



NEWS RELEASE

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WASHINGTON STUDENTS EMBARK ON AMAZING RACE TO RAISE AWARENESS

Four Arts Projects Chosen to Receive Problem Gambling Awareness Funds

In Mt. Vernon, Maple Valley, Spanaway, and Mossyrock, junior high and high school students will join a virtual "race" to spread the word that gambling of any kind requires limits and respect. Recent studies are documenting powerful brain chemistry involved with gambling, similar to substance use.

The Evergreen Council on Problem Gambling (ECPG) and Washington State's Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR) have teamed up for the second year to fund student-to-student messages designed to develop problem gambling awareness. The organizations this week announce that they will award grants to four student groups.

Projects receiving funding from the Evergreen Council on Problem Gambling include:

- **Maple Valley Youth Council, Maple Valley Community Center:** An "Amazing Race" event for 15 to 30 youth/youth and adult teams.
- **V.O.I.C.E. Youth Coalition, a United Hospitals youth program:** A 60-second youth public service announcement for the Skagit Valley area.
- **Mossyrock Jumpstart Program (Mossyrock Junior High and Educational Service District 113, Olympia):** A short dramatic video promoting www.addictionisagamble.com, the Evergreen Council's new youth Website.

The project receiving funding from DBHR is:

- **"A Positive Message for Life" and Spanaway Junior High School students:** An informational classroom video featuring junior high students and La Mar Hudson, Pierce County music and prevention specialist.

"Last year's arts awareness projects were outstanding in their ability to reach youth with important messages about healthy choices and risky behaviors, and we are pleased to be able to offer this program again," said Maureen Greeley, executive director of the Evergreen Council on Problem Gambling. All three projects funded in 2009 can be seen at <http://www.youtube.com/user/Evergreencpg>.

"We agree. No one speaks to youth better than youth," added Linda Graves, DBHR problem gambling program manager. DBHR manages a Website for parents at www.notagame.org.

Young people are exposed to many forms of gambling and, in Washington, reports indicate that more than 8% of youth are at risk for developing a gambling problem. It may start with an occasional bet

between family and friends, but some young people get carried away. Youth who experience gambling problems may also experience problems with alcohol and drugs or suffer from depression.

Gambling problems can be treated. Many people have been helped through problem gambling counseling (referrals in Washington are available through the 24/7 Helpline: 800.547.6133) and support through Gambler's Anonymous (visit www.evergreencpg.org for Washington's list of GA meetings).

For more information, contact Rhonda Stone, Community Education Coordinator, Evergreen Council on Problem Gambling, at 360.352.6133 or rstone@evergreencpg.org or Linda Graves, Problem Gambling Program Manager, Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery.

MORE ON THE 2010 GRANT RECIPIENTS:

Maple Valley Youth Council:

The Maple Valley Amazing Race Community Youth Challenge (Event, Mural & Video). Target: Grades 6-12. A similar event last year was very successful and the team hopes to grow it to as many as 30 teams and 60 racers this year. The race will include problem gambling messages as part of the checkpoints and challenges. A mural that will be created as part of the race will be displayed in the community and a video will be created for social marketing.

V.O.I.C.E. (Voicing Our Ideas, Challenging Everyone Youth Coalition, Skagit Valley):

Active promoters of prevention in Skagit Valley communities, the VOICE teens have worked with other prevention topics. For problem gambling, they plan to create a 60-second PSA demonstrating progression in gambling addiction—from fun entertainment to behavior-changing addiction. They plan to share the short PSA with Skagit County High Schools and broadcast on community TV and social media. Target: Grades 9-12.

Mossyrock Junior High Jumpstart:

The afterschool program is considered a model program by Educational Service District 113. In cooperation with the school's drama department, the team plans to create a dramatic video promoting www.addictionisagamble.com, a new Website for Washington teens. In addition to students performing in the video, it will be shot and edited by Mossyrock students who have started a budding videography business.

A Positive Message for Life/Spanaway Junior High Students:

This dramatic video will feature students of diverse ethnic backgrounds talking about a particular potential problem gambling issue and use "green screen" technology and animation drawn by students to create fun and interest for junior high-age students. The cartoon art story boards will create a visual display to highlight information about youth problem gambling. The project will be coordinated by music and prevention specialist La Mar Hudson of Tacoma, WA.

The Evergreen Council on Problem Gambling is dedicated to increasing public awareness of problem gambling, expanding the availability of services for problem gamblers and their families, and encouraging research and programs for prevention and education. Established in 1991 as a private, nonprofit organization, the Council provides statewide confidential support through its 24-hour Problem Gambling Helpline (800.547.6133) and public awareness, education, prevention, training, and resource development services. Visit our website at www.evergreencpg.org.

