

aired in every baseball market. Grants to the Jacksonville Jaguars, a professional football team, produced a high-profile media campaign, and led to the decision by the team owners to keep tobacco advertising out of their stadium. Team owners also removed tobacco ads from the back cover of the Jaguars' Game Day program, making the Jaguars the first National Football League (NFL) team to successfully challenge the league's position on tobacco advertising. This led to a joint decision by the NFL and individual franchises to no longer accept tobacco advertising in Game Day programs. The Jaguars also began the Honor Rows program, which awards free seats at Jaguars games to youth who meet certain academic, behavioral, and public service goals, and who sign a pledge not to use tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs.

In addition, RWJF was funding a number of national programs aimed at reducing tobacco use, among them SmokeLess States: Statewide Tobacco Prevention and Control Initiatives®, which supports the development and implementation of comprehensive statewide strategies to reduce tobacco use through education, treatment, and policy initiatives and the National Center for Tobacco-Free Kids, a national campaign to reduce youth tobacco use (ID#s 028086, 029600, 035124, and 035929).

Aware of RWJF's programs focused on reducing tobacco use among young people, the New Jersey Nets (Nets) contacted RWJF staff in the summer of 1996, indicating their interest in developing an educational and marketing campaign to help prevent smoking among young people. The Foundation encouraged the Nets to collaborate with New Jersey Breathes, a broad-based coalition of health, educational, business, and community organizations convened by the Medical Society of New Jersey. New Jersey Breathes, a project in the SmokeLess States initiative, promotes a tobacco-free state through innovative educational approaches to involve the groups most often targeted by tobacco companies, especially children, minorities, and women.

## **THE INITIATIVE**

The goal of this project, which was funded through two program contracts, was to leverage the identity and marketing capabilities of the Nets to establish an organizational presence in the National Basketball Association (NBA) committed to reducing tobacco use among young people. The program, which was developed by the Nets in collaboration with the New Jersey Breathes project, had three objectives: (1) conduct an aggressive marketing and media campaign to send a strong "no tobacco use" message to New Jersey families, national television audiences, and basketball fans throughout the United States; (2) encourage schools and community groups in the New Jersey area to undertake efforts to keep their schools and communities smoke-free; and (3) remove tobacco advertising from the Continental Airlines Arena (the Nets' home court) and work with other NBA teams to initiate a "no tobacco use" program throughout the league.