

Posted: 7:28 PM Jun 19, 2010

HALL: Meth Project ads may get them to 'just say no'

Reporter: Stan Hall

I remember the first time that I saw the commercial with the egg in a frying pan. The narrator said, "This is your brain." And then, I saw the egg actually sizzling in the frying pan. The narrator calmly says, "This is you brain on drugs." I suppose the fact that I remember it means that it had some impact on me. But, I can tell you from an observational perspective; it didn't have much of an impact on a whole lot of other people who seemed perfectly willing to hear the sizzle in their brain. Because they showed no signs of avoiding drugs that I could tell.

That response has been typical of the many campaigns that have been instigated by the government in an attempt to keep kids away from drugs. I am sure that when it was created, everyone thought that it would be the message that we had all been waiting for and that drugs would disappear from our society. Obviously it wasn't and obviously they haven't. Even Nancy Reagan jumped in with her "Just say no" campaign. While it was a bit catchy, it was more often used as the butt of jokes instead of a credible tool in drug prevention programs. Over the years, many other educational programs, slogans and commercials have come and gone and they really have not accomplished a whole lot.

Drugs are as prevalent as they ever have been and the age of first-time users seems to be getting younger and younger. Most kids will tell you that they really don't think that smoking marijuana is that big of a deal. Many states are doing all that they can to legalize marijuana usage for medicinal purposes. Don't even get me going on that farce. Politicians now freely admit that they tried drugs in earlier years. With all of this going against the campaign of drug prevention, it has been difficult to mount a movement that would have any real effect on kids who were considering whether or not they would try drugs. Well, all of that has changed with a project that began earlier this year. While its target has only been methamphetamine, its message will be heard well beyond just those contemplating experimenting with meth.

Just as I saw the old "brain on drugs" commercial by chance, I saw one of the commercials focusing on methamphetamine while doing some late night channel surfing. I have never used meth, and I am fairly comfortable in saying that I never will. But, hypothetically, if I was thinking about it this commercial would have swayed me in the other direction. The "I am only going to do this once" and "I won't be like that other guy" is one of the most powerful public service messages that I have seen; particularly for their teenage target audience. This commercial and others that are being aired through the Georgia Meth Project have actually received some criticism based on their harsh message as to what meth can do to you. This response by some, of course, is and has always been part of the problem. We don't want our kids doing drugs, but we also don't want them to see what it can actually do to them. It's just too dramatic and disturbing! Seriously?



It is exactly what they need to see. And they need to see it now. The use of methamphetamines is on the upswing at a rate that we have not seen before. It is one of the nastiest, most addictive, life changing and often deadliest drugs that have come along in a very long time. Marijuana doesn't hold a candle to the destruction that meth can cause. Kid's lives and the lives of entire families have been ruined based on this little ditty sinking its teeth into unsuspecting and uneducated kids.

We must talk to our kids about this drug, as well as drug abuse in general, even if it is uncomfortable at times. As parents, we are limited as to what we can do to the sycophants who bring these drugs to our children. But, we must take advantage of every opportunity that we can to protect them from their reach. The Georgia Meth project, www.georgiamethproject.org, provides excellent material to facilitate this dissemination about meth in a frank and factual manner. The commercials are harsh; very harsh. They present the truth as to what methamphetamine can do and how quickly the devastation can occur. I would much rather our kids see this unarguable result in an educational manner than in a mirror as they stare at a reflection that they no longer recognize.

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