surveyed, including among eighth graders. In the meantime, cases of vaping-related deaths and severe lung illness increase — 39 and 2,051 respectively, are growing.

For help with quitting vaping, teens can visit thetruth.com/quit or text "DITCHJUUL" to 88709 for free resources.

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 tobacco. **truth** gives teens facts to make their own informed choices about tobacco use and inspires them to use their 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.