

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Smoke-Free Illinois Anniversary sculpture unveiled



Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago unveiled a sculpture on Tuesday to commemorate the one year anniversary of Smoke-Free Illinois. On January 1, 2008, Illinois became the 22nd state to ban smoking in public places. In preparation, Respiratory Health Association issued a bounty on ashtrays. Student artists Vincent Finazzo, Eric Seigel and Emanuel Aguilar from Chicago's Columbia College took the defunct ashtrays and transformed them into a sculpture, "Phoenix," signifying beauty created out of something ugly.

"We find "Phoenix" as appropriate title for this work in the purpose of giving new life – a more beautiful existence – to the ugly past of the ashtrays. Now not longer serving the smoker, but enriching the viewer," said Emanuel Aguilar, one of three student sculptors.

Speaking about the benefits of Smoke-Free Illinois at the State of Illinois Thompson Center were RHAMC President and CEO Joel Africk, State Senator John Cullerton, State Representative Karen Yarbrough, Illinois Department of Public Health Director Dr. Damon Arnold, Restaurateur Dan Rosenthal and Cook County's Health Lungs Initiative representative Dr. David Goldberg.

"As result of this law we will see fewer Illinoisans suffer from lung cancer, fewer heart attack hospitalizations and fewer asthma attacks. Simply stated the Smoke-Free Illinois law will save lives," said Joel Africk, president and CEO of Respiratory Health Association.

The sculpture is currently on display at the Thompson Center. For more information about Smoke-Free Illinois, please visit www.lungchicago.org.

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Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago has been a local public health leader since 1906. Today the Association fights lung disease and promotes healthy lungs by supporting research, advocacy, and educational efforts on behalf of individuals and families affected by lung cancer, asthma, COPD (chronic bronchitis and emphysema), and other lung diseases. For more information, visit www.lungchicago.org.

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Leader Since 1906

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