

# Cold Turkey class burns out bad habit on campus

BY NICK WILSEY  
Index Staff

In a stuffy room in Pershing Building last Thursday, 11 people took the first step toward a new life — a life free of nicotine.

Freshman Faith Maslonka came to this semester's first Cold Turkey tobacco cessation class to help make up her mind.

"I still think I'm fighting the concept of actually, 'Am I a smoker? Or am I just doing this in college?'" Maslonka said.

Because many consequences of smoking don't materialize for decades, young smokers find it hard to use health risks as a reason to quit, she said.

"There's so many different things affecting our health — I mean, how much do we really trust Sodexo?" Maslonka said. "For [smokers], this is a justification. ... We're all going to end up having cancer even if we run every day and eat the right thing."

Although she came to the Cold Turkey class, Maslonka said there's still something holding her back from quitting.

"I think I'm just being ... lazy, honestly, because I know what smoking can do to me," she said. "It's in our family — we have extreme situations of people dying over it, and then some. My aunt does smoking commercials because she has a hole in her throat from losing her voice box."

But her laziness isn't the only obstacle to overcome, Maslonka said.

"I think I just have to find enough personal reasons [to quit] that outweigh the personal reasons I [smoke], and I haven't found that yet," she said. "I'm looking."

Barry Poyner, professor of communication and adviser to Ekklesia, a nondenominational Bible study group, said many of the challenges to quitting are not just personal ones.

He said Ekklesia has purchased nicotine replacement products for smokers who have wanted to quit, but for most people, the products are cost-prohibitive.

"That stuff is expensive," Poyner said. "You buy one box of patches, you're probably talking \$30, and that lasts one week. ... If [patches] are the best routes to quit smoking, ... they need to be made more affordable."

Poyner said that although the high

cost of stop-smoking remedies is enough to deter many smokers, higher taxes on cigarettes aren't enough to drive smokers away from the cigarettes.

"I don't think the higher taxes is going to prevent someone from smoking," Poyner said. "I think anybody, if they're addicted and they want it, they're going to get it."

Poyner said he has helped counsel people on smoking cessation with Ekklesia through events like the Great American Smokeout. He said Ekklesia has tried to find creative ways to promote cessation, such as "turkey bowling," during which participants roll a frozen turkey like a bowling ball and knock down cigarette-shaped pins. He said part of the reason he wants to help people quit smoking is that he used to grow tobacco in Kentucky.

"There's been a heritage in the South of growing, and to some degree I think we've become more aware of its addictive properties and, therefore, have felt some personal responsibility in wanting to see people stop," Poyner said. "But ... from a religious point of view as well, I think it's anything that so binds or addicts someone, ... there's got to be something wrong with it."

Freshman Hannah Evans, who also went to the Cold Turkey class last Thursday, said she appreciates the help she's been offered at Truman but thinks there's still a missing ingredient.

"My only problem is that [the cessation instructors] aren't smokers, so they don't really understand," Evans said. "It's a lot more than just replacing the cigarette with something else. ... You have to want to not go outside and have a cigarette."

Evans said Cold Turkey's emphasis on the buddy system could be effective but also possibly dangerous.

"I would probably be more prone to quit if I had other smokers quitting with me as my support group," Evans said. "But our problem is, if one of us slips, we're really forgiving because we all understand: 'It's OK, I'll smoke one with you.'"

Freshman Spencer Girouard came to the Cold Turkey class with Maslonka and



Mark Hardy/Index

Freshmen Faith Maslonka, Eric Mosley, Hannah Evans and Spencer Girouard (left to right) attended the Cold Turkey class last Thursday. Evans said it would be easier for her to quit smoking if she quit with her friends.



Krista Goodman/Index

Roommates Freshman Andrew DeMarco (left) and Matt Grose (right) enjoy a smoke in their regular spot outside Ryle Hall.

Evans. He said he started smoking with other employees when he worked at KFC.

"It was a social thing, really," Girouard said. "We're all going out back for a smoke break, I'd go with them. I started buying my own, and it all snowballed from there."

Carol Cox, associate professor of health science, said college is a prime time for people to stop smoking.

"You've got to think about your health because it's not just going to be you," Cox said. "It's going to be your wife, it's going to be your kids, it's going to be your health insurance costs."

Cox said many student smokers want to quit because of the short-term social effects rather than the long-term health effects of smoking.

"We have the college students who

[say], 'I just smoke when I drink, and I don't want to do it anymore — my clothes, my hair, my boyfriend, my girlfriend' kind of thing," she said. "We've got the whole gamut."

Cold Turkey classes are offered at Truman thanks to a collaboration between Eta Sigma Gamma, the Student Health Center and several other organizations. Cox said the best aspects of the program include its flexibility and its personalization.

"It's like having a bunch of teachers for your classroom," Cox said. "If some kids are a little slower, or they're not ready for something, or they want to learn in a different way — in your classroom, you have only one teacher. Here, ... we can take people who chew — 'Come here, chew guys, let's work with you a little bit differently because your social situation is different

## Where to get help

- **Ekklesia Campus Ministry**  
Offers prayer, Bible study and pastoral counseling.  
Contact **Dan Green**,  
660-657-5003
- **Cold Turkey tobacco classes**  
Offers education, personalized counseling, and free patches. Classes in Pershing 301 at 8-9 p.m. on Feb. 21, Feb. 28 and March 6. Free physician's counseling on Feb. 28.

Contact the  
**Student Health Center**  
660-785-4182



from the people who are smoking."

Although the social factor plays a role in how many smokers got started, Cox said this also can help a smoker to quit.

"It's that bonding, that support — plus, it is a class and they get educated," she said. "But the big thing is the opportunity for the free patches and free physician's [consultation]. You know how much you or your insurance would pay for that?"

A grant through the Missouri Foundation for Health allows the Cold Turkey program to offer free vouchers for a one-week supply of nicotine patches from Rider Drug, as well as free personal physician's consultations during the Feb. 28 class.

"We've got all the tools," Cox said. "They've just got to commit to quit and put their mind to it."



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