



NEWS RELEASE

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Office of Mary Metcalfe, Acting Director
PUBLIC HEALTH & EMERGENCY SERVICES
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www.oxfordcounty.ca/publichealth

Driven to Quit Challenge helps tobacco users turn their willpower into horsepower!

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NEWS

More than 200 people in Southwestern Ontario have already committed to quit smoking this March by registering for the fifth annual *Driven to Quit Challenge* with a chance to win a 2010 Ford Escape Hybrid and other prizes.

The Driven to Quit Challenge is designed to give daily smokers 19 and older an incentive to quit smoking or tobacco use. Smokers can enter the challenge, set a quit date no later than February 28 and, with the support of a buddy, prepare to go smoke-free for the month of March.

Entrants who are successfully smoke-free for the month of March have the chance to win a 2010 Ford Escape hybrid and one of two \$5,000 vacation getaways. A \$2,000 MasterCard gift card is exclusively reserved for one person in Southwestern Ontario. Prizes are generously sponsored by McNeil Consumer Healthcare.

People who register before January 31, 2010 will also be eligible for the early bird prize, a \$1,000 MasterCard gift card. The registration deadline for *The Driven to Quit Challenge* is February 28, 2010.

To register for *The Challenge*, Ontarians aged 19 and over can download a registration form at www.DrivenToQuit.ca or visit Oxford County Public Health at 410 Buller Street in Woodstock for a printed form.

Participants can contact Oxford County Public Health for more information at 519-539-9800 or 1-800-755-0394. Additional support is provided by the Canadian Cancer Society *Smokers' Helpline* at 1 877 513-5333 and www.SmokersHelpline.ca.

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QUOTES

“This is a great time of year to quit smoking and stay tobacco free. The health benefits of quitting smoking start 20 minutes after the last cigarette.”

- *Gerry Moniz, Tobacco Control Coordinator, Oxford County Public Health & Emergency Services*

“Some people may need to make several attempts at quitting before they’re successful, so we encourage all smokers and tobacco users in our community to show their drive to quit smoking this year. Find a support buddy, seek out additional support while trying to quit, and you can be a winner in this year’s challenge by finally quitting tobacco.”

- *Carol Bossenberry, Public Health Nurse, Oxford County Public Health & Emergency Services*

QUICK FACTS

- Approximately 22,300 Ontarians participated in the 2009 Challenge. Since 2006, *The Driven to Quit Challenge* has inspired more than 101,000 entrants to make a quit attempt.
- Tobacco use is the number one cause of preventable disease, disability and death in Ontario. Every year, 37,000 Canadians and 13,000 Ontarians die from tobacco use.

BACKGROUND

- ***The Driven to Quit Challenge*** is a health promotion campaign hosted by the Canadian Cancer Society in support of a Smoke-Free Ontario. Oxford county Public Health & Emergency Services is a proud partner in *The Challenge*.
- The **Canadian Cancer Society** is a national community-based organization of volunteers whose mission is the eradication of cancer and the enhancement of the quality of life of people living with cancer. When you want to know more about cancer, visit www.cancer.ca or call the bilingual Cancer Information Service, toll-free, at 1 888 939-3333.
- **Oxford County Public Health & Emergency Services** seeks to promote and protect the health of Oxford County’s more than 100,000 residents. An upper-tier municipal service with a \$16.9-million annual operating budget and approximately 160 employees, the department’s services include family health, immunization, healthy living, infectious disease prevention, sexual health, environmental health, emergency services, and other programs that support healthy behaviours in a healthy environment. For more information, visit www.oxfordcounty.ca/publichealth.

FOR MORE INFORMATION / TO ARRANGE AN INTERVIEW:

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