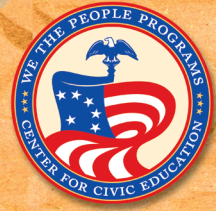PROJECT Citizen

Righting a Wrong

Every week when students at Twinfield Union School in Plainfield, Vermont, opened national news magazines, they saw advertisements for cigarettes. These were student editions of the magazines—designed especially for teens in middle and high schools. One group of Twinfield eighth-graders decided that cigarette ads were not appropriate and that they were going to do something about it.

Community Connection As part of their work with Project Citizen, the students from Twinfield contacted Vermont attorney general William Sorrel to express their concern that cigarette ads were being placed in magazines for young people. The attorney general was surprised to hear this news but grateful that the students had contacted him. As the students had discovered through research into the issue, under a previous agreement, cigarette companies are not allowed to advertise to teens.

Taking Action The attorney general of Vermont shared the information provided by Twinfield's students with attorneys general in other states. Together, they complained to the tobacco companies. The companies agreed to remove their ads from student editions of magazines. "I never thought at this age I could actually affect something nationwide," said Maegan Mears, one of the students. "I hope to continue to make a difference, now that I know I can." Vermont's attorney general also expressed his appreciation for the Twinfield students' actions: "Without their involvement," he said, "we would not have known what was going into these student editions. This is a wonderful example of what can be accomplished through active citizen participation."

Students from Twinfield Union School took action to stop cigarette advertisements in student magazines.

SERVICE LEARNING

1. Why did this group of eighth-graders try to get cigarette advertisements removed from some magazines?
2. How did the Twinfield students make a difference for teens nationwide?