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'All we're saying is, Don't try it once'

Meth Project unveils newest set of ads

By WILLIAM BROWNING - Star-Tribune staff writer | Posted: Tuesday, May 18, 2010 12:00 am

The Wyoming Meth Project unveiled on Monday its newest set of advertisements aimed at steering youth away from one of the state's most popular and dangerous drugs.

The ads, which include billboards, radio spots and television commercials, endeavor to use human voices and stories to illustrate the damage methamphetamine wreaks on users.

Since its inception three years ago, the campaign's public service announcements have always been graphic. But Jean Davies, the project's executive director, said the newest set ups the ante.

There's a television commercial of a young girl, sitting on her bed in her underwear, being injected with the drug by her boyfriend. "He takes care of me," the girl says. Another shows a young man, frantic at being locked out of his parents' home, screaming at them through the door, "I'm going to kill you!"

The radio spots feature "Ashley," a 17-year-old describing the physical toll the drug has taken on her body. In another, "Dean" tells how his girlfriend died in a car crash instigated through the drug's use.

The television commercials were directed by filmmaker Darren Aronofsky, director of feature films "Requiem for a Dream," "The Wrestler" and others.

In introducing the new ad campaign Monday, Ashley Bright, chief professional officer of the Boys & Girls Club of Central Wyoming, described meth as "the devil's candy."

The initiative's efforts, he said, have "really resonated with the kids in our program."

"As a community, we have a responsibility. .. if there is one user, that's too many," he said.

Wyoming has one of the highest rates of methamphetamine use for children 12 and older, according to research by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Law enforcement officials across the state have acknowledged the substance to be the leading drug problem Wyoming currently faces, Davies said.

She hopes the campaign's "hard-hitting," graphic approach continues to influence the state's young people in a positive way.

"Here in Casper, it's still a problem," Davies said of the drug. "It's not as bad as it once was, but we have to be diligent."

"All we're saying is, 'Don't try it once,'" she said.

The ads were unveiled during a press conference at the local Boys & Girls Club.

Star-Tribune Publisher Nathan Bekke is a member of the project's board of directors.

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On the web

All forms of the Wyoming Meth Project's newest public service announcements can be viewed at www.wyomingmethproject.org/View_Ads/.