



WINTER 2013

## Behind the **LENS** Newsletter

State/Territory Underage  
Drinking Prevention Videos Project

Keeping you informed, inspired, and up to date.

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### IN YOUR WORDS

POSTCARD FROM MAINE



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Mental Health Services



#### Maine's video features five youth explaining why they choose to be alcohol free. Why did you choose this approach?

The Maine Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services wanted to focus on the positive alternatives to drinking rather than an approach that would concentrate on consequences (e.g., drunk driving). Our primary goal was to convey the message that, contrary to many assumptions, most students choose not to drink. Our prevention team wanted to showcase youth's stories and their passions and ask them why they personally did not drink.

#### How did you identify and determine which youth would be featured in the video?

A letter was sent out to prevention professionals and education officials requesting nominations for students with interesting stories who represented Maine students making smart choices. In our nomination letter, we stressed that we were not looking for "superstars," but average, responsible kids who are involved in activities like art, music, volunteering, mentoring, job, conservation, sports, etc. We were looking for student role models that could clearly articulate their choice to choose a lifestyle that didn't include alcohol because it would interfere with their goals and ambitions. In addition, we presented the video project as an opportunity to give a little attention to someone who did not ordinarily receive it.

#### What, for you, was the most interesting or satisfying aspect of participating in this project?

The most satisfying aspect of working on this project, by far, was working with the youth and hearing their stories. In our eyes, this project was successful and will have a long shelf life because the youth who were interviewed were honest and gave genuinely interesting and inspiring responses. In addition, it was very rewarding to see the project come to fruition through the strong collaboration of our video production team and the producer.

#### What challenges, if any, did you encounter during the production process, and how did you overcome them?

It was challenging to work with so many different individuals and entities simultaneously and ensuring that everyone's feedback and comments would be addressed accordingly and with equal consideration. Although this was a challenge, it was also what made the video a success. Through routine meetings and careful deliberation, our team and the producer were able to create a valuable product that we could all be proud of.

#### What advice would you give to someone who is just beginning to work on a video?

Our team felt it was extremely beneficial to convene on a regular basis to discuss the project, meeting at least once a month. It was also important to have a leader or point person who would organize the meetings, facilitate conversation, and help delegate tasks. In the beginning of the project, it was very helpful to develop a creative brief that outlined our project's goals, the background, the desired change we wanted to make, and—most important—identify the target audience we wanted to reach. It was also worthwhile to watch existing SAMHSA [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration] underage drinking prevention videos and recognize which elements we liked most. Consistent communication with the video producer and voicing our team's thoughts and needs proved to be invaluable. It was also

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essential that we developed a project timeline and stood by it. Lastly, if a project chooses to recruit students to share their stories as we did, I would highly recommend that they put a considerable amount of energy into getting to know those students as well as their parents or advisors. Gaining trust and strengthening relationships early in the process proved to be integral to our video.

View the [Maine video](#).

## TIPS FROM THE PROS



A senior producer shares insights on making a video even more effective.

“When we producers talk about ‘locations,’ we don’t just mean cities or towns. Rather, we are referring to specific places where we need to set up our equipment. In fact, a video shoot may call for two or three individual locations within one building, each of which requires setting up and breaking down our equipment. To maximize limited time and resources and reserve more time for actual shooting, work with your producer to limit the number of locations for your video.”

—*State/Territory Videos Senior Producer*

## OVERCOMING OBSTACLES



**Challenge:** A scene in one of two public service announcements created for the State of Kansas called for a science fair setting. The planning and review team, however, did not know of any science fairs going on in Topeka-area schools during the time the video was slated to be shot.

**Solution:** For a location, the production team went to the Kansas Family Partnership’s offices on a weekend when they wouldn’t interfere with normal business operations. For props, a member of the state’s planning and review team brought some of her now-grown children’s old school projects, another person created a banner, while others recruited youth and parents to appear in the scene. The end result is what looks to be an actual science fair! Watch the [Kansas video](#) to see the “fair.”

## SPREAD THE WORD



**Here are some ways states/territories are getting the message out:**

Indiana distributed copies of its youth-targeted video on DVD to colleges around the state for freshman orientation sessions. Some schools also posted the video on their websites while others used it as part of alcohol education courses. Some high schools plan to show it to their graduating seniors as part of their transition education before those students enter college.

## WHAT'S NEW



[Tennessee's Brighter Future](#)

In an effort to measure the effectiveness of the State/Territory Underage Drinking Prevention Videos Project, the contractor team is evaluating both the production process and video dissemination activities. States/territories that have already completed videos can expect to hear from the team soon. Those whose videos have recently been completed or are currently in preproduction can expect to hear from the evaluation team about 3 months after receiving their DVDs.

## STATUS CHECK

### Recently completed:

- Kansas
- Maine
- Tennessee

### Currently in postproduction:

- Native American communities, in collaboration with SAMHSA’s Native American Center for Excellence
- Ohio

### Currently in preproduction:

### To be scheduled:

- Massachusetts
- Pennsylvania

- California
- Illinois
- Maryland
- Nevada
- New Hampshire
- North Carolina
- North Dakota
- South Carolina
- South Dakota
- Wisconsin

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