

SPOTLIGHT: St. Louis, MO Affiliate Fighting Heroin In A Unique Way



Over the past four or five years St. Louis has unfortunately become a destination for heroin traffickers whose target is young, affluent suburban teens. As is always the case with heroin, overdose deaths began to mount up, each year worse than the year before.

In 2010 we had over 200 death overdose deaths among young people in the greater municipal area. We felt it was time for the council to do something. We asked the Missouri Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse (ADA) for funding help in order to craft a public awareness campaign to alert parents what was going on and, at the same time begin the process of better educating youth and raising their awareness, as well. ADA was able to come through with some limited funding, which we were very appreciative of. We got right to work.

The first thing we did was create a concept and a website built around that concept.



Recognizing that ads and commercials are limited insofar as how much you can say or communicate, our intent was to direct folks to the website, allowing us the opportunity to educate and provide information in a much more substantial manner. Once the website (www.not-even-once.com) was up and running, we kicked the campaign into gear. We did several things at once; ads in movie theatres, ads on the backs of buses, parent radio spots that feature parents who have lost a child to overdose and we began to set up regional town hall forums in conjunction with local law enforcement, treatment programs and self-help groups. Since June we have done eight regional town hall forums with more requests coming in almost daily. The response from local media has been remarkable. We have done thirty radio, TV and newspaper interviews just on heroin since June. The earned media has complimented our efforts. ADA is pleased with our campaign and is currently taking our radio spots statewide. In Missouri, St. Louis has been the hot spot for heroin but we are hearing that the increased use, primarily among youth, is now spreading to other parts

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of the state. We are also aware this is happening in other states and cities across the nation. We feel this campaign has been successful in raising awareness, the first step in addressing the problem however, by no means will this be enough to confront this hideous drug trend head-on. We hope the second stage of this effort can include ways to provide more substantial prevention and treatment. Please take a look at the website. It was designed to be as comprehensive as possible for adults and adolescents, alike.

For More Information on our programs:

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