

**NEWS RELEASE****Attention: Education Reporters  
Entertainment Reporters  
Health Reporters****Contact:** Laura Oxley, (602) 542-1094  
**For Immediate Release:** January 23, 2015**Web Comedy Series Tackles Teen Tobacco Prevention**

(Phoenix) -- Students Taking a New Direction (STAND), Arizona's anti-smoking youth coalition, is excited to announce a partnership with the popular web-based comedy series *Voyage Trekkers*. This inventive collaboration fuses STAND's crucial anti-smoking message with the wit, humor and originality that the series is known for. The locally-produced videos follow the *Voyage Trekkers* crew on their mission to stop young people from using tobacco.

Fans of the web series know the characters as a hopeless starship crew serving the Galactic Union. The award-winning show has been described as a successful parody of sci-fi institutions like *Star Trek* and *Star Wars*. Here, the series turns its aim on cigarettes and chew tobacco by lampooning the "stiff" public service announcements of the past in a ten-episode project titled, "Voyage Trekkers to the Rescue."

"Our goal is to find new ways to reach teens and spread our anti-smoking message," said Courtney Ward, Chief of the Office of Tobacco Prevention & Cessation, Arizona Department of Health Services. "Teaming up with *Voyage Trekkers* is the perfect way to entertain while we educate viewers about the dangers of smoking, and using social media platforms to do this makes them easily accessible to our target audience."

"We've had a lot of fun embarking on this mission with STAND," said Nathan Blackwell, *Voyage Trekkers* Director. "Our characters are their normal, ridiculous selves here, and their well-intentioned, but poorly executed actions, are proof that humor can be effective for conveying a serious message."

The ten episodes can be viewed on the STAND website at <http://www.standaz.com> and will be revealed twice a week—each Wednesday and Friday—starting January 23<sup>rd</sup>. Teens who visit the STAND Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/Stand> can answer an episode-related question for the chance to be entered to win prizes from *Voyage Trekkers* on a weekly basis.

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