



Hackademy Awards Name ‘Nine’ Smokiest of All For 09 ***Thumbs Up! Goes to Latest ‘Transformers,’ Paramount First Major Studio With Smoke-Free Year for Youth-Rated Releases***

SACRAMENTO, CA. Feb. 25, 2010 -- Reeking like a blast of cigarette breath, “Nine” stunk up the 2009 screen with basically two hours of tobacco use and smoked past the competition as Thumbs Down! Movie recipient at the Feb. 25 Hackademy Awards.

Direction of the star-studded PG-13 musical soared far above the wildest expectations of any cigarette marketer and totally beyond anything resembling historical context. There were so many smoking scenes packed into its nearly two-hour running time that reviewers had trouble keeping count.

“The title ‘Nine’ could just as easily refer to the total number of tobacco free minutes in this movie,” said Claire, a student at Davis High School and volunteer youth movie reviewer with the Thumbs Up! Thumbs Down! (TUTD) Program at Breathe California of Sacramento-Emigrant Trails.

The 15-year-old Hackademy Awards raise awareness of the impact of tobacco use in films on pre-teens and young adults. Studies have established a direct link between smoking depicted in films and an increased willingness by teens to try smoking, showing that 40 percent of the youth who try tobacco products do so because of exposure to smoking in movies, according to researchers at Dartmouth College.

Thumbs Down! movies exemplify how tobacco use in movies can needlessly validate smoking as a consequence-free habit. “Nine” provided a depressingly perfect example by lavishly promoting cigarette and cigar smoking as emblems of sexiness, wealth, power, coolness and relaxation. Reviewers also felt those misleading messages about smoking were magnified

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through a cast of popular celebrities such as star Daniel Day Lewis, Nicole Kidman and Kate Hudson.

“It’s going to have a more powerful impact because, basically, you have a lot of stars, a lot of them who are well-known and in a lot of other movies — then, you have them each smoking in an environment that promotes sexiness and coolness,” said Tristan, a reviewer from Rio Americano High School in Sacramento.

The extremes undertaken to include smoking in nearly every scene earned Day Lewis the Thumbs Down! Actor Award for his portrayal of the nicotine-addicted Guido Contini.

Other Thumbs Down! Movie Award nominees were “Avatar,” “Sherlock Holmes,” “I Can Do Bad All By Myself,” and “The Fantastic Mr. Fox,” all of which received Black Lung designations in their reviews, available at www.scenesmoking.org.

The Hackademy Awards also gives an annual Thumbs Up! Award to a movie that either doesn’t include tobacco use, or even better, includes a realistic message about tobacco’s disastrous effect on health. Actors and actresses in each category are also recognized because of their power as role models who young people look up to.

For the Thumbs Up! Award, youth reviewers picked “Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen,” another PG-13 release. Transformers was totally tobacco free, a refreshing surprise in the action thriller genre, and more evidence that the smoke is finally clearing in at least one corner of the entertainment industry. “Transformers” was among 11 PG and PG-13 movies from Paramount in 2009, making it the first major studio to release 100 percent smoke-free youth rated movies. Overall, all 2009 Paramount movies had the lowest percentage of scenes depicting tobacco use, 18 percent, which was lower than Disney at 24 percent.

Other Thumbs Up! Award contenders included “Twilight Saga: New Moon,” “The Time Traveler’s Wife,” “The Proposal” and “(500) Days of Summer.”

Joining Day Lewis in the actor category was Sigourney Weaver, who won a Thumbs Down! Actress Award for her role in “Avatar.” As scientist Dr. Grace Augustine, she demands a cigarette after making the switch from avatar back to human. It’s 154 years later, on an alien

planet, in a movie that has redrawn the boundaries of cinematic technology through groundbreaking 3-D exactitude. So why the hackneyed prop, an echo from the days of Big Tobacco product placement? TUTD reviewers were as puzzled as many were across the nation.

“She’s smoking in the future. That’s like saying, ‘Why quit smoking now? They’re going to be smoking in the future, so let’s keep going.’,” said reviewer Zaira, from Sheldon High School.

Including Weaver’s portrayal of Dr. Grace in “Avatar,” the percentage of smokers who were women in 2009 movies was greater than in years past. If that trend continues, it could aggravate the climb in numbers of girls ages 13 through 15 who smoke — currently more than boys in the same age group.

On a more positive note, Hackademy Awards for Thumbs Up! actor and actress reflected a hopeful trend in two PG-13 movies. While unfortunately filled with plenty of smoking, the Black Lung-rated “I Can Do Bad All By Myself” also has Thumbs Up! Actress Hope Olaide Wilson’s teen character delivering anti-smoking messages in the movie.

This year’s Thumbs Up! Actor award went to Taylor Lautner, who delivered a smoking, but smokeless, performance in the tobacco-free vampire hit “New Moon.”

“Whether you are for Team-Jacob or Team-Edward, everyone wins when tobacco is not shown in a hugely popular teen movie,” said Shelley Mitchell, with Breathe California of Sacramento-Emigrant Trails.

For more information about the Hackademy Awards, log onto www.scenesmoking.org.

Breathe California of Sacramento-Emigrant Trails promotes cleaner air, healthier lungs and a tobacco-free tomorrow. Originally founded in 1917, the organization that is today Breathe California of Sacramento-Emigrant Trails is an independent non-profit. For more information, call (916) 444-5900, or visit www.sacbreathe.org .

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