Tobacco-Free Parks LTE Template

Drafted January 18, 2018

**Tobacco-free parks are a good idea for (COMMUNITY NAME)**

Dear Editor,

START YOUR LETTER BY TALKING ABOUT WHAT YOU ENJOY ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY’S PARKS **(TAKING YOUR KIDS/GRANDKIDS TO PLAY, WATCHING BASEBALL OR SOCCER, FISHING , OR HAVING A PLACE TO GET ACTIVE).** SPECIFICALLY LIST A PARK THAT YOU ENJOY VISITING. NOW SHARE THAT YOU’D ENJOY THE PARK EXPERIENCE EVEN MORE IF YOUR COMMUNITY’S PARKS WERE TOBACCO-FREE.

ELABORATE BY SHARING AN EXAMPLE OF A TIME YOUR ENJOYMENT OF A COMMUNITY PARK WAS IMPACTED BY OTHERS USING TOBACCO. EXAMPLES COULD FOCUS ON SECONDHAND SMOKE CONCERNS, TOBACCO BEING USED NEARBY CHILDREN, OR LITTERING. ELABORATE ON WHY THIS BOTHERS YOU AND WHY YOU FEEL THE PARKS WOULD BE BETTER OFF WITHOUT TOBACCO USE.

**USE THIS PARAGRAPH TO PROVIDE BROADER CONTEXT FOR YOUR CONCERNS.**

* **IF YOUR PRIMARY CONCERN IS HEALTH, THEN TALK ABOUT** [**THE EFFECTS OF SHS**](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/secondhand_smoke/health_effects/index.htm) **AND SHARE THINGS LIKE**
	+ **THERE IS NO SAFE LEVEL OF EXPOSURE TO SECONDHAND SMOKE**
	+ **SECONDHAND SMOKE IN OUTDOOR AREAS CAN BE EQUAL TO AMOUNTS FOUND IN INDOOR AREAS WHERE SMOKING IS ALLOWED (**[**http://exposurescience.org/pub/reports/Outdoor\_ETS\_Final.pdf**](http://exposurescience.org/pub/reports/Outdoor_ETS_Final.pdf)**)**
	+ **A PERSONAL STORY IF YOU HAVE ONE FROM SOMEONE WITH ASTHMA OR ANOTHER CONDITION THAT’S BEEN NEGATIVELY IMPACTED BY SECONDHAND SMOKE IN OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENTS**
	+ **YOU CAN ALSO TALK ABOUT HEALTH GENERALLY AND HOW ALLOWING TOBACCO USE DOESN’T FIT WELL WITH THE PURPOSE OF PARKS (ENJOYING NATURE, GETTING ACTIVE, YOUTH SPORTS, ETC.)**
* **IF YOUR PRIMARY CONCERN IS LITTERING, SHARE THINGS LIKE**
	+ **CIGARETTES ARE THE MOST LITTERED ITEM IN THE WORLD**
	+ **CIGARETTES ARE NOT BIODEGRADABLE**
	+ **WISCONSIN HAS OVER 15,000 LAKES AND TOXIC CIGARETTE BUTTS LEACH HARMFUL CHEMICALS INTO THE WATER**
	+ **A RECENT STUDY FOUND THAT CIGARETTE BUTTS ONLY DECOMPOSE ABOUT 38% AFTER TWO YEARS (**[**https://truthinitiative.org/news/5-ways-cigarette-litter-impacts-environment**](https://truthinitiative.org/news/5-ways-cigarette-litter-impacts-environment)**)**
* **IF YOUR PRIMARY CONCERN INVOLVES ADULTS MODELING TOBACCO USE TO YOUTH, SHARE THINGS YOU’VE SEEN, LIKE**
	+ **INSTANCES WHERE YOU’VE SEEN KIDS PRETENDING TO SMOKE**
	+ **INSTANCES WHERE YOU’VE SEEN KIDS PICKING UP DISCARDED CIGARETTES AND TOBACCO PRODUCTS**
	+ **SHARE THAT TOBACCO-FREE PARKS ESTABLISH HEALTHY COMMUNITY NORMS AND GIVE ADULTS THE CHANCE TO BE TOBACCO-FREE ROLE MODELS**

LET READERS KNOW HOW THEY CAN CONTACT THE COALITION IF THEY’RE INTERESTED IN TOBACCO-FREE PARKS OR OTHER TOBACCO PREVENTION AND CONTROL EFFORTS IN **(COMMUNITY)**. ALSO INCLUDE THAT TOBACCO USERS CAN CALL 1-800-QUIT NOW FOR HELP TO QUIT.