

Santa Passes Carbon Monoxide Test

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Santa Claus came out clean when he took a carbon monoxide test as part of the HELP - For a Life Without Tobacco campaign (<http://en.help-eu.com/pages/index-2.html>) in Rovaniemi, Finland.

Rovaniemi, located near the Arctic Circle, is Santa Claus' hometown. His secret getaway is in the East of Lapland, on the Korvatunturi Fell, a secluded area on the border between Finland and Russia, which is impossible to reach by anyone else.

The Korvatunturi Fell is shaped like an ear, which helps Santa listen to children around the world and know whether they have been bad or good. It has also helped him to hear about the HELP campaign (<http://en.help-eu.com/pages/index-2.html>)!

Santa gave his full support to the campaign, which informs people (particularly young people) about the many health risks caused by smoking and tobacco smoke (<http://en.help-eu.com/pages/index-2.html>), not just to smokers but also to the people around them. He was especially concerned about families in which parents smoke.

"Parents' who smoke are harming their own health but also exposing their children to tobacco smoke. Our health is more valuable than even the most expensive Christmas present, so we should not put it at risk by smoking," Santa said to the representatives of the HELP campaign who visited him.

The HELP campaign is an initiative of the European Commission in all 27-member states of the European Union. The carbon monoxide tests (<http://en.help-eu.com/pages/index-2.html>) are carried out at public events to show people the effects of smoking and passive smoking. In 2006, over 75.000 Europeans took the test at one of over 250 events where the HELP stand was present. In 2007, the campaign will be present at even more places and events.

"HELP" is the second major EU-wide anti-smoking campaign (<http://www.help-eu.com/>) run by the European Commission. The European Commission earmarked €72 million for the campaign between 2005 and 2008. Adolescents (15 to 18 year olds) and young adults (18 to 30 years olds) are the main target groups.

At the outset of the campaign Markos Kyprianou, the European Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection, said: "The sickness and death caused by smoking costs EU countries €100 billion a year. Prevention and information campaigns like "HELP" are an investment in a healthier and more prosperous future for our citizens. As well as promoting tobacco-free lifestyles to young people, the campaign also highlights the dangers of passive smoking and supports the trend towards tobacco-free public places."

He continued: "Eight out of ten smokers start in their teenage years. Once hooked, it is a habit that

takes many of them to an early grave. Every year, 650,000 EU citizens die from tobacco related disease. I am determined to do everything I can to stop young people taking up smoking, and to help young smokers kick the habit before it ruins their health. I want to see a major shift in our society, where being smoke-free becomes the norm and the smoke-addicted are a dwindling minority."

Press releases, press packs, the logo and pictures of the 'HELP' campaign (<http://en.help-eu.com/pages/index-2.html>) can be downloaded from the Internet site www.help-eu.com.

- ENDS -

Images:

Santa takes the HELP Campaign Carbon Monoxide Test:

<http://prweb.com/prfiles/2006/12/18/492704/SantaClaus09bsmall.jpg>

Santa scored two when he took the HELP campaign's Carbon Monoxide test - That's a normal background CO score for a non smoker:

<http://prweb.com/prfiles/2006/12/18/492704/SantaClaus10Bsmall.jpg>

Santa gives us the thumbs up after trying the HELP campaign's Carbon Monoxide test:

<http://prweb.com/prfiles/2006/12/18/492704/SantaClaus013small.jpg>

For further press information please contact:

Niall Dologhan or Naomi van Moppes

Tel: 020 020 8789 2587

Email: n.dologhan@kestrelcomms.co.uk

