



EVERGREEN
Council on Problem Gambling
Treatment. Training. Awareness.

March 8, 2010

For immediate release

Contact: Rhonda Stone
Community Education Coordinator
360.352.6133
rstone@evergreencpg.org

“Zander” Shares His Story of Dealing with Gambling Addiction

**Zander and others share inspiring stories March 11 at UW-Tacoma for
Problem Gambling Awareness Week**

TACOMA, Wash. – “Zander” could be anyone, including a teen in your own home or next door. Zander’s issue—problem gambling—often goes unrecognized and misunderstood.

The Evergreen Council on Problem Gambling (ECPG) is giving an identity to “Zander” the underage gambler during National Problem Gambling Awareness Week, March 7-13, 2010. The public is invited to hear “Zander” and two other college students whose lives were adversely affected by problem gambling. The panel discussion will take place at the University of Washington–Tacoma campus, March 11 (two times: 12:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.; room: MAT 104).

Joining “Zander” will be a young woman who, as a child and teen, watched her family lose everything, including their home to problem gambling and a college student whose significant other ruined her excellent credit by “borrowing” from her credit accounts. Other panelists include Dr. Charles “Chuck” Maurer, President of the National Council on Problem Gambling and Seattle psychologist.

“We are grateful to these young adults for sharing their stories with the community in order to reach out to others who have been affected by gambling addiction,” said Rhonda Stone, ECPG community education coordinator.

Serving as a pseudonym, the name “Zander” was used in a collaborative campaign launched by the Washington State Gambling Commission and ECPG last fall (visit www.notazander.org). The campaign aims to prevent underage gambling by informing teens and their parents about new fines approved by the Washington State Legislature. Teens can now be fined and required to fulfill community service hours for sneaking into card rooms and casinos.

Individuals who start gambling by age 12 are four times more likely to develop a gambling problem, which often surfaces in the young adult/college years. To learn more, visit ECPG’s new Website for teens, www.addictionisagamble.com, or its site for the general public, www.evergreencpg.org .

About ECPG: 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 and services. www.evergreencpg.org

###

QUICK FACTS

About Problem Gambling

- To gamble 30 years ago, most people had to pack their bags and travel to Las Vegas, NV, or Atlantic City, NJ. Today, gambling is accessible virtually everywhere. In addition to card rooms and casinos throughout Washington State, gambling can be done at home on a personal computer or from a cell phone that has access to the Internet.
- In nine years (2000 to 2009), gambling receipts in Washington State grew from \$864 million to over \$2.2 billion. Washington casinos alone employ more than 25,000 people.
- Most people who gamble never develop a gambling problem. Although the percentage is small (2% to 4%), problem gambling still effects at least 80,000 adults in Washington State each year.
- Twice as many teens and young adults are at risk for developing gambling problems because (1) the physiological ability to control impulses is not fully developed until age 25; (2) the teen and young adult years are typically a time for risk-taking and risk-taking is associated with dopamine release; and (3) dopamine—the brain’s own “feel good” chemical artificially released with drug and alcohol use—is also released with gambling activity.
- Individuals who start gambling by age 12 are four times more likely to struggle with gambling addiction.
- On Washington State’s 2008 Healthy Youth Survey, 1/3rd of 8th, 10th, and 12th graders said that they had gambled in the last 12 months. On the same survey, 3 percent of high school seniors responding—more than 2,000 12th graders—said that their own gambling was already causing problems in their lives.
- Problem gambling is treatable—but often requires specialized assistance. A confidential, statewide Problem Gambling Helpline is available 24/7 to assist Washington residents. The number: **1-800-547-6133**.
- Problem gambling treatment is available at low-cost and no-cost in Washington State (on a limited basis). Visit www.evergreencpg.org for a list of treatment providers.